PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FORTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1994–95

COMPRISING PERIOD
30 October—8 November 1995

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THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 27 APRIL 1992]

FORTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 265**

SIXTEENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1994–95

House of Commons

Monday 30 October 1995

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

WALES

Strikes

1. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many working days are currently being lost in strikes in (a) Wales and (b) South Korea. [37825]

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. William Hague): In 1994, an average of 14 working days per 1,000 employees were lost due to labour disputes in Wales. I understand that the corresponding figure for South Korea was 103 per 1,000.

Mr. Arnold: Do not those figures, which draw a comparison with one of the leading tiger economies of Asia, show the progress being made by Wales? Do not they show how Wales has cast aside its labour and trade union industrial tradition and taken on the opportunities presented by Tory Britain? May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his work in South Korea with a team of Welsh business men? It is already bearing fruit.

Mr. Hague: I thank my hon. Friend for his comments. He is quite right to point to our good industrial relations record in Wales over recent years. When that is added to the fact that there is lower tax in Wales than in other countries, less regulation than in other countries and a good sense of partnership, it is no surprise that one of the headlines in the newspapers today was, "Wales heads UK confidence".

Dr. Marek: Nevertheless, does the Secretary of State realise that the tax take in the Republic of Korea is approximately half what it is here? Does he also realise that the rate of growth in South Korea has never fallen below 5 per cent. during the past 15 years, whereas the rate of growth in this country has never been above 5 per cent? Indeed, on average, it has stayed at around 1.5 per cent. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree, therefore, that whether there are strikes in the Republic of Korea makes no difference in any comparison with the Welsh economy? Is not the real comment on the Welsh economy the Conservative Government's abysmal handling of it?

Mr. Hague: It really is time that the hon. Gentleman started to reflect on and talk about the good news in our country. The recent Ford announcement in Bridgend was a huge vote of confidence in Wales, its workers and its economic circumstances. Unemployment in Wales has fallen by 27,000 since 1992; in the valleys, it has come down by 23 per cent. since the programme for the valleys began in April 1993. The hon. Gentleman should be joining me in telling the rest of the world how well we are doing and how good our prospects are.

Mr. Duncan: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that, following his visit to Korea and, indeed, because of the climate for business in Wales, major companies in Korea want to use Wales as a springboard for investment in this country and to export to other countries in the European Union, and that his visit may well prove to be a great success?

Mr. Hague: I certainly think that there is considerable potential for investment in Wales by Korean companies. Some of them have already invested in other parts of the United Kingdom and I hope that, before too long, we shall see concrete evidence of their investing in Wales. For such companies, Wales is a very attractive place from which to do business with the rest of Europe because we have lower tax, less regulation and good industrial relations—all of which have been brought about by the Government.

Mr. Morgan: While I yield to no one in my admiration for the phenomenal economic growth achieved in the tiger economies of south-east Asia, will the Secretary of State take this opportunity to apologise to the House and to Wales for the disgraceful anti-Welsh behaviour of his predecessor in preventing Wales from even mounting a bid for the 3,000-job Taiwanese picture-tube project, while Scotland, Ireland and the northern region had no such inhibitions?

Mr. Hague: In recent years, Wales has continued to gain between 10 per cent. and 20 per cent. of all inward investment into the United Kingdom—more than its proportionate share on the basis of population. That does not mean that we can be complacent; we have to redouble our efforts each year. All my predecessors were successful in helping to attract more inward investment into Wales and I hope to emulate that record.

Standard Spending Assessment

2. **Mr. Dafis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning the standard spending assessment for the unitary authorities in 1995-96. [37828]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Gwilym Jones): Various.

Mr. Dafis: I thought that the Minister would say more, but I am glad to know that he has now recognised the need for a damping mechanism to mitigate the reduction that seems to be in the offing in relation to local government services in Wales. I am also glad that the Government are prepared to reconsider the formula for the standard spending assessment in future.

May I suggest to the Minister that, as a result of, first, increased demand for services, generated in part by Government legislation, and, secondly, cuts made over several years in areas such as schools and social services, the need now is for an enhanced level of funding rather than for a reduction? If the Government go for a reduction in funding, causing a reduction in the quality of services, to fund pre-election tax cuts, the political price that the Conservatives will pay in Wales will be very heavy.

Mr. Jones: I note what the hon. Gentleman says. As he knows, our decisions about the spending arrangements for local government—and about all the other spending arrangements—will be announced in due course. I can confirm—I think that I detect a certain note of welcome for it—our decision to bring about a damping scheme to reflect the new situation in the standard spending assessments. There has been considerable constructive work by Welsh Office officials and local government officers, which has resulted in the revised indicative SSA figures, which we are publishing today. Copies have been placed in the Library and will be sent to the chief executives of local authorities. The figures are to be discussed with them on 6 November. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I will discuss the subject with the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government Finance on 16 November.

Mr. Nigel Evans: Does my hon. Friend agree that the people of Wales tend to get fed up with the whingeing of Opposition politicians, who are for ever crying that local authorities in Wales do not get enough money? Is he aware, however, that only the other day Mid Glamorgan councillors tried to line their own pockets by voting themselves a 400 per cent. increase in allowances—no doubt at the same time as cutting essential services to the people who live in the area? Will my hon. Friend give an assurance today that capping will remain in place in Wales to protect the people who will end up having to pay the high bills that will be foisted on them by Labour councillors?

Mr. Jones: I appreciate much of what my hon. Friend says; he has expertise in local government. He is absolutely right to point out the significance of councillors choosing to increase their pay by 600 per cent. They do so out of existing moneys, which means that they take the money away from other vital functions of local government.

Mr. Ray Powell: Will the Minister reflect on an article today in *The Daily Telegraph* which states that the Government are considering slashing the special aid package to Scotland and to Wales? Last year, we had £5 billion for Scotland and Wales through the special aid package. Will the Minister consider what effect slashing the aid package would have on local government? Will he ask the Secretary of State whether he will take the same stand as the Secretary of State for Scotland? If the Government intend to slash this amount, they will be on their death bed.

Mr. Jones: I am fascinated that, after being sacked by his leader only a fortnight ago, the hon. Gentleman has taken to reading *The Daily Telegraph.* Is this the rightward lurch that we know is going on in the Labour party today? I can simply tell the hon. Gentleman that my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer is on record as saying that the formula arrangements for Wales have not changed and that that remains the position.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Although there has been a small increase in the budget for community care this year, what is the Welsh Office doing to address the fact that there is a deficit of about £71 million between assessed need and the grant for community care this year and the fact that there is a high risk that, when the unitary authorities take over next year, they will be even more stretched than local government is now?

Mr. Jones: The hon. Gentleman acknowledges that the increases that we laid down for three successive years have been left in place, despite the fact that inflation was lower than forecast for that period. We will consider all these matters when we make our announcements on local government spending towards the end of next month.

Unemployment

3. **Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are unemployed in (a) Clwyd and (b) Wales; and what were the figures for May 1979. [37830]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Rod Richards): In September 1995, the seasonally adjusted number of persons on the claimant count in Wales was 68,700. The unadjusted figure for Clwyd in September 1995 was 13,065. There is no comparable figure for Clwyd for May 1979.

Mr. Jones: Will the Minister and the Department take a keen interest in the long-term future of jobs at Merseyside and North-Western electricity board, as 300 compulsory redundancies were predicted during the takeover? Is he aware that some 2,000 aerospace jobs have been lost in my constituency in the past two years? We cannot afford to lose any more skilled jobs. Will he undertake to visit the headquarters of MANWEB to discuss its future?

Mr. Richards: I am aware of press speculation of redundancies at MANWEB and, while it is a matter for the company, no one wants uncertainty for its employees or forced redundancies. There is also an awful lot of good news in and around the hon. Gentleman's constituency—particularly with regard to Broughton, which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State visited on 26 September this year. The Raytheon Services Centre is staying open, while Sharp UK has announced an investment that will create 50 jobs. The Almedica Services Corporation has announced an investment that will lead to a further 200 jobs being created, while Warwick International is creating 60 more jobs. Kemitron in Hawarden is creating 100 jobs, while Mita UK in Abergele—in my constituency, as it happens—is proposing an investment that will create 70 jobs.

Mr. Sweeney: Will my hon. Friend join me in welcoming a piece of investment that is very important to my constituency? The new Barry hospital, which cost £8 million, was opened last Thursday by her royal highness Princess Margaret, and I look forward to that hospital providing a wonderful service to my constituents in the years to come.

Mr. Richards: I am delighted that there has been further investment in the NHS in my hon. Friend's constituency. Such investment has formed a part of the policy of the Government since 1979, and my hon. Friend may be assured that the health service is safe in our hands.

Mr. Rogers: Further to the Secretary of State's response to Question 1 regarding the number of working days lost—

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must rephrase his question so that it relates to unemployment. We cannot operate in retrospect—we are now dealing with Question 3.

Mr. Rogers: Further to any replies which have been given here today in relation to unemployment in Wales, is the Minister aware of the number of working days lost through unemployment? What is his message to the young people of the valleys whom we represent? In some communities, unemployment among young people is more than 80 per cent., while among adults the figure is well over 30 per cent. The Government's new revolution in south Wales seems to have passed the valleys by. Does the Minister have any comment on the matter?

Mr. Richards: I am astonished that the hon. Gentleman should raise the issues of unemployment and days lost through strikes. Had there been a count of the number of days lost through strikes in July this year when the Labour party was on strike—one out, all out as the Labour party slogan seems to be—there would have been an additional 28. I notice that all Labour Members took their pay for that day, even though they were not here at their place of work.

Mr. John Marshall: Will my hon. Friend estimate what would happen to the level of unemployment in Wales and in Clwyd if we were to introduce a national minimum wage, which in other countries has destroyed jobs, and to sign up to the social chapter, which would discourage inward investment into Wales?

Mr. Richards: My hon. Friend makes two extremely valid points. There is no question but that, if a minimum wage were introduced, unemployment in Wales, in Clwyd and in the United Kingdom as a whole would soar and that the introduction of the social chapter would have the same effect. Fortunately, between now and the general election, the Government will ensure that the electorate are informed of the dire consequences of introducing either of those two disastrous policies.

Mr. Ron Davies: The Under-Secretary of State's statement in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) will be welcomed by Opposition Members. I trust that he will join me in congratulating the Labour-controlled Clwyd county council on its sterling work to attract investment and jobs to that area. Does he agree that, if we are to overcome the appalling legacy of the past 16 years—the 150,000 jobs that have been lost in Wales and the fact that, every month, we go down the regional pay league—we must have a much more positive partnership between the public and private sectors? If so, will he acknowledge the vital work being done by the Welsh Development Agency? Perhaps he could confirm that, when the present round of forced asset-stripping of the WDA comes to an end, it will be Welsh Office policy to restore the previous level of grant to the WDA.

Mr. Richards: I certainly would have joined in with what the hon. Gentleman had to say about the WDA's good work had he bothered to turn up in July. I am not sure which is worse—the new Ron, the old Ron, or no Ron. The hon. Gentleman is wrong to say that the Government's economic policy since 1979 has been a disaster. It has been an outstanding success in Wales—we transformed the clapped-out economy that we inherited from the Labour party into a high-tech, modern economy with new, meaningful, high-tech jobs. That is the consequence of 16 years of Conservative Government, to which the WDA has contributed, as the hon. Gentleman knows, although the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) has refused to acknowledge it. As for the future funding of the WDA, the hon. Gentleman will find out in due course.

Madam Speaker: Order. We are not in debate. This is Question Time.

Roads

4. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many road projects are currently receiving substantial European aid in (a) Clwyd and (b) Wales. [37831]

Mr. Hague: One current project in south Wales is receiving in excess of £1 million grant aid.

Mr. Jones: Will the Secretary of State ensure that some grant aid, be it from Europe or anywhere else, will go towards forming a link between the A55 and Denbigh to replace the jobs lost as a result of the loss of the North Wales hospital there?

Mr. Hague: The good news for the hon. Gentleman is that £1.5 million is being secured from the 1995 trans-European network fund for projects on the United Kingdom sections of the Ireland-UK-Benelux road link, which includes the A55 trunk road across north Wales. I shall always consider suggestions from around Wales for spending on other projects, but in each case we have to decide our priorities and balance the economic case for roads spending against the environmental consequences.

Sir Wyn Roberts: May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on unblocking the European funds that were due to Wales from Brussels, after his recent meeting with Commissioner Wulf-Mathies? Does not that suggest that the howls of anguish from Opposition Members both here and in the European Parliament about additionality were transparently much ado about nothing?

Mr. Hague: I thank my right hon. Friend for his comments. There has never been any question about addionality because the money that the European Community paid is additional to United Kingdom public expenditure. I am glad that we have now clarified those difficulties. I hope that next time Labour Members of the European Parliament want to question addionality, they will discuss it with me instead of making complaints in Europe, which leads to the funds being held up wholly unnecessarily.

Mr. Ron Davies: The Secretary of State and I seem to have missed each other on the first occasion on which he appeared at Welsh Questions, so may I put on record my congratulations on his good fortune at being appointed to the Cabinet? As he knows from his recent trip to Brussels, his predecessor tried to divert to the Welsh Development Agency funds that had been earmarked for other purposes. I am glad that the Secretary of State has put that matter right. Will he answer the question that the Under-Secretary of State for Wales, the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West (Mr. Richards), signally failed to answer? When the present programme of forced asset stripping of the Welsh Development Agency comes to an end in 1997, will the WDA's grant be restored in real terms to its previous level?

Mr. Hague: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his welcome and I welcome him to Welsh Questions. We did miss him a little last time—it was like a performance of "Hamlet" without one of the grave diggers—and it is a great pleasure to see him here. I congratulate him on his re-election to the shadow Cabinet and look forward to many more exchanges.

My predecessor did not divert funds as the hon. Gentleman described. All that we did in our recent agreement with the Commission was to change the transparency of the presentation. It is agreed that the money has always been additional. On the future funding of the Welsh Development Agency, he will know that, in the Welsh Office baseline, the grant in aid to the agency rises sharply once property sales are completed. I expect that to be the case, although it is, of course, subject to public expenditure decisions between now and then.

Nursery Education

5. **Mr. Rowlands:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on further developments of nursery education in Wales. [37832]

Mr. Richards: Our proposed voucher scheme aims to expand the level of provision in the maintained, voluntary and private sectors so that every four-year-old in Wales whose parents so choose will have access to pre-school education.

Mr. Rowlands: Why do Welsh Office Ministers have to wait upon English pilot projects and schemes for voucher systems? After all, education is a totally devolved responsibility. Why do they not exercise some imagination and use some of the vacant classrooms that already exist in many of our primary schools to deliver nursery education for our three and four-year-olds now?

Mr. Richards: We already have some 90 per cent. coverage in Wales and the Office of Standards in Education has been surveying provision. English local education authorities have proposed running pilot schemes, which we did not feel were necessary in Wales as we already had 90 per cent. coverage. Nevertheless, we shall look carefully at the outcome of the pilot schemes in England.

Mr. Merchant: Does my hon. Friend agree that the real benefit of the excellent initiative on nursery education is that all four-year-olds in Wales will benefit in real terms from the new nursery education policy and that that contrasts favourably with what happened when Labour was in power, when there was no effort to make provision?

Mr. Richards: My hon. Friend makes a valid point. While we are in power, parents will have a choice as to the provision of nursery education, which they would not have were Labour ever to come to power.

Mr. Hanson: Will the Minister ensure that, in any future scheme, strong discussions with local authorities will take place because Labour authorities are providing nursery education and many Opposition Members fear that any future scheme will top-slice that money and ensure that more children receive private nursery education, but at more cost to their parents and with fewer opportunities for all the children of Wales?

Mr. Richards: There will be new money plus, of course, an amount of money from current local authority expenditure. As always, the Government consult.

Mr. Win Griffiths: Can the Minister explain why we need a voucher scheme in Wales when virtually all the four-year-olds who the scheme will cover already have full or part-time education; when the voucher, which is valued at £1,100, offers less than two thirds of the current cost of providing a nursery place in Wales; and when the whole scheme is likely unnecessarily to destabilise existing provision? Given that the Secretary of State for Education and Employment in England fought against the scheme right to the last minute, is this not another case of raving right wingers in the Tory party getting hold of a policy for which there is no need in Wales?

Mr. Richards: We are having a voucher scheme because, unlike the Labour party, the Government believe in offering choice to parents in Wales. The hon. Gentleman spoke of the voucher being worth £1,100. Yes, the voucher will be worth £1,100, but that does not mean that local authorities cannot spend more than £1,100 and, obviously, parents in the private sector will spend more than £1,100.

Digital Terrestrial Television

6. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning the implications of digital terrestrial television on the future of S4C and the Welsh language. [37833]

Mr. Richards: Several.

Mr. Wigley: May I ask the Minister to repress his natural modesty and congratulate S4C, on whose programmes he has been an all too familiar face, on its tremendous success? Does he agree that a success of the establishment of the channel was that it enabled Welsh language programmes to be viewed at peak viewing times without denying people in the non-Welsh speaking parts of Wales access to BBC 1 and HTV, on which Welsh language programmes had previously been seen? Will he therefore ensure in any forthcoming discussions on the future of those television services that the Welsh language programmes will be at peak time and that paragraph 2.44 of the White Paper, which suggests that the programmes could be rescheduled, will not lead to that conclusion?

Mr. Richards: I am delighted to hear the hon. Gentleman say what a great success S4C has been because it was the Conservative Government who set it up.

On the hon. Gentleman's more serious point, I am aware that many people are concerned about peak viewing hours for the Welsh language. Those fears are entirely unfounded. The Government are determined to ensure that both S4C Welsh language programmes and Channel 4 programmes will be made available during peak times in as many parts of Wales as is technically feasible.

Mr. Stephen: Is my hon. Friend aware that Cardiff is a centre of excellence in the film animation industry and that some of its cartoon characters are world famous? Does he join me in regretting that so many of them end up as Labour Members of Parliament?

Mr. Richards: One of those cartoon characters—the hon. Member for Cardiff, West—is sitting on the Labour Front Bench. We have become accustomed to his antics. My hon. Friend makes a valid point.

Mr. Hain: Will the Minister clarify his statement that both Channel 4 and S4C will be available? The current proposals, as I understand them, are for a shared channel, yet digitisation provides the opportunity for up to 18 channels. There seems to be no technical reason why the whole of Wales could not have both S4C and Channel 4 through digitisation. Will the Minister make sure that that happens?

Mr. Richards: I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman asks a question. I thought that his silence had been bought.

I can assure the hon. Gentleman that S4C Welsh language programmes will be made available at peak viewing times in Wales and that, where it is technically feasible so to do, Channel 4 will also be available.

Council Tax

7. **Mrs. Jane Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received with regard to council tax being levied on prescribed dwellings by local authorities. [37834]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: Several, including one from the hon. Lady herself.

Mrs. Kennedy: Does the Minister recall receiving representations from my constituent, Mr. Ronald Bender, after Anglesey council levied council tax at the full rate on his chalet, which he is allowed to use, by agreement, for only six weeks a year? Will he examine the extent to which Anglesey council is not giving discounts, even where appropriate, so that I can reassure my constituent that the regulations are being applied fairly?

Mr. Jones: I assure the hon. Lady that I recall the correspondence that we exchanged about her constituent, Mr. Bender. I understand that Ynys Môn borough council has received counsel's opinion and, as a result, has refunded to the hon. Lady's constituent sums of money that go back to 1993. I trust that that is a satisfactory outcome. This is a responsibility for Ynys Môn and any other local authority in Wales, and I am sure that any further case will be considered carefully in the light of the outcome of Mr. Bender's case.

Catalonia

8. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Catalonia. [37836]

Mr. Hague: Wales has been developing economic and cultural relations with Catalonia since 1991. My visit coincided with the Wales in Catalonia festival when, in addition to leading a trade delegation, I was pleased to meet regional President Pujol, his Minister for Industry and Energy, and the Mayor of Barcelona, Mr. Maragall.

Mr. Jones: When the Secretary of State met President Pujol, did it cross his mind that President Pujol is a politician who is directly elected by the people of Catalonia, and that that is in stark contrast to the position of the Secretary of State for Wales and his party, who have no democratic mandate from the people of Wales? Does he realise that that denial of democracy and the running of Wales by quango-isation mean that support for a Parliament of Wales is now at an unprecedented level?

Mr. Hague: I suppose that all sorts of things crossed my mind, but it certainly crossed my mind that Wales has huge advantages. We have an expanding economy, a willing work force, fantastic scenery and a wonderful culture. Wales can hold its head up high in the world and we should not ruin it with an unnecessary assembly, which would be a room full of hot air.

Mr. Jenkin: Did my right hon. Friend have a moment to compare Catalan unemployment levels with those in Wales? Would he draw any conclusions from that?

Mr. Hague: I do not have the Catalan figures on the tip of my tongue, but my hon. Friend will find that Spanish unemployment in general is two to three times that in the United Kingdom. Unemployment in Wales has been brought down to the UK average over the past 18 months for the first time in 70 years, which is a considerable achievement. That compares well with almost everywhere else in Europe because of the lower tax levels, less regulation and good industrial relations that the Government have brought about.

Mr. Donald Anderson: Did the Secretary of State note the degree of regional pride in Catalonia arising from its autonomy in respect of both Spain and the external world? Did he notice that the cities in Catalonia have a degree of financial independence and responsibility that makes our cities in Wales extremely jealous?

Mr. Hague: I certainly noticed the regional pride, but the hon. Gentleman will agree that a great deal of pride exists in Wales. People are not prevented from having that pride just because we are not changing the constitutional arrangement in the United Kingdom. I hope that the new unitary authorities will prove a successful development in local government and that, over time, more functions can be transferred to local government. My predecessor did that with several items of decision making and I hope to do the same.

Chemical-Chase Manhattan Bank

9. **Mr. Jon Owen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what talks he has had with the newly merged Chemical-Chase Manhattan bank about its continued presence in Wales. [37837]

Mr. Hague: I have made it clear that I am available to talk to representatives of the company, should the circumstances warrant it.

Mr. Jones: That is a rather disappointing reply, as the Chemical-Chase Manhattan bank is possibly the cornerstone of the financial services initiative in south-east Wales. Were it lost to Wales, the implication would be far worse than a loss of jobs. It has been one of the companies that has helped attract many other companies into Wales and I am disappointed to hear that the Welsh Office has not yet thought fit to discuss whether the bank should stay in Wales or whether the jobs should go to south-east England.

Mr. Hague: I fully share the hon. Gentleman's feelings—he need have no question about that. Wales needs and deserves a strong financial services sector. That bank knows that it is extremely welcome in Wales and grant has been paid to it in the past. I have intimated to it that the Welsh Office and I are fully prepared to have discussions with it. I stand ready to discuss things at any time.

Local Government Finance

10. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment he has made of the level of support for standard spending from central Government to local authorities in Wales. [37838]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The level of support for 1995-96 is 88.6 per cent. and provision for the next financial year will be considered shortly.

Mr. Key: That sounds very generous to me. In fact, rumours have already reached my constituents in Salisbury that money has been spent by councillors in Wales to increase their allowances dramatically. That has been confirmed this afternoon. Does my hon. Friend know that those who are most upset by that development are the Liberal Democrats, who control my council, who wanted that money for their own increases?

Mr. Jones: I see—such is the way that the party of the left fights over the spoils as it lurches ever rightwards. Perhaps those councillors need the shadow Secretary of State for Wales, who is in the shadow Cabinet because he acts as a messenger boy for the Leader of the Labour party, and is trying to persuade Labour local councillors to keep their increases down to 400 per cent.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

European Courts

25. **Sir Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Attorney-General what the estimated legal costs involved in each of the cases coming before the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights were over the past two years; and what estimate he has made of the costs to (a) public and (b) private funds resulting from each court decision. [37855]

The Attorney-General (Sir Nicholas Lyell): In the two years ending 16 October 1995, the United Kingdom has participated in 95 cases decided in the European Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance and 11 in the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg. The costs of counsel to date are respectively £412,447 and £299,654, in each case inclusive of VAT. The wider costs, if any, arising from a particular decision are a matter for the relevant departmental Minister.

Sir Teddy Taylor: In view of the horrendous costs to the United Kingdom—not just legal costs but, more important, the cost of implementing the courts' decisions, for example on pregnant Army officers and free prescriptions for the over-60s—is it not time that the Government published some kind of paper explaining the cost to the taxpayer of some of those decisions, which some people in Parliament regard as lunatic? Can my right hon. and learned Friend at least give me an assurance that at next year's intergovernmental conference the Government will strongly endeavour to curb the substantial powers of those courts to interfere in almost every aspect of our way of life in Britain?

The Attorney-General: I well recognise the strong feelings about certain of those judgments of not only my hon. Friend, who has held particular feelings for decades, but of a great many of my hon. Friends. My hon. Friend will understand that the question of what representations to make to the IGC is a collective decision for Ministers, but some of the points that he has raised are being focused upon as we marshall our case for the IGC.

Mr. Denzil Davies: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that one of the problems is that should the House of Lords, as the final Court of Appeal, make a decision that might involve more public expenditure, the House, as a democratic body, can overrule that decision, whereas should the European Court of Justice make a decision involving increased public expenditure, the House, as a democratic assembly, cannot overrule it? Will he make proposals at the IGC next year that national democratic assemblies should have the ability to overrule the European Court of Justice when its decisions involve public expenditure?

The Attorney-General: The right hon. Gentleman will have it in mind that all member states are involved in this process. He should cast his mind back to the Barber judgment, which looked likely to cost £50 billion of public and private moneys in this country and many billions in other member states. He will recall that, at the previous IGC at Maastricht, the member states, exercising their democratic will, put forward a protocol to remedy the decision of the court—in fact the court subsequently remedied the problem itself. The way to overcome such problems is for member states to act collectively through the IGC. There will be an opportunity to do that.

Mr. Beith: Will the Attorney-General take pains to explain to his Euro-sceptic colleagues, including Ministers, that the European Court of Human Rights has absolutely nothing to do with the European Union or the IGC? It resulted from treaty obligations that we entered into long before we joined the European Union.

The Attorney-General: The right hon. Gentleman is correct. We originally ratified the European convention on human rights as long ago as 1951, and we have applied it as a treaty obligation ever since then. Many people muddle Strasbourg and Luxembourg; I am glad to note that the right hon. Gentleman does not.

Sir Peter Emery: Would the Attorney-General like to point out to those people who speak about high costs the fact that, in the 106 cases that he mentioned, the legal fees were no more than about £7,000 per case, which is not the exorbitant price that many people would suppose?

The Attorney-General: My right hon. Friend is perfectly correct. The legal fees are not excessive for slightly more than 100 cases. The other fact that my right hon. Friend will have in mind is that we win a substantial proportion of the cases either in which we intervene, or to which we are parties. In recent years, there have been some significant moves by the court in directions that we would favour, as well as some that receive criticism.

Mr. John Morris: With hon. Members on both sides of the House, we condemn terrorism, but will the Attorney-General note our surprise at the comments of the Deputy Prime Minister on the recent judgment of the European Court in the Gibraltar case, including his threats to withdraw or review our adherence to the convention? Specifically, does the Attorney-General agree with the Deputy Prime Minister, who has declared that the Government will ignore the ruling? Is that not sheer hypocrisy from a party that poses as a party of law and order? Would it not be better, give quicker justice and be less expensive if the convention were incorporated into our law?

The Attorney-General: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has muddled a good many questions.

The McCann judgment—the Gibraltar case—has no practical effect in our law save in relation to costs. The question of costs will be brought before Ministers in the usual way.

However, that judgment caused a great deal of proper public unease. I would have expected the right hon. and learned Gentleman to have commended the views of the minority in the court. He will remember that the decision was made by only 10 to nine, and that the president of the court took a fundamentally different view from the majority and set it out in concise reasoning with which, in my opinion, every sensible person should agree.

Mr. Stephen: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that recent decisions under the European convention on human rights are regarded by many of our constituents as an unwarranted interference in the sovereign right of this country to manage its own affairs? Is he further aware that many of our constituents take the view, not that we should ignore the decisions reached by the court or by the Commission of Human Rights, but that the United Kingdom should serve notice to withdraw from the convention?

The Attorney-General: My hon. Friend has his own views, and any question on that is, of course, a collective one for Government, not a matter for me. However, it should not be supposed that we always lose before the European Court of Human Rights or that our record cannot stand honourably with that of other countries. We have given the right of individual petition for far longer than many other countries. Considering our size and the openness of our justice, our record is far more creditable than people realise.

Departmental Work

26. **Mr. Mackinlay:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the work of his Department since 19 July. [37856]

The Attorney-General: Since 19 July, my Department has been engaged in carrying out its normal range of duties.

Mr. Mackinlay: How does the Attorney-General account for the disparity of his conduct in relation to possible contempt of court cases? How is it that, with great speed, he has taken contempt of court action against *Today* regarding tittle-tattle that it published about the Prince of Wales's former housekeeper, but has taken no action against those newspapers that prejudiced an important criminal trial, with the result that the proceedings were aborted, at great cost?

The Attorney-General: I can only attribute the hon. Gentleman's question to his ignorance. What even that Essex man does not seem to realise is that three contempt cases were already in the pipeline before the recent concern was brought to light by the judge at Harrow. I am looking at that carefully.

Mr. Mackinlay: Looking at it carefully?

The Attorney-General: Carefully and fairly, so that I can decide whether to bring proceedings.

As I have said, three cases are to come before the divisional court—two respecting the BBC and one respecting the *News of the World*. I do not think that the hon. Gentleman was aware of that.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Aid Trends

31. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been received on trends in overseas aid during the past three months. [37863]

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Jeremy Hanley): We have received a large number of representations about the level of overseas aid, a great many of them paying tribute to the quality of our programmes.

Mr. Pike: The Government may have given the impression that the budget faced a 12 per cent. cut so that they could introduce a smaller cut. Will the Minister recognise, however, that the public feel that overseas aid should not be reduced by a penny in real terms, but instead should be increased?

Mr. Hanley: We cannot prejudge the outcome of the public expenditure survey, but, whatever happens after the Budget, we shall continue to have a highly effective aid programme befitting the United Kingdom's status as a country with ties throughout the globe.

Ours is the fifth largest economy in the world, and we have the fifth largest aid programme. I believe that our £2.2 billion programme—closely targeted, and concentrating on the poorest in Africa and Asia, with the magnificent support of the British non-governmental organisations—gives value for money far in excess of what some other nations may offer.

Mr. Lester: Does my right hon. Friend accept that many hon. Members on both sides of the House deeply appreciate the quality of our aid programme, and its maintenance at a very satisfactory level? We are all concerned about the possibility that anyone should want to reduce it. This year's scare has been much greater than usual, and I hope that that will be taken into account.

Mr. Hanley: As my hon. Friend knows very well, not just the volume but the quality of British aid is at issue. That quality is extremely high. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has recognised the programme's effectiveness—with its poverty focus and growing emphasis on encouraging the private sector—but, as I have said, we cannot prejudge the outcome of the PES. Let us wait and see.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Will the Minister confirm that, whatever the outcome of the PES, a cut in the total budget would probably mean a cut three times as great in the bilateral budget for this country's specific commitments? If there is any cut at all, the projects that will be most at risk are those to which the country is most committed.

Mr. Hanley: I do not accept that we are "most committed" to any specific part of the aid programme; it is all extremely important to us. I accept, however, that if there is a cut in the aid budget it will have a gearing effect on our bilateral aid, because of the proportion of bilateral to multilateral aid and the changeover that is likely to occur over the next three years. I can only repeat what I said before: our £2.2 billion programme is extremely effective, and I know that many people rely on us.

Sir John Stanley: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the change to which he has just referred—the decline of the share of our bilateral aid programme, and the increasing share going to the European Union following decisions at the Edinburgh summit—is a matter of considerable concern? At the forthcoming intergovernmental conference, will my right hon. Friend renegotiate those arrangements, and try to claw back to our national control a greater element of our available aid expenditure?

Mr. Hanley: Multilateral aid is currently about 50 per cent. of the total aid budget, and that reflects Britain's worldwide responsibilities. We plan to retain a substantial and effective bilateral programme, but our multilateral commitments are great because of our worldwide links and interests. We are working hard to ensure that multilateral aid, particularly that distributed through the European Community, meets the highest quality standards.

Miss Lestor: Is the Minister aware of the dismay that has been felt throughout southern Africa at the Government's refusal at last month's round table conference in Brussels to pledge any new money to help to consolidate the peace process in Angola, in response to calls for investment in vital rehabilitation programmes? That was prejudging the cuts. Is the Minister aware that that refusal is viewed as a lack of political commitment to the peace process in Angola, the success of which is essential not only for war-torn Angola but for the stability of southern Africa as a whole? Will he reconsider the matter without waiting for the Budget announcement?

Mr. Hanley: As the hon. Lady knows, 40 per cent. of our bilateral aid in 1993-94—that is more than £363 million—went to countries in sub-Saharan Africa. We also make a substantial contribution through multilateral aid. The European Community's aid programme to sub-Saharan Africa for 1995 is equivalent to £7.6 billion, and the United Kingdom's share is £1.25 billion. As to Angola specifically, I shall pass the hon. Lady's comments on to my right hon. and noble Friend the Minister responsible.

Ghana

32. **Mr. Mark Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what levels of assistance are being provided to Ghana. [37865]

Mr. Hanley: In addition to Ghana's share of our multilateral aid contributions—which are approximately £16.5 million—we have a substantial bilateral aid programme in Ghana; that will mean disbursements of some £17 million this financial year.

Mr. Robinson: Sponsored by the British Council and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) and I took part in a good governance seminar at the beginning of the summer recess. Will my right hon. Friend tell the House what the Government are doing to support countries such as Ghana, which are doing so much to restore democracy and good governance to their political systems?

Mr. Hanley: I thank my hon. Friend for his question. We contributed £1 million to the cost of the 1991 elections in Ghana and we have given £400,000 for equipment and voter registration forms in next year's elections. Other measures to help to establish the new democracy have included the funding of links between our respective Parliaments.

Mr. MacShane: Is the Minister aware that one of the multilateral organisations that is giving tremendous help to Ghana is the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation? Therefore, the Prime Minister's speech attacking UN agencies delivered at the UN general conference last month—which his media spinners said was directed at the FAO—was received with great distress. The FAO works with the grain of the market and it is operating very effectively around the world to support market-driven agricultural reform. Will the Minister assure the House that Britain continues to support the FAO?

Mr. Hanley: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said that all money spent by the United Nations must be spent efficiently and effectively. I agree with that entirely.

Sir Wyn Roberts: May I stress to my right hon. Friend the importance of the democracy in Ghana, which is something of a flagship in west Africa? Furthermore, I urge him to recognise the important fact that the majority of Ghanaians are English speakers, and we therefore owe them particular support.

Mr. Hanley: I agree with my right hon. Friend: Ghana is one of our best African friends, and therefore it is quite natural that it should be one of Africa's main recipients of United Kingdom aid. It has received more than £160 million in the past five years. In answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Somerton and Frome (Mr. Robinson), I referred to the aid that we are giving, and have given, to Ghana. I think that that answer confirms my right hon. Friend's comments also.

Commodity Prices

33. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what efforts are being made to increase the real prices of commodities from the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. [37867]

Mr. Hanley: Experience has shown that attempts to ignore market forces and increase commodity prices artificially are doomed to failure. Instead, Britain has been helping African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to increase their overall export earnings by advocating trade liberalisation and providing aid to encourage export diversification.

Mr. Corbyn: Does the Minister accept that his reply will be disappointing to those who are suffering the effects of structural adjustment programmes? They have been forced to liberalise their economies to export more goods for less profit and often lower local domestic production and consumption. Does he recognise that the way out of poverty for many people in the world is for farmers to be paid decently and properly for their products without the profits being creamed off by banks and manufacturing organisations in the west?

Mr. Hanley: As I said, experience has shown that attempts to ignore market forces usually fail. International commodity agreements have failed to achieve real price rises over a sustained period. Some attempts have been costly failures. The International Tin Council left debts of £183 million and when the international coffee agreement collapsed, the consequent sharp decline in prices had an adverse effect on producing countries. Therefore, intervention in commodity prices has not proved effective in reducing poverty.

Points of Order

3.30 pm

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Has there been any mention of a debate in the overspill period or in the next Session of Parliament on the report of the Scott inquiry, especially as today another four people from the firm Ordtech are appealing against a judgment against them, which arose only because the Government did the same as they did during the Matrix Churchill affair—threatened public immunity certificates? The net result is that four people are being hounded in the courts while the Ministers who are on the rack are answering questions very long-windedly and providing more questions for Scott to answer with a view to dragging out the matter beyond the general election.

Madam Speaker: That is not a point of order for the Chair. It is a matter of Government business. The hon. Gentleman might put a question to the Leader of the House to find out about business when we come back after prorogation.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. You may be aware that I have a number of customs officers in my constituency. Many of them are deeply concerned about various statements that were made over the weekend. They wonder whether their jobs are secure as it has been suggested that cannabis should be legalised. Can we have a short statement on the matter as soon as possible?

Madam Speaker: The hon. Gentleman and the House know that statements from Ministers are not my business, but I have had no information that a Minister is seeking to make a statement on the matter.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. A supplementary question by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mrs. Kennedy) wholly and directly related to a matter in my constituency. Unfortunately, the hon. Lady did not have the courtesy to inform me that she was about to refer to it. Will you please remind hon. Members that it is a courtesy in the House that hon. Members should be informed?

Madam Speaker: I noticed that the substantive question did not mention the hon. Gentleman's constituency. Constituencies are often mentioned in supplementary questions. It is extremely difficult always to give Members notice, particularly on the spur of the moment in a supplementary question and often in an exchange across the House during Question Time. As the hon. Gentleman knows, I like Members to be courteous and I hope that they will carry out the proper procedures of the House and inform Members when they are able to do so.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I understand that next Monday we shall debate whether to put into effect the recommendation of the Nolan committee concerning the disclosure of outside financial interests that arise from parliamentary activities. I raise the point of order with you because, in local government, as you probably know, councillors have to declare their interests before they vote. That is very clear and they can be taken to court if they do not do so. When hon. Members vote next Monday, how will it be possible for them to make it perfectly clear that they have a direct interest? It is extremely important because the public will want to know how we go about our business. The Nolan committee has made a firm recommendation. Will you rule it necessary for Members to declare their interests if they are likely to be affected by the ruling, if it is implemented?

Madam Speaker: I hope that hon. Members will keep it in mind at all times and particularly, as the hon. Gentleman says, next Monday, that if they are speaking in the debate, they should make their interests quite clear at its start. That is what the hon. Gentleman seeks.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Madam Speaker: With permission, I shall put together the motions relating to statutory instruments.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(3) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.),

PROBATION

That the Probation (Amendment) Rules 1995 (S.I., 1995, No. 2622) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

That the National Health Service (Optical Charges and Payments) Amendment (No. 3) Regulations 1995 (S.I., 1995, No. 2307) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (SCOTLAND)

That the National Health Service (Optical Charges and Payments) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 3) Regulations 1995 (S.I., 1995, No. 2369) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Knapman.]*

Question agreed to.

Northern Ireland (Remission of Sentences) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

3.34 pm

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Sir Patrick Mayhew): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I shall describe the purpose of the Bill, the reason for its introduction now, the way in which its provisions would work, and the number of prisoners who would be affected.

The Bill has a simple purpose. It is to restore the practice which existed in Northern Ireland until 1989 and which had obtained since 1976, that all prisoners serving fixed terms of imprisonment, regardless of the nature of their offence, became eligible for release at the halfway point of their sentence.

The Bill will secure that in future, in Northern Ireland as in all other jurisdictions within the United Kingdom, all prisoners will be required to serve a minimum period of 50 per cent. of their sentence. But there is an important further purpose. The Bill provides that those in Northern Ireland released in accordance with the Bill's provisions will, like their counterparts in the other United Kingdom jurisdictions, now be liable for recall to prison. They will be liable for recall if at any point up to the two thirds point in their sentence their continued liberty would present a risk to the safety of others or if they are likely to commit further offences. That is a new provision for Northern Ireland, and a desirable one.

The reason for introducing the Bill now is that the reversion to the former practice that I have described has been made possible because the ceasefires have been maintained for more than a year. The risk of further terrorist-related offences being committed by those offenders whom the Bill affects is seen to be greatly reduced.

It is necessary to remind the House of the cumulative security background to the changes that were made in 1989. Parliament then changed the rules for remission of fixed sentences. The House will, of course, remember the IRA's horrifying bombing at Enniskillen in November 1987 of the crowd assembled for the Remembrance day service. Eleven people were murdered then, and many more by far were injured. That outrage was followed by a series of very serious terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland, extending throughout the following year. Attacks upon the security forces, both on and off duty, featured especially in those.

We remember the deaths in June 1988 of six soldiers in bomb attacks after a "fun run" in Lisburn. We remember the deaths of eight soldiers in August, when their coach was bombed at Ballygawley, in County Tyrone. We remember some hideous attacks on civilians as well. Both the republicans and loyalists were responsible for a series of sickening sectarian attacks. The IRA murdered a six-year-old boy and his parents, and murdered three civilians in Londonderry with a bomb meant for the security forces. By the end of 1988, no fewer than 94 people had lost their lives by reason of campaigns of terrorist violence, and there was no sign of any let-up.

That was the background to a security review that was undertaken by the Government. In consequence, the Prevention of Terrorism Bill, introduced in 1989, contained two provisions regarding sentences imposed upon offenders convicted of terrorist-related offences. The first provided that where a fixed sentence of five years or more had been imposed for such an offence, remission for good conduct should be restricted to a maximum of only one third of the sentence, instead of the previous one half.

The second provided that any such offender who, during a period of release through remission of sentence, committed a further terrorist-related offence, should be required to serve any unexpired portion of the remitted sentence before starting to serve the new one.

Parliament approved each proposal, and the resulting provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1989 were continued in force by sections 14 and 15 of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1991. That Act was itself enacted at a time when the terrorist campaigns of violence were still raging. That covers the violent background to the present law, exceptional as it is to Northern Ireland.

The security situation in Northern Ireland today, while it is still horribly blemished, is nevertheless very different. The ceasefires have been maintained for more than a year. Instead of 94 deaths, in the past year two persons have lost their lives, one after being tragically injured in an attack some 22 years before. The risk of terrorist offenders committing further terrorist-related offences is seen to be greatly reduced now.

It is therefore now for decision whether the exceptional restriction introduced in 1989 on the release of such offenders needs to be continued in its effect. I would point out that the Bill leaves untouched the provision that I have just mentioned for serving out the unexpired portion of an earlier sentence.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Will the Secretary of State redouble his efforts to educate the Home Secretary, so that he understands that the release and transfer of prisoners plays a crucial part in building confidence in the peace process and should not be regarded as a reward? In that context, will he put renewed pressure on the Home Secretary to agree to the urgent transfer of Patrick Kelly and Michael O'Brien from Whitemoor, to prisons either in the north or in the Republic of Ireland, in view of the very compelling and compassionate circumstances surrounding their cases?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: I hear what the hon. Gentleman says, but that is quite outside the scope of the Bill. However, I will just say that there is a clear policy regarding the transfer of offenders to the jurisdiction nearest to their homes and families and that the Home Office has pursued that policy consistently. The two prisoners whom he mentioned are prisoners who have never had any domicile in Northern Ireland, but whose domicile is in the Republic and who have not been able to be transferred to the Republic until such time as the Republic's ratification of the European convention on the repatriation of prisoners takes effect. That will be some time next month.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Will the Secretary of State give way?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: I hope that it is something to do with the Bill.

Mr. Corbyn: With regard to what the Secretary of State just said to my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden), when the Dail Eireann passes the appropriate legislation to allow the transfer of prisoners to the Republic of Ireland, will he expedite the transfer of Patrick Kelly on humanitarian grounds, if for no other reason, because of Mr. Kelly's serious illness?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: I hoped that I had indicated that those two gentlemen, and Mr. Kelly in particular, are not in my jurisdiction but in that of the Home Secretary. I do not doubt that he will take account of all appropriate circumstances.

I was describing the security situation today. I said that it is for decision whether the exceptional restrictions introduced in 1989 need to be continued in effect. In August this year, in a speech at Queen's university, I drew attention to the transformation of life in Northern Ireland occasioned by the ceasefires. I said of the ceasefires that they had

> "transformed the situation into which prisoners are released. For the first time in 25 years, our young people are growing up in a situation in which they are not tempted with the call for arms.
>
> They should not face the temptation of involvement in such criminal activity. The need for the increased measures of 1989 has therefore dramatically reduced."

I continued:

> "Provided there is not in the meantime the resumption of terrorist violence which would restore the need for stronger measures, I shall therefore seek early legislation which would enable those already serving sentences for terrorist offences to be released after they have served 50 per cent. of their sentences."

I believe that that undertaking can properly now be implemented.

It is desirable that, in the light of the changed situation brought about by the ceasefires, the Government, in this field as in others, should not seem reluctant to respond in a positive manner consistent with their previous analyses and policy statements. But in so recommending such a response to the House, I want to emphasise the importance of understanding and respecting the feelings of the terrorists' victims, whether they are victims by reason of injury or bereavement, or in some cases both.

I tried to signal such emphasis when at Queen's I said:

> "Time can never remove the hurt; for many it is as fresh and painful after 25 years as after one year . . . We must always feel with those who will always grieve."

Yet I find that, quite often, it is those very people who have most to forgive who show inspiring hope and vision for the future.

I come to how the Bill will work. Clause 1, by its first two subsections, mitigates the effect of section 14 of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1991. That section limits to a maximum of one third the remission that may be granted to an offender convicted of a scheduled offence and sentenced to a fixed term of five years' or more imprisonment. I should explain that a scheduled offence is one contained in schedule 1 of the EPA, which has not been exempted from that Act's provisions by a certificate given by the Attorney-General.

The reason why the clause does not simply enlarge remission from one third to one half is that to do that would technically bring the sentence to an end at the halfway point, and thus prevent the release of the offender on licence—which we wish to provide for in subsection (3). I have already described the circumstances in which subsection (3) would permit the Secretary of State to revoke a person's licence. It is a necessary safeguard to cater for a situation in which a person under licence presents a risk to the safety of the public if he continues at liberty, or in which he appears likely to commit further offences. So, that safeguard is provided.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): Since this power is quite unusual, as it is entirely subjective—it depends on the Secretary of State making a judgment that a person has become liable to commit further offences, which he was not liable to commit when he was released—is it assumed that it has arisen from a change in the political situation, a breakdown of talks, so that people become inclined to commit offences that they would not have done otherwise, or is it simply intended to meet a changed personal situation in which, perhaps, an individual joins a more extreme group?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: The power is expressed in the words of the Home Secretary's directions some years ago to the Parole Board, to cover matters that it should take into account when determining whether to recall to prison somebody who has been released, having been sentenced to a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment. Of course, the circumstances in each instance would have to be particular to the individual person on licence, and I would not wish to seek to circumscribe the appropriate circumstances.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): I am grateful to the Secretary of State for the answer that he gave to the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith). But this is a different case, of course. The Secretary of State referred to the Parole Board, which is an arm's length body that exists to evaluate the evidence. In the Bill, all that exists is the Secretary of State, so it seems that the Secretary of State is concentrating all powers into his hands without any objective or distanced judgment on the available evidence.

Sir Patrick Mayhew: The Secretary of State must do the best that he can. He is responsible for the safety of everybody in Northern Ireland. A proper safeguard is provided in subsection (4), which provides that the Secretary of State must give reasons for the recall and must, of course, notify the offender that he is entitled to make representations about that recall and about those reasons. Above all, there is the overarching safeguard that the Secretary of State's decision would be subject to judicial review and that any capricious, unreasonable or misguided recall decision would be liable to be overturned by the court.

It is a matter of regret that we have, for so many years, not been able to have something equivalent to a Parole Board system in Northern Ireland. The House will know why, for the moment, that remains the case.

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has drawn attention to the stringent powers given to the Secretary of State in relation to the withdrawing of licence for someone who appears likely to commit further offences. Is it not the case that those further offences, in those circumstances, would, in effect, be scheduled offences? Should not the word "scheduled" be included in the Bill before the word "offences"? Or is the Secretary of State suggesting, as the

Bill suggests, that someone who is released on licence can be returned on the decision of the Secretary of State because of a civil offence that has no connection with terrorism or any scheduled offence?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: Naturally enough, the Secretary of State will wish to use his discretion in a sensible manner. The Bill does not provide that the offence shall be a scheduled offence. Many people would be upset if the Bill limited the offence to that. Here is somebody who, under the Bill, is being licensed at the 50 per cent.—halfway—mark, having been convicted of serious scheduled offences. That person may be committing other offences or may be likely to commit other offences of a serious nature. Many people would be extremely upset if such a person was not liable to be recalled. I believe that that is a fair reflection of how the public would respond.

Mr. Mallon: I regret the equanimity with which the Secretary of State assumes to himself the power to take away someone's freedom because that person has committed a civil offence for which he or she can be committed to prison only by a court. In this instance, the Secretary of State is granting to himself or his successor the power to remove someone's freedom and to put that person in prison for a civil offence. Surely that should be put right in the Bill. If it is not, the Secretary of State will not help the cause of justice, but will grant to his office the power to put a person in gaol on foot of a civil offence.

Sir Patrick Mayhew: I do not quite understand what the hon. Gentleman means by a civil offence. We are talking about an offence. The Bill deals with criminal misconduct and is limited to criminal offences. I do not know quite what the hon. Gentleman means. It is not a question of a debt or anything like that.

Mr. Robert McCartney (North Down): The phrase "civil offence" used by my hon. Friend the Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) is meaningless in law in this context. The hon. Gentleman means a criminal offence that is not a scheduled criminal offence—in other words, a terrorist offence. If someone, for example, had been charged and convicted of a scheduled offence of great personal violence, and subsequently became subject to remission at 50 per cent. of the sentence, but was subsequently involved in a crime of serious domestic violence, which was not a scheduled offence, for the protection of the public at large and to prevent the public from being exposed to any risk, the Secretary of State might well revoke that person's licence and bring him back into prison as a dangerous person per se, whether likely to commit scheduled offences or crimes of domestic violence.

Sir Patrick Mayhew: The hon. Gentleman has the position absolutely right. In those circumstances, I would be able to face the disapproval of the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon), who would criticise me for not leaving at licence and at liberty such a person, notwithstanding the fact that a serious offence of violence was likely to be committed by him. I doubt that that would be in the interests of the public.

Subsection (6) provides for mandatory court orders requiring a person to serve out the unexpired portion of a previous sentence when he has been convicted and sentenced for a subsequent scheduled offence. It does so in effect by applying section 15 of the emergency provisions Act to the period of release on licence.

Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the Bill on such day as the Secretary of State may appoint. Clause 3 permits the Secretary of State to make orders suspending or reviving the operation of clause 1. The House will readily understand that circumstances might change in such a way as to make that necessary. We trust that they will not.

Clause 4 provides for the affirmative resolution procedure for approving a draft order of suspension, with an exception to take account of circumstances in which suspension would be urgently required.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Will the Secretary of State assure me that the order will be brought into effect as soon as possible after the Act receives Royal Assent? Secondly, in the event of it being necessary to suspend the provisions of clause 1 during a period in which the House is not sitting, will steps be taken to allow the House to debate the suspension of clause 1 without our having to wait for the expiry period of 40 days, after which the House may still not be sitting?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: If the Act receives the approval of the House, the Government intend to bring it into force as soon as practicable and before Christmas. I cannot give an undertaking on the hon. Gentleman's second question, as that would be a matter for others. He points to a scenario in which it might be necessary as a matter of urgency to suspend the working of the Act without prior affirmative resolution approval having been given.

Lastly, the House will wish to know the number of prisoners whom the Bill would affect. If the scheme were introduced in early December, more than 90 prisoners would be released before Christmas. A further 88 prisoners would be released on licence during 1996 whose release otherwise would not have been due until 1997 or 1998.

By the end of the decade, about 340 prisoners out of the 471 to whom the Bill currently applies will have been released. The House will be reassured to know, however, that many of those who have been sentenced for the most heinous offences would under the provisions of the Bill remain in prison until at least the end of the first decade in the next century.

The Bill is not an amnesty. It makes no concession to people who falsely claim that those who are convicted of terrorist offences somehow become political prisoners. It makes no concession to terrorism at all. On the contrary, the Bill will enable the penal system in Northern Ireland to make a positive, but proportionate and prudent, response to the continuance of the ceasefires, and to the welcome reduction in risk that has been brought about over the past year. I commend it to the House.

3.57 pm

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): The Opposition approach the Bill in the spirit of bipartisanship characterised by our support for the peace process, particularly since the ceasefires. My hon. Friend the Member for Redcar (Ms Mowlam) has asked me to apologise for her absence today, which is the result of other urgent Northern Ireland business. My hon. Friend

[Mr. Tony Worthington]

has said repeatedly that peace and the search for a constitutional settlement are far too important to be undermined by party political point scoring.

On no occasion was the importance of that more clear than during the regrettably cancelled British-Irish summit, where there was a great danger that the respective Governments would be seen as agents for one or other of the protagonists, rather than as facilitators for peace and a constitutional settlement that would meet with the consent of the people of Northern Ireland. Just as the Governments of the United Kingdom and of the Irish Republic must stick together, so must the Opposition do all that they can to ensure that the pressure for an agreed solution is maintained on all parties.

We have urged this measure on the Government since June. The Secretary of State promised to introduce it in his speech during the summer, after we had urged the change. It is clear that both traditions and both sets of protagonists regard the prisoner issue as key. One element in that is the beneficial role that prisoner groups played in bringing about a ceasefire. We must also pay tribute to the constructive part played by some ex-prisoners in supporting the peace process.

As the Secretary of State said, there are other important elements to be borne in mind. First, any approach must never forget the victims of the violence—those whose nearest and dearest were slaughtered and maimed although they were no part of any dispute. Unfortunately, the appalling indifference to suffering still seems to be around, as seen in the barbaric torture of a 16-year-old girl last week as part of the deplorable pattern of punishment beatings.

The crimes that were committed were heinous and the perpetrators must serve fair sentences. Even after the measure is passed, there will be large numbers of prisoners with considerable sentences to serve. Justice can be done only if the victims are not merely remembered but honoured by our passing legislation that respects their suffering.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): My hon. Friend refers to honouring the victims. Is he aware—if he is not, I am sure that he will be pleased to learn—that those of us who have been campaigning for a proper memorial in Birmingham for the 21 victims of the mass murder that took place on 21 November 1974 have been told that such a memorial is now to be erected? I hope that it will be put up on the 21st anniversary of the atrocities. I am sure that that shows that we shall always remember and honour those who died—the victims of terrorism, whether on the mainland or, as so often happened, in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Worthington: I hear with great respect what my hon. Friend says. I am sure that both civic and national authorities will be listening to him.

The legislation must be fair and principled. It seems to us that the measure is so, although there are flaws, as I shall point out. The Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989 and Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) 1991, which the Bill supersedes, were introduced under conditions of emergency. They imposed more stringent conditions of imprisonment. The Government now propose, and we agree, that under conditions of peace it is appropriate to impose on those prisoners exactly the same conditions of imprisonment as if they had committed their crimes in Great Britain.

I recognise that exact equality is not possible, particularly because Northern Ireland does not have a parole system, but an imperfect peace is far superior to the alternative and it seems to us that the measure should be supported. However, the precedents for hurried legislation are not good. We can all think of examples, including contemporary examples, of legislation passed in haste and repented at leisure.

We have been able to consider the Bill only since late on Thursday. We shall make proposals for change which we hope that the Government will consider constructively. The Government have welcomed and, I hope, valued our bipartisan approach, but I remind the Government that bipartisan means joint and shared. It does not mean that the Secretary of State decides and we follow. The points that we are putting today are constructive and we put them in the knowledge that a Labour Government are likely to enact the legislation.

I shall make other proposals and comments which might not be appropriate as amendments to the Bill, but on which the response of the Secretary of State will be important. For instance, I understand that in the recent Pepper *v.* Hart judgment, seven Law Lords ruled that where there was doubt about the law—the Bill will result in many such doubts—the statements of Ministers about the intentions of the legislation acquire the force of law. Therefore, I hope that, on occasion, the Secretary of State will intervene to clarify his intentions.

I now arrive at one such point that is important in terms of the Government's bona fides. This is retrospective legislation, in that it alters the conditions under which prisoners were sentenced. It ameliorates the conditions of remission. If legislation can be passed to improve remission retrospectively, it follows that it can be passed to worsen it.

The legislation is going in the opposite direction to recent statements by the Home Secretary. For example, at the Tory party conference, he said that he would introduce a crime Bill before the next election which would give effect to his statements—for example, that

> "five years should mean five years . . . No more automatic early release . . . And no more half time sentences for full time crimes . . . Persons serving 12 months . . . or more will be eligible for a small period of earned early release."

For the sake of all the people of Northern Ireland, it is important that the Secretary of State gives us the firmest of assurances that nothing that the Home Secretary is preparing will have any impact on this Bill or any of the prisoners affected by its proposals. As has been pointed out, it should be recognised that, written into the Bill, are considerable reserve powers for the Secretary of State.

Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman could give us some information on a closely related matter. The Bill applies only to determinate sentences, and not to life sentences. What impact do the Government envisage it having on the length of time served by lifers? The Secretary of State will be aware of the judgment of Mr. Justice Dyson that the Home Secretary's policy of delaying parole applications for five lifers, who had reached the end of the tariff part of their sentences, was "unreasonable and unlawful." The judge also described the policy as "manifestly unjust". Has a decision been made on whether to appeal against that judgment? It would be strange if the Government were introducing this measure at the same time as appealing against Mr. Justice Dyson's decision.

Mr. Madden: As the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is implying that the matter has nothing to do with him, I must inform my hon. Friend and the House that the Home Secretary had until one day last week to submit notice of an appeal on the matter to which he referred. No such notice has been submitted and we can only assume that the right hon. and learned Gentleman does not intend to appeal against that judgment.

Mr. Worthington: I hear what my hon. Friend says but, with all due respect, it would be good for Ministers to say so. I heard the Minister of State saying that it was nothing to do with this Bill, but, as we all know, the measure is part of a jigsaw—a constellation of factors affecting prisoners—and we want to know how it fits together.

On the specifics of the Bill, some of my remarks are on matters that would normally be mentioned in Committee, but I hope that the Secretary of State will accept that, due to the exceptional circumstances of this Bill, it will help the business of the House if I make those points now so that the Government can consider them and respond in Committee—hopefully, by accepting our proposals and using their drafting skills to improve the legislation. Hope springs eternal. After all, I expect that the Government hope for the minimum of amendment in the other place so as to avoid any complication in reporting back to this House, and I hope that they will be helpful in this matter.

Clause 1(2) states:

> "A person to whom this section applies shall be released on licence".

The Government's assurances on that are very important. Do the Government intend to impose any conditions on the licence beyond a general expectation that the person should be of good behaviour? For example, will there be any restrictions on freedom of movement or freedom of association?

At the moment, the Bill gives the Government the freedom to create whatever conditions they want. Given the sensitivities of the situation and the considerable powers in clause 1(3), it does not seem to be necessary to write in specific conditions of licence, but an assurance from the Government would be welcome.

Clause 1(3) is probably the most contentious in the Bill and I hope that the Government will be able to move some way to improve it. We fear that, if they cannot, it will cause problems. Especially difficult is the expression

> "The Secretary of State may revoke a person's licence . . . if it appears to him that"

a person

> "is likely to commit further offences".

The matter has already been mentioned in interventions. What sort of offences would be involved? Should there not be some sort of quality—or gravity—control? Surely the Secretary of State should not be given such carte blanche powers when he thinks that someone

> "is likely to commit further offences".

Is the Secretary of State willing to consider writing in scheduled offences or some other such seriousness threshold to give reassurance on the matter?

However, the worst part of clause 1 is the fact that the Secretary of State is policeman, prosecuting counsel, judge, jury and Court of Appeal. Will the Government give some undertaking to improve the clause? Let me suggest three improvements.

First, logically should not clause 1(4)(a) and 1(4)(b) be reversed? At present, a person

> "may make representations in writing to the Secretary of State about the revocation"

and then

> "shall as soon as is practicable be informed of the reasons for the revocation".

Remember, that is after the licence has been revoked. Surely the first thing to do is to tell the person why the licence is being revoked and then tell him of his right of appeal to the Secretary of State.

If we reverse clause 1(4)(a) and (b), is there not also a case for amending clause 1 to say that the person should not be informed

> "as soon as is practicable"

but should be informed immediately and in writing of the reasons for the revocation? At present, there could be a dispute about what a person was told when he was informed verbally. If it is right that a person should be able to make representations in writing to the Secretary of State about the appeal, surely it is right that the Secretary of State should tell that person in writing why the licence is being revoked.

Secondly, there has to be some judicial or quasi-judicial intervention in the matter to evaluate the evidence. I should welcome a response on the matter from the Minister so that we can decide what to do in Committee. What thought have the Government given to that?

If we were in Government, we would not want to assume all the powers in clause 1 because we would in so doing bring condemnation upon ourselves. There is certainly a case for creating an intermediary body. The Secretary of State may wish to respond as to the form of an intermediary body to give assurance, in a highly dangerous political situation, that there will be fair dealing. That is especially important because of the Government's sources of information.

When a prisoner in Great Britain breaches parole, it may come to light either through the police bringing charges via the courts or through the actions of the probation service. In Northern Ireland, there is no parole and the probation service has not been involved with supervising paramilitaries. The only sources of information for the Secretary of State are the Royal Ulster Constabulary or the security services, which do not have to bring a case to court. Mistakes can be made and the Secretary of State will be aware of the hostility of sections of the nationalist community to the RUC.

I make those points not out of sympathy—quite the reverse—for terrorist activity, but out of knowledge of how damaging to community peace it would be if mistakes were made on the basis of this procedure. It is crucial that the procedure is seen as fair.

The clause makes no reference to legal assistance being made available to the person whose licence is being revoked. Will the Secretary of State comment on that?

[Mr. Worthington]

Clause 1(3) also says that, if the Secretary of State recalls someone released on that type of licence, that person will then be detained

> "in pursuance of his sentence".

Does that mean beyond the period when the person would be released anyway under current law, and beyond the time when he benefits from one third remission? The preamble says that that is not intended and that all prisoners will still be entitled to one third remission, but the clause is not clear and I ask the Government to clarify it.

I do not understand why clause 2 exists. It says:

> "This Act shall come into force on such day as the Secretary of State may by order made by statutory instrument appoint."

We are rightly considering the Bill as a matter of urgency and the other place will consider it on Thursday. Soon afterwards, it will go for Royal Assent and could be enacted on that date. The Secretary of State has said that he intends to have it in operation so that it affects people by Christmas. Why do the Government need a further stage—a statutory instrument at an unspecified date—before the Bill comes into force? What will be the content of the statutory instrument, apart from a date? Cannot the clause simply be deleted? The Secretary of State has all the reserve powers that he could possibly want in clauses 3 and 4. I am at a loss as to why clause 2 is needed.

Clauses 3 and 4 give the Secretary of State powers to cancel the whole Bill. The Government may feel that they need to retain that power, and I see little chance of persuading them to drop the clauses, even if one wanted to. Will the Secretary of State clarify one point and give an assurance on another? Although clause 3(2) says that the suspension of clause 1 will not apply to prisoners released on licence—they will not be brought back into the system—what about those who are sentenced after clause 1 has taken effect?

Let us suppose that someone is sentenced to 15 years for a scheduled offence, which could happen on the day after the Bill becomes law. If such a person were sentenced to 15 years, he or she would expect to be out in seven and a half years. Obviously, we hope that the Secretary of State will not suspend clause 1, but, if he did, that prisoner would be released only after 10 years. In 1989, when remission was cut to one third, the Government were careful to apply the provision only to those sentenced after 1989, so that those sentenced expecting half remission got to keep it. It would be interesting to know why the Government have taken a different approach in this case.

Clauses 3 and 4 appear to duplicate each other. I have been informed that clause 4, which proposes retrospective approval for action by the Secretary of State, has been included in case emergency action is needed during a summer recess. As my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) hinted, were the Government to consider revoking the legislation, the House should be recalled to discuss such an obvious crisis. Can the Secretary of State clarify the purpose of clauses 3 and 4?

The Opposition broadly support the Bill, which we want on the statute book quickly. We believe that the normalisation of the remission rates will help the development of the peace process. Surely the Government accept that the Bill could be improved to make it more effective. I look forward to the Government's response to the issues that I have raised.

4.20 pm

Mr. Andrew Hunter (Basingstoke): I welcome the Bill. I would like to think that the absence of so many of my right hon. and hon. Friends is confirmation that they share that reaction.

The substance of the Bill is justified in its own right, and the time is right for the changes that it initiates to be introduced. I believe that the argument is straightforward. In the first place, the Bill is a small but significant step in the normalisation of life in Northern Ireland. It has rightly been the Government's objective to see created the circumstances in which the fear of a terrorist outrage is relegated to the past; political differences are resolved exclusively by peaceful means within the democratic process and the emergency legislation that we deemed to be necessary is no longer considered so. The Bill is a move in that direction.

As the Secretary of State explained, in effect the Bill repeals the requirements of section 14 of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1991 and section 22 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989. The ultimate justification for those and other emergency powers was that they were needed to deal with exceptional circumstances. It has been argued, and I accept it, that the exceptional circumstances that justified our emergency powers in respect of those two sections no longer exist.

Despite, as the Provisionals predicted, a summer in which the streets echoed with the sound of marching feet; despite Mr. Adams' more recent assurance that the IRA has not gone away; and despite the fact that the IRA is still intact, is recruiting, training, targeting and raising funds and seeks to expand its influence through intimidation and violence, the ceasefires have thankfully held and the most horrific manifestations of terrorism are on hold. It is therefore right, as the Secretary of State has said on a number of occasions, to begin to look again at some of the features of our emergency legislation. That is the precise purpose of the Bill.

The Bill is acceptable, first, as it represents a move towards establishing normality in the life of the Province. Secondly, by making that move, the Government are acting positively on a subject that is important and sensitive to many people in the Province. Once enacted, the Bill is therefore likely to inject momentum into the search for a permanent peace and the achievement of overall political agreement.

To say that the prisoners issue is sensitive and important is not to condone what the prisoners have done; far from it. As the Government have repeatedly emphasised, there has never been any justification for violence in Northern Ireland. As the Government have emphasised, there are no political prisoners in the United Kingdom—only criminals, and the criminals who indulge in terrorist offences are punished, deservedly, for their crimes.

It would be entirely wrong to make any concessions on those issues. Our principled stand is right.

Nevertheless, the current terms of imprisonment and remission for scheduled offenders were determined when circumstances were different. We can acknowledge that. We can change those terms without compromising our position of principle.

As a result of doing so, the Government may well inject a further dose of momentum into that search for permanent peace and overall agreement, not least because the effects of the Bill will be felt on both sides of the community divide in Northern Ireland.

To achieve the normalising of life in the Province, self-evidently progress must be made on a wide range of issues at the right time and in the right way, and never at the cost of diluting, compromising or betraying principle. The Bill certainly does not do the latter. It acknowledges that the ceasefires have significantly changed the position in Northern Ireland, and that some of the strict demands of the emergency legislation can be modified.

A second reason for supporting the Bill is therefore the fact that it represents movement on what is an important issue to many people, and is likely to promote further peace and practical political agreement.

Thirdly, the Bill is consistent in one important respect with other measures that the Government have taken since and in response to the ceasefire: it can be reversed if circumstances so necessitate.

Let us consider the measures so far. A broadcasting ban has been lifted but, theoretically, that could be reimposed relatively simply. Some exclusion orders have been lifted. They also could, if so required, be reimposed. Border crossings have been opened, but they can be closed again. Military support for the Royal Ulster Constabulary has been downgraded; that could be countermanded. Troops have been withdrawn; they can be sent back. All can be reversed if previous levels of violence return.

It is the same with the Bill—it is reversible. In the case of individual licences, clause 1(3)

> "allows the Secretary of State to revoke a licence if it appears to him that the licensee's continued liberty would present a risk to the safety of others or that he is likely to commit further offences."

Clause 1(6) applies section 15 of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1991 and part II of the Treatment of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 so that—I quote again from the explanatory and financial memorandum of the Bill:

> "where a person commits an offence while on licence, a court may (and must, in certain circumstances where the offence was a scheduled offence) make an order requiring him to serve the outstanding period of his sentence."

In the case of the proposed system of release on licence after half the sentence has been served until two thirds have been served, under clause 3 the Secretary of State can suspend release on licence if he believes that the position has so deteriorated that section 14 of the 1991 Act and section 22 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989 should be reintroduced.

The more limited safeguard in respect of individual licensees and the general power to suspend clause 1 are reassuring.

The Bill merits support, and I hope that the House will support it. It helps to promote a central object of Government policy—to move towards establishing normality in Northern Ireland. By making that move, the Government are acting positively on an issue that is important and sensitive to many people, and may well inject momentum into the peace process as a result.

The Bill contains its own safeguards. Its provisions can be reversed if the security situation deteriorates. I hope that it will be supported by both sides of the House.

4.28 pm

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): I have good news for the Secretary of State: the Ulster Unionist party will not be opposing the Bill. It is obvious—as only one member of our party is present—that any such opposition would be quite weak.

We have some reservations about what is happening today. The Secretary of State will probably recall that, on Thursday 19 October, the Leader of the House confirmed that we would be debating the Disability Discrimination Bill this afternoon. Then suddenly, last Thursday, the Leader of the House announced a change in today's business.

At 3.30 pm on Thursday 26 October, I tried to obtain a copy of the Bill, but it was not available in the Vote Office and did not arrive in the post over the weekend. Like other Northern Ireland Members—only four out of 17 are present this afternoon—I did not see a copy until 2 pm today.

I do not understand why the Bill has been presented with such undue haste. There has been no proper consultation, and hon. Members have not had ample time to consider the Bill and the reaction to it. It may well be that, early last week, the Whips discovered that the Northern Ireland spokesman for Her Majesty's Opposition and the leaders of the Ulster Unionist, Social Democratic and Labour and Democratic Unionist parties would not be present. They are all in Washington.

Notice of that was given well in advance. Perhaps the Whips Office decided to seize the opportunity and rush the measure through today, allowing it to complete all its stages. That is a most unparliamentary procedure, unless there is a strong reason for exercising such haste. I shall be interested to hear from the Minister what the reason is.

The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) mentioned the Home Secretary's speech at the Conservative party conference, and gave us some excellent quotations from it. Let me give some more. The Home Secretary said:

> "If prison—and the threat of prison—are to work effectively, there's a strong case for greater certainty in sentencing . . . I will tell you now, some people won't like it. They'll say it's too tough. I've got a simple answer. If you don't want the time, don't do the crime . . . There is no doubt that the fear of imprisonment is an extremely effective deterrent."

The Home Secretary finished his speech by saying:

> "It will put honesty back into the heart of sentencing. And it will help build a safer Britain."

The philosophy of the Home Office seems very different from that of the Northern Ireland Office, as presented this afternoon by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Thomas McAvoy (Glasgow, Rutherglen): Does my right hon. Friend think that the Northern Ireland Office also arranged for the absence of the Home Secretary?

Mr. Taylor: I shall not respond to that. My point is that, at a time when the Home Secretary is adopting a more hard-line attitude to the sentencing of criminals, a more liberal regime in regard to imprisoned criminals is emerging in Northern Ireland.

The Bill has been presented as part of the on-going political process in Northern Ireland since the ceasefire that was announced 14 months ago. Since then,

[Mr. Taylor]

spokesmen for the terrorists—terrorists from both communities, I might add—have demanded the early release of prisoners. It has been suggested that that could be disguised by an increase in the remission of sentences. That is what we are talking about this afternoon. When the ceasefire was announced on 31 August 1994, I said that my gut feeling was that the ceasefire was for real. Many people questioned it at the time, but I remain reasonably confident—I stress the word "reasonably"—that the ceasefire is for real. However, there must be caution and, as the Secretary of State said, there must be concern about the victims of the terrible, violent terrorism that we have suffered during the past 25 years.

The IRA is still there—the Government know it, the security forces know it and Mr. Gerry Adams has recently confirmed it—and it is targeting people for future assassinations and continuing to intimidate people. Only last week a young Catholic girl in Twinbrook was tarred and feathered and had a gun put in her mouth. A fortnight ago a young Catholic man fled to England after being expelled from the city of Londonderry by the IRA. Intimidation by the IRA continues.

The IRA also demands the right to retain its arsenal of firearms. Reports yesterday suggest that there are fairly large arsenals of IRA firearms in Cork and in Kerry. That is very interesting, as at least one elected MP in Kerry has somersaulted on the issue of the IRA handing in its firearms before all-party talks.

Mr. Mallon: Will the right hon. Gentleman clarify what he means by "MP" in that context?

Mr. Taylor: In a language that the hon. Gentleman is more familiar with, "MP" means "TD". From his reaction, I suspect that he does not know the language as well as I thought.

The IRA is also reported to be questioning the ceasefire in east Tyrone, south Armagh and more recently in the city of Armagh. There are reports that the IRA is becoming restless. I must place on record the fact that the IRA still has the means and the potential to recommence violence without any advance notice to the Secretary of State. Therefore, the Secretary of State should not recklessly dismantle the physical security installations that it would take time to replace in the event of a new emergency.

Not only are we providing the early release of terrorist prisoners, but I am sorry to say that during the past 14 months of the ceasefire the process of prosecuting those who carried out terrorist offences but who are still not before the courts has stalled. No doubt hon. Members will be surprised to learn that, since the terrorist campaign commenced in 1969, 1,800 terrorist murders remain unsolved in Northern Ireland. Yet since the ceasefire 14 months ago only three persons have been charged with terrorist murders. Something very odd is happening. The people of Northern Ireland know that and they want answers from the Government.

The Secretary of State said that there are no political prisoners in Northern Ireland and the House agrees with that statement. However, we must also accept that people are in prison as a result of the political circumstances that have applied in Northern Ireland. Those on the nationalist and on the Unionist Benches know that. I have visited young loyalist prisoners in the Maze prison and, in many ways, they are like young republican prisoners: they did wrong, but in a normal society many of them would not be in prison. They had a cause and I believe that their roles contributed to the ceasefire. As the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie said, prisoners played a role in bringing about the ceasefire and the approval for it by the main paramilitary organisations.

The Ulster Unionist party has several queries about the Bill. Under the Bill, release at the halfway point of a sentence for those sentenced to five years or more will now be automatic, but in England it is a matter of recommendation from the Parole Board and a decision by the Home Secretary. As a result, cases in England are considered on an individual basis. As has been pointed out, there is no parole board in Northern Ireland and we dislike the automatic nature of the release of all prisoners, irrespective of their individual circumstances.

Another reservation relates to the distinction that will continue to be drawn between terrorists—that is the scheduled cases—and other criminals. The latter will continue to be on automatic 50 per cent. remission with no licence requirement. I see no good reason why the regime should not be uniform for all prisoners in Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and England, as that would ease the potential problems of transfers of prisoners within the United Kingdom.

No mention has been made of the prison officers who have served Northern Ireland so well in the past 25 years. The number of prisoners who will now be released as a result of the measure could well mean a loss of jobs within the Prison Service. The Secretary of State owes it to the Prison Service to make a comment about the future security of employment for prison officers.

The Secretary of State mentioned the victims of violence and we must remember and honour them. As one of those who suffered from the IRA, I have noted over the years the great generosity and the admirable Christian response of those who have suffered as the peace process developed, especially during the past 14 months. Praise must be given to the victims throughout Northern Ireland who have shown such generosity of spirit and helped the present political situation to develop.

We shall not oppose the Bill. We very much regret the way in which it has been rushed through this afternoon with hardly any notice, but we hope that it will contribute to an improving political situation in Northern Ireland.

4.42 pm

Mr. David Wilshire (Spelthorne): Following the points raised by the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor), I am conscious that some Ministers prefer Northern Ireland debates to take place when I am not here, let alone when a number of other people are missing. On this occasion, however, they can relax. By my standards, I plan to be moderately helpful, which is probably a first, but I am disappointed that the media have trailed today's debate as legislation being rushed through. We have known about my right hon. and learned Friend's proposal for some long time.

For the benefit of the right hon. Member for Strangford, let me explain my understanding of why we are debating the Bill. I understand that the business originally planned for today was delayed because of what is best described as a little local difficulty within my own party. I may be wrong, but I have a sense that that might have something to do with it.

We are speeding up the process, as well as occupying today's business, because—at least in principle—the Opposition parties support the measure and are as happy as the great majority of Conservative Members to see the Bill on the statute book as soon as possible. I hope that that, rather than anything more sinister, explains why we are debating the measure this afternoon.

I hope that this afternoon's debate and the legislation concerned has nothing to do with a stalled peace process and President Clinton's visit. If I may invent a word, I do not believe that we should try in this way to "unstall" a stalled peace process. Any peace process does not require and must not be given such a gesture. If such a change in the arrangements for prisoners is meant as a gesture, that implies that it is acceptable to trade prisoners for arms or for talks and I am implacably opposed to that.

Mr. Robert McCartney: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way, but there seems to be a difference of opinion between him and the hon. Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter), who suggested that one of the great benefits of the legislation would be that it would inject momentum into the peace process. Preventing it from stalling and injecting momentum into it are the same if they are seen from a different perspective.

Mr. Wilshire: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's point, but I note that he has not been here very long. Had he been here longer, he would note that my disagreement with my hon. Friends is not unusual, and he must take that for what it is worth. I understand his point, but he must allow me to say what I believe to be the case.

If the measure is a gesture in a stalled peace process, it assumes that the peace process needs a big gesture, and that is wrong. According to my detailed knowledge from this side of the water, I do not judge the peace process in the Province to be as fragile as some would have us believe, so I hope that it is not a gesture along those lines.

I also oppose making gestures to President Clinton. This is a domestic British matter and the sight of politicians grubbing around for domestic votes by foreign intervention is not particularly edifying.

When the Bill was first announced earlier this year, my initial reaction was to say, "No, I do not support it." My deep reservations for thinking along those lines are well catalogued and I shall not rehearse them again this afternoon.

The peace process to date has been marked by one-sided concessions. Her Majesty's Government make the concessions, and Sinn Fein and the IRA continue to arm, to recruit, to target, to kneecap and to bomb. At least two murders in the past 12 months are down to terrorists.

For those reasons, I had reservations when I first heard the proposal, but over the years I have learnt to sleep on some of my initial reactions, so I thought the Bill through and persuaded myself that it was right to support it, provided that its purpose is to create the same prison regime throughout the United Kingdom, and treat all Northern Ireland prisoners in the same way, whatever the reason for them being in prison in the first place.

If that is the purpose of the Bill, even though there may still be some exceptions, I am happy to support it. However, I take issue with the points made by the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) and the deputy leader of the Ulster Unionists.

The comments by my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary about crime are not relevant to the debate. If all prisoners in the United Kingdom are treated in the same way, his strictures apply to them all. We can have a separate debate about whether the Home Secretary's conference speech is correct, but, for today's purposes, the Bill brings Northern Ireland back into line with the rest of the United Kingdom.

If I am wrong, however, and the Bill is the start of a process leading to special reductions in Northern Ireland over and above what is available for the rest of the United Kingdom or if it leads or is intending to move towards special parole or amnesty in Northern Ireland, I am unable to support it.

I seek some assurances from the Government. First, I hope that it will be possible to assure me that the Bill will not lead to concessions for terrorist prisoners. Crime is crime, and it cannot be excused by one's ideology. If I judge them correctly, the British people are not in the least bit interested in why people who are innocently drinking in a pub should be gunned down. They are not interested in the fact that it was done in the name of a united Ireland. It is just as wrong for that reason as if those people had been gunned down while someone was robbing a bank.

Motivation must not be allowed to cloud the issue: a crime is a crime. I make it crystal clear to the Government that under no circumstances will I ever support an amnesty for terrorist prisoners, be they in Northern Ireland or anywhere else.

The second assurance that I hope to get is that the Bill does not mean that the Government have decided to accept that there are political prisoners in this country. As I understand the situation, all those who are convicted of crimes are prisoners in exactly the selfsame way. I have heard that said before, but I should like to hear it again.

Refusing to negotiate on the issue of prisoners is therefore a matter of principle. I do not see it as a practicality: it is just as much a principle to say that we will not negotiate about criminals who are properly convicted as it is to say that we will not allow people with guns and explosives to take part in any sort of all-party talks. Both principles must be preserved.

The third assurance touches on the matter mentioned by the right hon. Member for Strangford—the question of those who have committed crimes but who have not yet been detected. I should like to be assured that the Royal Ulster Constabulary will continue to search out as vigorously as it did in the past all those who have committed crimes but who have not yet been detected.

It is just as important that the RUC will continue to search out and prosecute those who are still committing crimes. I have in mind what we heard last week about the brutal beating of a 16-year-old and those who, in the name of God knows what, drive 6 in nails through the kneecaps and ankles of innocent victims. Such acts must continue to be treated as crimes that are not excusable in the name of whatever the ideology might be.

I hope that I have made it clear that I do not think that the Bill is in any way about special cases. Terrorist prisoners and terrorist crimes are not special—at least in

[Mr. Wilshire]

the sense that by being special they are excusable; Northern Ireland prisons are not special; and, most important of all, Northern Ireland itself is not special. It is an integral part of my country and is just as important and integral as Scotland, Wales and, dare I say it, England.

The Government are absolutely right to treat Northern Ireland in the same was as they treat the rest of the United Kingdom. It is right to seek the same protection for the victims of crime in Northern Ireland as for victims elsewhere in the United Kingdom, and it is right to treat criminals in Northern Ireland in exactly the same way as they are treated elsewhere.

The Government are also absolutely right to campaign to protect the Union. Would that they would campaign to keep Northern Ireland in the Union as vigorously as they campaign to keep Scotland and Wales. I like to think that the Bill will help to protect and enhance the Union, and that it has nothing at all to do with appeasing murderers, terrorists and bombers. If the Bill is intended to protect and enhance the Union and to protect victims of crime throughout the Union, it has my support.

4.53 pm

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): I welcome the Bill, and I am pleased to hear expressions of support for it from all parts of the House. I expect that it will also be welcomed by prisoners and their families, although I suppose that it will come in for some criticism, in that it does not go far enough.

It is a modest measure, because increasing remission from one third to one half is simply reverting to the status quo that prevailed from 1976 to 1989. Undoubtedly, over those years some terrible atrocities were committed and there must be unequivocal condemnation of those acts, particularly those that led to the loss of the lives of innocent men, women and children. Nothing can be done to bring back those lives, and, of course, loved ones will suffer the loss for the rest of their lives. In that sense, they are enduring a life sentence without any remission.

There have been some positive and welcome signs. Circumstances have changed in recent times. The ceasefire has now lasted for 14 months, and many people, particularly the young, are experiencing at least a semblance of peace for the first time in their lives.

It is important to recall how the ceasefire came about. I pay tribute to people such as my hon. Friend the Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) in that respect, but I entirely agree with the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) that prisoners and former prisoners also played an important part in initiating and approving the ceasefire and ensuring its maintenance. I am talking about prisoners of both loyalist and republican persuasions.

The ceasefire makes it much less likely that such prisoners, if released, will reoffend. It is in no way to condone what they have done to say that the time has surely come for the Government to adopt a more generous attitude by increasing the remission even more substantially than is proposed in the Bill.

We must remember that those prisoners were convicted under an inferior judicial system. The hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) spoke about all parts of the United Kingdom being equal. Sadly, they are not. Many of these prisoners—probably all of them—were subjected to an inferior judicial system which operated standards of justice, or so-called justice, that would never be tolerated in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Wilshire: I understand the hon. Gentleman's point and, like him, I very much hope that we can return to jury trials in Northern Ireland as soon as possible. However, he must not lose sight of the fact that we found ourselves in that position because terrorists, of whatever persuasion, were adept at terrorising, threatening, murdering and otherwise preventing people from serving on juries or giving evidence. As soon as we can get away from that, we can take another step on the return to integration within the United Kingdom.

Mr. Canavan: That emphasises the uniqueness of the situation in Northern Ireland. Whether we like it or not, it is different from other parts of the United Kingdom. The law does not recognise these people as political prisoners, but in many or most instances they had political motivation for what they did. With the advent of the ceasefire and the commencement, soon we hope, of talks with all parties committed to the peace process, that motivation no longer exists.

In giving the Bill a general welcome, I urge the Secretary of State to come up with some bolder initiatives on prisoner issues with regard to increased remission. I also urge him to facilitate the transfer of prisoners, so that they can serve their sentences in Northern Ireland or in the Republic of Ireland.

Can the Secretary of State confirm that the Council of Europe convention on the transfer of sentenced prisoners is soon due to be ratified, and can he say something about the implications for Irish prisoners who are serving their sentences in British gaols?

I also understand from the Secretary of State's earlier remarks that the Bill does nothing for people serving a life sentence in prisons in Northern Ireland. Will the Secretary of State tell us whether that is the case, or whether the status quo will continue? As I understand it, it is at the discretion of the Secretary of State, after consultation with the Life Sentence Review Board, to decide whether and when people in that category are released.

A few months ago, the Secretary of State used his discretionary powers to release Private Clegg, who served only three years of a life sentence after being convicted of murder. It is worth recalling that, since 1970, more than 350 people have been killed in Northern Ireland by the security forces, and more than half those victims were unarmed civilians. I am aware of only three convictions of members of the security forces for murder.

The release of a convicted murderer and his reinstatement in the British Army understandably raises accusations of double standards. Some of the prisoners who we are talking about under the legislation have committed less serious crimes than murder, and very few, if any, will be released after serving only three years of their sentences.

While welcoming the measures in this Bill, I urge the Secretary of State to consider increasing still further the remission available to prisoners, as a sign of good will and a positive contribution to the development of the peace process.

5.1 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): The Secretary of State made it quite clear that he does not regard the prisoners with whom the Bill is concerned as in any way political prisoners, and that the introduction of the measure is not an attempt to engage in appeasement as part of the peace process. Because the hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) suggested otherwise, while allegedly speaking in support of the Government, I thought that I would emphasise the fact that I accept the Secretary of State's assurance on these points. Indeed, we would not support the Bill if we thought that it was conceived in those terms. The Bill restores to Northern Ireland the pattern of remission which is normal in the rest of the United Kingdom.

It is very hard for any of us to support with any enthusiasm measures that might seem to lighten the punishment placed on those responsible for horrible crimes, as are some of the prisoners who will be affected by the Bill. The fact that they thought that they were pursuing a cause and were thereby justified is not something that we accept. It may be how they see it, but to us, murdering people, wreaking destruction, assisting in the process by which people are murdered, causing injuries and all the terrible consequences that flow from such actions, deserve severe punishment.

It is right, however, to introduce the Bill, because the kind of remission it offers fits reasonably with the system that operates in the rest of the United Kingdom. No one should underestimate the importance of some of those involved in the political process in Northern Ireland, which we wish to encourage. Loyalist and republican prisoners have been key players in securing and maintaining the ceasefires, and some of them carry significant authority in parts of their respective communities, whatever view we may take of their actions. It is therefore sensible at this stage in the process to restore that kind of remission to them.

There are, however, some worrying elements in the Bill, and some parts that I do not think are well drafted. Our exchanges over clause 1(3) will illustrate that. Clause 1(3) gives the Secretary of State the power effectively to send a person back to prison, not because he has gone on to commit a crime but because the Secretary of State thinks that he is

"likely to commit further offences"

or that his

"continued liberty would present a risk to the safety of others".

Even if one thinks that the Secretary of State is very unlikely to make the wrong decision in that sort of case, the law should be drafted properly, and should not open up absurd possibilities, which it does if drafted in this way. The Bill is subjective.

If the Secretary of State thought that somebody who was on licence in this way and who had opened a shop might sell goods in imperial rather than metric quantities, he, as a politician, would be permitted under the legislation to send that person back to prison. That is an absurd way to frame a law.

It is not what I could conceivably imagine the present Secretary of State for Northern Ireland ever doing. I have great respect for him, but one should not frame the criminal law in such a way as to put politicians in a position where they have the power to send people back to prison on a basis unrelated to the purpose of the legislation. Politicians might not use that power, but they might threaten to do so.

One can imagine a situation in which a politician could say to a prisoner, "You're enjoying your time out of prison, but we don't like the political direction you are now taking. Of course, there are one or two technicalities on which you might be liable to go back to prison." It is the sort of power that liberal democracies do not give to their Executives. Therefore, we should be very worried about its use in this form in this case.

There are many ways in which the power could usefully be qualified. The hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) suggested that it could be qualified by restricting it to scheduled offences. It could be qualified by being exercised by someone other than a politician. For example, it could be exercised by a commissioner, as there is at this stage no parole board in Northern Ireland. In any event, it is bad drafting to leave legislation so open and to place such powers in the hands of the Executive.

I can envisage another piece of legislation coming along some time in the future, and some Minister standing at the Dispatch Box, saying that the House was ready to accept it as a reasonable provision, because something similar was accepted in the Northern Ireland (Remission of Sentences) Act 1995. I do not think that we should set a bad precedent in that way.

Of course, there is more that could be done to assist in the peace process. Hon. Members have mentioned issues such as release at Christmas and the transfer of prisoners, which could be made much easier when, on Wednesday, the Republic signs the European convention on the transfer of prisoners. That could be an opportunity—I hope that it is not wasted—for the Ferrers report's recommendations to be actively pursued.

One has to judge the legislation, as a number of hon. Members have done, against the background of the Home Secretary saying that, in future, there will be no more half-time sentences for full-time crimes. I think that there is a warning to Governments that they must not engage in rhetoric in such a way as to make it difficult or even impossible to introduce legislation carefully constructed in the light of circumstances and needs, because, of course, that phrase "no more half-time sentences for full-time crimes" could effectively condemn the Bill. It will not do to, as happened in the case of the Secretary of State for Defence, to say that the speech was just for the rabble, that the phrases were trotted out for Conservative conference, and we know what a difficult lot they are.

Ministers are Ministers and they must make speeches which have regard to their responsibilities to the House. I have not heard the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland make a speech along those lines, and I do not expect him to do so, but he has to bring in legislation which already seems to have been condemned out of the mouth of the Home Secretary. Perhaps he is fortunate that so many hon. Members have given notice this afternoon that they do not intend to oppose it. We share that view.

5.8 pm

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): I, too, welcome the Bill, as it is a remarkable change—in the 10 years that I have been here, we have debated legislation of the most punitive type. I welcome it as it is the first

[Mr. Seamus Mallon]

time since peace broke out that we have in effect a slight movement in the opposite direction. I welcome it in those terms because it is crucially important. It is nonsense to say that prisoners in the north of Ireland have nothing to do with the political process. They are central to it, and we all know that. We all know that there would have been no Northern Ireland if the British Government of the day had not taken people out of Lincoln gaol in the Isle of White, and from various other places, and brought them to Pont street in London to take part in the negotiations that set up the state of Northern Ireland. We know that to be an historical fact.

We also know that, when it suits Governments, they will talk to prisoners and deal with prisoners under their right to do so if that will change the situation for the better. I know that, and I speak as a member of a party that has taken great risks in talking to people who have been involved in violence—but then, we are not alone, are we? It is not so long since the deputy leader of the Conservative and Unionist party released from prison the now president of Sinn Fein and flew him across to London in a British Air Force aeroplane to take part in discussions. Indeed, he was right to do so if it was going to improve the situation. So let us get rid of the euphemism that somehow or another the prisoner situation has nothing to do with the political life in the north of Ireland—it has everything to do with it.

The right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) himself—I remember the day well because I was not far away—was shot in an assassination attempt on the streets of Armagh. Thankfully, he recovered. I am quite sure that he has since passed those who planned his assassination. Perhaps he has even spoken to them—I do not know.

I had a chilling experience when I recently spoke with those who issued a sentence of death on me. They were able to tell me later who was supposed to carry it out and when. That is how the prisoner situation is linked with the political life of the north of Ireland. It has been linked, and is, but—thankfully—we are reaching a stage where we can move away from such identification of prisoners with the political process. We can do that only if we are honest and truthful enough to recognise how central is the issue. It is central because there would not have been peace had there not been people in those prisons who had time to think, who were free from some of the pressures outside, and, because of the impossibility of the situation, had the moral imperative in those prisons to say, "Hold on a minute, we may not be beaten, but we cannot win."

It is because those people in the prisons had the moral authority within their own organisations to say such things that we have had 15 months of peace. We know that, the Secretary of State knows that. Everybody in the House knows that there would not have been peace without those involved in prisons.

Prisoners are also important in terms of arms and munitions—decommissioning, one can call it what one likes—because again there is a harsh truth to it. There are two ways of getting rid of illegal arms, be it in the north of Ireland or in any other part of the world: either take them out or talk them out. Twenty five years was spent with armies, with police services, with emergency provisions Acts, with prevention of terrorism Acts, with all types of legislation, with all types of abnormal law, with all types of security operations, yet the objective was not achieved.

Is it not right now to give the talking out of illegal arms the same priority; to say that we recognise that if they cannot be taken out, since they were not taken out despite all those security operations, we should start seriously trying to talk them out? If we are going to talk them out, another harsh reality that must be recognised is that the prisoners are central, and what happens to the people in them is crucial.

The prisoners are crucial to building the political structures and arrangements that are required if we are to have a peaceful, permanent resolution of the problem without any more guns anywhere and without any more prisoners tied into the political process. Irrespective of what happens and irrespective of all the semantics in which we involve ourselves, prisoners are central—here is another harsh reality—for this reason: everybody has a veto.

There cannot be political arrangements if, in effect, we all choose to exercise a veto. We must try to clear the way so that it is easier for the Ulster Unionist party, the SDLP, Sinn Fein, the Democratic Unionist party and those who speak or claim to speak on behalf of the loyalist paramilitary groupings to move down the road towards structures and arrangements. One of the ways in which to do that is to deal with the problem of the veto.

That is why the jingoism of Blackpool was so counter-productive. That is why it was so offensive. It was so selfish; it had nothing to do with solving the problems of the north of Ireland, and everything to do with party politics. That is why it went to the core of the problem and that is why the right hon. Member for Strangford was right to add another quotation to those ably presented by the deputy shadow spokesman on Northern Ireland, the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington).

Such politics will not solve the problem that we have had, not only since the state was formed but long before it. That type of jingoism should be disregarded totally when considering present issues. I have said that it is not a popular issue. It is not popular for me in the north of Ireland because I have to face victims of the problem every day of the week—God knows, there are enough where I live.

Also, it is not a populist issue, which is why Conservative Members who have spoken today should be congratulated on not falling into the trap and following the example of the Home Secretary and his jingoism. They did not fall into the trap of playing the populist card on such a crucial issue. I thank the Conservative Members for that and congratulate them on it because it is crucial if we are to resolve the problem.

Dealing with the problem of prisoners is a sign not of weakness but of strength. Vindictiveness in prisons is a sign of weakness because it means that the real question is not being faced up to. A strong Government and a strong person in any dealings with prisoners is the person who has enough strength of intellect and character, and an absence of vindictiveness, to grasp hold of the problem and to start to solve it.

I again thank Conservative Members for their absence of jingoism, as I do the right hon. Member for Strangford, for recognising, and saying very clearly in the House, that many of the people who are in prison for scheduled offences would not be there in any other type of arrangement or society. That point should be recognised because such an approach would loosen all the emotional valves in the north of Ireland and allow us to solve all the problems—arms included. I do not exclude the question of prisoners from the solving of the arms problems.

I welcome the return to 50 per cent. remission in the Bill, but—let me put it this way—it is no big deal. It is actually less than what was operated by the Conservative and Unionist Government led by Baroness Thatcher between 1979 and 1989. One can pose this question. If a Tory Government, during the war situation between 1979 and 1989, could live with 50 per cent. remission, cannot the present Tory Government live with it during peace? I make that as a serious point because it will be suggested to people within the Conservative party that the Bill is a sign of weakness. It is not; I see it as the opposite—strength. I do not detect any element of opportunism within it; I do not believe that there is any.

The Bill should not be portrayed by the media or by anyone else as the Government's political response to peace, because it is not. It is a recognition that the political problems are centred on the prisoners—that is different from making a political response to peace. There are and should be no bonuses for the Government in introducing the Bill or for any of us for supporting it. There should be no brownie points in supporting the Bill because it will ensure that those who have, as the right hon. Member for Strangford said, got caught up in something over which they had no authorship or control, can get into a normal situation as quickly as possible.

Nor will the Bill, as some newspapers will probably tell us tomorrow, lead to a mass exodus of prisoners who have been prematurely released from gaol—it will do nothing of the sort. It is simply a movement towards effectively lessening the problem.

I have reservations about the details. I do not think that any Secretary of State, whether this one or any other, should be able, in effect, to make the arbitrary decisions that the Bill allows him to make. This Secretary of State or another can decide that a licensee can be put back in gaol if he or she suspects that the person might be thinking of committing a crime—not committing a crime, but thinking about it—which does not even have to be a scheduled offence.

I take the distinction made by the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. McCartney) between civil and criminal offences. However, can one imagine a person being returned to prison by a Secretary of State, without any judicial input, because that person had committed an offence such as, dare I suggest, smuggling? That is what the Bill would leave us open to.

Mr. Robert McCartney: The hon. Gentleman has picked up an important point. Smuggling might well be the smuggling of arms which would be an absolutely appropriate offence to cause the Secretary of State to revoke the licence.

Mr. Mallon: The hon. Gentleman has confirmed that he represents North Down. I represent an area of south Armagh where smuggling was never considered in those terms despite the fact that those involved in violence did carry out the crime to which the hon. Gentleman refers. I make my case—one can choose any other offence that one likes—that the Secretary of State should not have the powers of judge, jury, policeman and executioner, as hon. Members have said. There should be some independent input or some judicial input in the process, as we always thought there should be for the exclusion orders, although we never got that. There should also be some right of regular application by the licensee for re-release. I can see no reference to that in the Bill.

I hope that the Secretary of State will consider the points made by the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington), the Labour deputy shadow spokesperson—what a terrible title! I shall now call him my hon. Friend, which is much simpler. I hope that the Secretary of State will consider those points not least because none of us really had a chance to table amendments. The right hon. Member for Strangford complained that he had not seen the Bill until very recently and neither had I. There was no time to table amendments.

This is an opportunity for the Secretary of State to show magnanimity. I should like him to show magnanimity towards the suggestions, which are sincerely made, and to do it before the evening is out so that those of us who have had to struggle with all such legislation can at least say that we have turned a corner, however slightly, and that when we started to turn the corner, the Secretary of State responded.

5.24 pm

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): I support the Bill because it is right in principle and right in the context of the politics of Northern Ireland. It is important that we do as the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington), our Front-Bench spokesman did, and draw attention again to the victims of paramilitary violence, whether it came from the Unionist or the republican side. We should remember not just those who died or who were physically injured, but those whose lives have been emotionally destabilised and whose lives may remain so for the rest of their lives. There is no automatic remission for them; that is an important point that we should all make and have in our minds.

Having made that point, I am aware, as the Secretary of State said, that many of the people caught up in the violence are the people who are ready to show forgiveness. We ought to recognise the strength of that forgiveness and to recognise that it is built partly on people's desperate desire, which I have sensed in Northern Ireland for some years, to put the past behind them and to make a fresh start. If those people are prepared—many cases, if not all—to forgive, we should make sure that we do everything possible to ensure that the peace process continues.

The Bill is part of that process and we all know it; that is part of the reason why it is being proceeded with rapidly. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Clydebank and Milngavie, I am concerned about fast-track legislation, on which the House often makes mistakes. The hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) and one or two other hon. Members have drawn attention to some of the unanswered questions in the Bill.

The question which I identify, which the Secretary of State needs to address, is that of recall on licence. I remember, from the time when I operated as a probation officer in Britain, that when one recommended recall to prison—contrary to the present Home Secretary's view, that took place on many occasions—one was often

[Mr. Clive Soley]

overruled either by the Parole Board or by the Home Office. At least, however, one knew that there was a process and one could understand and convey those reasons. I am not convinced, as the Bill is presently drafted, that people would know the reasons why they were being recalled.

Although I am not a lawyer, my understanding is that the licence can have certain conditions attached to it which are part of the licence rather than part of the normal judicial process. If that is right, it is important that there is some way in which an alternative body can take a view about the actions of the Secretary of State. If not, we are doing what we have done too frequently in Northern Ireland, which is to invest a legal power in the hands of a politician.

It is on that basis that I shall address the wider issue of political prisoners and political motivation, which was raised by several hon. Members. It is right to say—it has always been my view—that we do not have political prisoners in Northern Ireland. I make that bald and bold statement because, whatever the political motivation, we do not in Great Britain or in Ireland—north or south—lock up people simply because of their political views or political behaviour. We lock up people who use unlawful means to support their political views. That is the difference between political prisoner status and non-political prisoner status.

One or two hon. Members have already said that it would fly in the face of reality if we were to lurch to the other extreme and say that there was no political motivation at all. The right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) has said that many of the Unionist prisoners sound and talk like many of the republican prisoners. In my judgment, that is true. They have been brought up in areas of Northern Ireland where they have been attracted into a particular type of crime because of the political breakdown of the Northern Ireland state. The system always had problems and never functioned successfully, which is one of the reasons why the House must now legislate directly.

There is a recognition of the underlying political problems that confront us, and we must address the needs of the prisoners in relation to the peace process. The hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) said that the measure must not be seen as a gesture to President Clinton. I feel that the hon. Gentleman would like to make a gesture to President Clinton, but not the one that we were thinking of when he spoke. The Americans should not have been drawn into the process, and I find it amazing that the Tory party has allowed that to happen. It would not have done so five or 10 years ago, but it has happened because the Tories have not handled the issue well.

The issue of the prisoners is now on the agenda, and it is important for two reasons. First, it is seen as a test of British willingness to move, but secondly, and more importantly in my judgment, it is a recognition of the fact that the prisoners are there largely because of the failure of the political system in Northern Ireland. If that is right, we shall need to bring the law into line with the law in the rest of the United Kingdom. If we are to allow the release of people who are no longer thought to be a danger to the public, we need a measure such as this on the statute book. That is entirely reasonable and proper.

I am a little concerned that we may try to skate around the issue of the importance of the prisoners in the peace process. While it is true to say that the process may have happened without the support of the prisoners, there can be no doubt that it would not have happened as rapidly if the prisoners had not been in support of it.

I chaired a meeting at the Labour party conference at which Unionist and republican ex-prisoners and a representative from the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders spoke. It was very moving to hear them describe how they had been caught up in the violence, what they thought had gone wrong and what they thought needed to be done to put it right. There is a recognition among both Unionist and republican prisoners that violence has failed. If they above all recognise that, we must reinforce that message strongly.

We need a flexible Prison Service and an element of flexibility in sentencing, a point that the Home Secretary does not take on board in Britain. I have never believed that longer sentences prevent crime, and Northern Ireland is a glaring example of that. If that were the case, many people who have received life sentences for crimes would never have committed those crimes. Factors that are far more important than the nature of sentencing drive people to commit criminal offences.

Above all, we must recognise two things. First, an aspect of punishment is to put on record society's response to an act, and to say, "We do not accept what you have done, and you must accept some punishment." Secondly, an aspect of sentencing policy, and punishment in particular, is that we lock a person up when he is a danger to the public. A strong aspect of the legal approach in Britain and many other countries is that if a person is no longer considered to be a danger to the public, it is not necessarily in the public interest to keep him in custody. That brings us to the peace process in Northern Ireland.

My feeling—shared by the Secretary of State, I gather—is that the process is more deeply rooted than many of us first thought. If that is the case, it is hard to argue that the people presently serving sentences for their involvement in paramilitary groups are still a serious danger to society. That does not mean that we should let them all out tomorrow morning, but we should look at the issue of the prisoners in both Britain and Northern Ireland in a way that recognises that people in Northern Ireland are attempting to forgive and forget. If we take a hard line or an over-legalistic approach to the problem, we do no credit to those people in Northern Ireland who have suffered far more than we have suffered, but are still prepared to move. If they are prepared to move, we should be prepared to move with them.

I urge the Secretary of State to listen carefully to what my hon. Friend the Member for Clydebank and Milngavie said about some aspects of the Bill. Legislating in such a rapid way leads to mistakes. The prevention of terrorism Act went through quickly and—as I pointed out on many occasions during my opposition to the Act and to certain parts of the emergency provisions Act—lent credence to the argument that there were political prisoners in Britain. There were two reasons for that. First, the emergency provisions Act contains listed or scheduled offences, for which people are treated differently by different courts. In allowing that, we eroded the rule of law. Secondly, the prevention of terrorism Act did enormous damage to the concept of the rule of law by, for the first time in 400 years, giving a politician—the Home Secretary—the power to exclude a person from one part of the UK. That leant credence to the argument that there were political offences, and we must make sure that we do not make that mistake again.

I hope that the Bill goes through without any problems, and that the Government do not leave it there. They must continue to work—I know that this is the Secretary of State's intention—on the peace process. There is a movement afoot in Northern Ireland of which many people here are not fully aware. There is a grass roots feeling that the people of Northern Ireland must come to terms with what has happened in the past. Both communities have much to blame themselves for, as well as blaming the other side. But if they are prepared to move, we in the British Parliament would be very small minded if we were not prepared to move with them at a similar pace and with a similar feeling of generosity.

5.37 pm

Mr. Robert McCartney (North Down): Although it affects only convicted prisoners, I welcome and support the measure, which equalises rights between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom. The measure deals with integration, equality of rights and, I hope, duties and responsibilities that one can endorse. However, it seems to me—perhaps because I am new to the House—that some of the speeches are like the peace of God; they passeth all human understanding. I have heard statements about the situation in Northern Ireland which, as someone who has lived there for nearly 60 years, I find remarkable.

It should be borne in mind that, even with the benefit of the peace process, Northern Ireland is no utopia. There are members of Protestant loyalist organisations and the Provisional IRA who are still heavily involved in organised Mafia-like crime. Crime has not disappeared with the peace process; it has merely taken a different shape and form. Indeed, the nature of crime is closely associated with the political process. The peace process has tended to concentrate on the absence of the use of explosives or guns, but the most fearful injuries are being inflicted with baseball bats, clubs, hammers and nails, which some of my surgical friends in the major hospitals say are even more dreadful than the kneecappings that were inflicted with firearms.

So let us be under no illusion that suddenly with the peace process law and order has come to the Northern Ireland. It has not; it is a question not only of physical violence but of intimidation and the organisation of what the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) might describe as civil crime—crime of a non-scheduled variety. I speak of course of the drugs problem in Northern Ireland, which is escalating at an enormous rate and is very much associated with paramilitaries, who are diversifying in the light of changing political circumstances—one might even say in criminal terms, changing economic circumstances—the range and nature of their activities.

Far too much credit has been afforded to paramilitary former prisoners who have had some sort of Damascene or Pauline conversion. They are suddenly sporting tweed coats and Aran sweaters and sucking pipes, they are very often hirsute and they display a new attitude to their activities. At the same time, they exploit every situation for their own ends. They have from time to time been described as terrorists on sabbatical, perhaps waiting until some change of circumstance takes them in another direction.

The overwhelming majority of decent, honourable, law-abiding citizens in Northern Ireland doubt the apparent conversion of a small number of former terrorists to the democratic process. The fringe or splinter parties, especially those on the loyalist side, have been given a status and approval that is far beyond their electoral mandate, which is little or nothing. Within the past six months, some of those groups have put up candidates in council elections in large estates in south Antrim and north Belfast. The results of those elections have shown that they have little or no popular support. Most of the claimed mandate of Sinn Fein and the IRA is obtained by the sort of criminal activity that I mentioned: the terrorising of people living in controlled estates and areas where the writ of the Royal Ulster Constabulary does not run as strongly as it might.

I was appalled at some of the statements made about the quality of justice administered in Northern Ireland under the so-called Diplock legislation. I have been personally involved in the legal process in Northern Ireland—although not so much on the criminal side—for almost 40 years. The standard of justice administered by judges dealing with Diplock cases has been extraordinarily high. If the statistics relating to Diplock trials were analysed, they would show that to be the case. Lord Justice MacDermott spoke this weekend at a conference in the Republic of Ireland. He pointed out without any great disagreement that justice in Northern Ireland was probably of a higher quality, fairer and more objective in some criminal cases with a judge sitting alone than might have been experienced in trial by jury.

The contention made by the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) that trial by jury is in all circumstances the hallmark of a superior judicial system is far from established. Many systems of law throughout the world that are not based on the common law principles dispense justice of an extremely high standard without the benefit of a jury. Some cases in the United Kingdom, such as the Birmingham case—in which the atmosphere was highly charged as a result of the deaths—employed juries, but, as experience has taught us, did not always result in justice being done. I make those remarks on behalf of the judiciary in Northern Ireland.

If the objectives of the legislation are, as I believe them to be, to bring the remission terms of convicted prisoners in Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the United Kingdom, I welcome it. However, if the Bill is an overt political move to recharge or supply energy to a flagging political process in Northern Ireland, that would be a retrograde step and one that ought not to be encouraged. Many people in Northern Ireland are the sons, daughters, fathers, mothers or relatives of people who have suffered the most horrendous injury or death.

For several years I have been involved in criminal injury cases involving members of the armed forces. I have had the unfortunate experience of seeing the most awful and hideous injuries inflicted by terrorist activity. I have also seen the innocent victims of IRA firebombs. One has always to keep in mind the effect of making concessions, even if it be politically judicious, which the vast majority of decent people feel ignore the suffering and plight that they have endured.

While I welcome the proposed legislation and offer my support for it, I believe that it is important that the Government emphasise that it is not a political move or one designed to engender some movement among people

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who have supported people who have resorted to terrorism. If it is seen as that, it will have a deleterious effect on the atmosphere of the peace process. It will be interpreted as just another cave-in, concession or retreat from a position taken up by the Government in their fight against terrorism.

I believe that the purpose of the Bill is not to recharge the peace process, but it will be the perception of many people in Northern Ireland that it is. It will fall to the Government to give assurances to those who have been the victims of terrorism that that is not the purpose of the Bill, but that it is purely intended to ensure parity of treatment of prisoners throughout the United Kingdom within the social context.

5.48 pm

Rev. William McCrea (Mid-Ulster): The subject before the House is important to many people in the Province. It is certainly important to prisoners and also to the rest of the population.

I listened with care to the speech of the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. McCartney) and I certainly believe that the Government must take on board many of the points made. As has been acknowledged, this legislation to increase the remission rate to 50 per cent. is a return to the situation prior to 1989 and in many ways, therefore, when taken by itself it is not a remarkable event.

The hon. Member for North Down asked whether the Bill was intended to bring Northern Ireland legislation into line with that of the rest of the United Kingdom. Is that where it stops? If it is, it is something that we should all welcome and, on that basis, I acknowledge that it is legislation that the House should pass.

We must also question, however, whether that is the case. Signs and signals are being given to the community and we have heard from a number of those who are inside that this legislation is one of a number of concessions that have been offered to those serving prison sentences. At the commencement of the ceasefire, those who were inside acknowledged that, if there had not been a promise of concessions on the prison issue, there would have been no ceasefire. We must ask ourselves whether the legislation is one of a number of concessions to terrorists—a number of concessions have already been made to a specific group, that is, the IRA.

The other question concerns timing. Not three months ago, the Secretary of State alluded to this very matter at Queen's university in Belfast. It is interesting that this legislation has been announced just prior to President Clinton's visit—perhaps to ingratiate the Government with the American Administration and to show that they are keeping the "peace process" and the political development on line.

As has been said, law and order has not returned to the Province, and that is a relevant factor. Hon. Members have already mentioned the brutal beatings. People have been brought to the very verge of death with clubs and iron bars. Nails have been driven into people's bodies. That is not a society of law and order to which anyone can give credence.

I have listened carefully and I have certainly not heard Sinn Fein rebuke the Provos for their activities against a young girl in the Belfast, West constituency. They have been asked to make statements about the matter, but have remained silent. Those are the people who are paraded up and down the steps of Stormont and into the Stormont buildings. They are given the credibility of some kind of respectability and of legitimate political enterprise, but these are thugs. They have always been thugs and have never renounced their thuggery. They have never condemned the butchering of the ordinary law-abiding people of the Province. I know that because I have witnessed the butchery of my own loved ones and of my constituents by those terrorists, and they continue to terrorise the community.

We must ask ourselves what is going on in the Province. What back-door deals and skulduggery are going on behind the scenes to try to placate those who have carried out and are still carrying out awful acts of butchery against a law-abiding community?

I suggest that Sinn Fein has no mandate for any political talks. The only mandate that it had was for the Armalite in one hand and the ballot box in the other. Those people will stand before the electorate at a future election and we shall find out whether they have a political mandate for what they are doing, which is wringing concessions out of the Government.

Yet while all those developments have been going on, Ministers have acknowledged that the IRA is still recruiting and restocking. There certainly is no clear sign of a renunciation of violence.

Does the House realise the impact of parading terrorist thugs across our television screens night after night? Gerry Adams would not even be noticed or have the television cameras on him if he did not have 25 years of terrorism and murder with the IRA—a terrorist organisation—under his belt. Now, he and his colleagues strut across our television screens and are paraded as if they were democrats. Anyone who looks into their reputations will know that they are far from democracy. What of the innocent? What does that do to law-abiding people?

At some meetings in Coleraine recently, a number of families who are grieving because of terrorist activity told me that they switch off the television at newstime because they are sure to find some terrorist being paraded across the screen as if he was a democrat, yet their loved ones are in the grave.

I have been requested by a number of those who have suffered because of terrorism to tell the Secretary of State that there seems to be a listening ear for Adams and those who have used 25 years of carnage and terrorism against law-abiding people. What about the law-abiding people? I shall be writing to the Secretary of State to ask him to receive a deputation of the innocent. Let us hear the voices of those who have suffered and of those whose loved ones are not in prison for one year, two years or 10 years, but who are themselves in prison for the rest of their lives. They are imprisoned by grief—the horrendous grief caused by their loved ones being murdered and destroyed. Fathers have been taken away from the head of the home and children have been slaughtered through wanton terrorism.

I shall be officially requesting of the Secretary of State that the innocent be heard in the position of power; they have the right to make their voices heard about the concessions that have been milked from the Government and pocketed by terrorist organisations.

Is this measure a sop to Sinn Fein, as the leader of the Ulster Unionist party said in the newspapers last week? Many people believe that that is so. The leader of my party certainly believes that we are witnessing a further step towards bringing the terrorists along a political line for a time. Bearing in mind the fact that they have never renounced violence, it will be the terrorists who decide just how long that period will be. They will decide to switch on or off when it best suits them.

We are talking about serious matters, because we are talking about life and death for people in the United Kingdom. We are talking about the hurt and grief of people who have endured great sorrow. I would say to the people of our Province and the United Kingdom that actions will speak louder than all the words spoken at the Dispatch Box today.

Mr. Mallon: I fully agree that actions speak louder than words. Is the hon. Gentleman going to vote against the Bill?

Rev. William McCrea: I believe that the hon. Gentleman has been listening. He is just trying to put a fly in the ointment with that intervention. At the beginning of my remarks, he heard me say that, of itself, the legislation is not something that I could or would oppose. If it brings us into line with the rest of the United Kingdom, I welcome it. Actions will speak louder than words, however, and we shall find out if that is so in reality. We shall wait and see.

5.58 pm

Mr. Thomas McAvoy (Glasgow, Rutherglen): I join the hon. Member for Mid-Ulster (Rev. William McCrea) in warmly endorsing the Government's proposals. Perhaps a warm endorsement is hotter than the Government would have liked, but nevertheless it is an endorsement and they should be grateful for it.

I should hope that hon. Members who represent constituencies on the mainland side of the Irish and Celtic seas would approach debates on Northern Ireland with some trepidation, especially on security matters, because, as the hon. Member for Mid-Ulster said, they can be and are matters of life and death. I come from Scotland, although I have Northern Irish grandparents. However, I was born and brought up in Scotland, and feel an integral part of the United Kingdom.

All my gut instincts are against being seen to be soft, to use the Home Secretary's word, in such matters. A Bill such as this does not rest easily with me. I have strong reservations in principle about such measures. However, I must come up against reality.

I travel frequently in Northern Ireland, and have done for some years. I should like there to be equality throughout the United Kingdom, as my hon. Friend the Member for North Down (Mr. McCartney) said. However, time and again we come up against the reality, which has been mentioned by hon. Members from both Great Britain and from Northern Ireland, that the situation on the mainland is different from that in Northern Ireland.

I do not like it that the situation in Northern Ireland is different; I would like it to be normal, as it were. When a section—I shall not try to quantify it—of the population would rather not be part of the United Kingdom, the situation is different. We have to recognise that reality.

The legal systems are different. I hesitate to cross swords on legal matters with my hon. Friend the Member for North Down, but I do not share his enthusiasm for the Diplock courts. It is a simple layman's point, but if the Diplock system is so judicially correct that it gives a better system of justice, why should we not extend it to the rest of the United Kingdom? Such a system is not acceptable or normal—I use the word with reservations—in a democratic society.

Some comments by judges in cases where, 16 or 20 years later, injustice was clearly seen to have been done, do not lead me to believe that those judges had justice and right on their side at all times.

Mr. Peter Bottomley (Eltham): I do not want to contradict the hon. Gentleman, but will he confirm that most of the cases in which there have been later pardons or successful appeals were tried on the mainland with juries rather than by Diplock courts?

Mr. McAvoy: Of course I confirm and accept that. However, some judges made comments which clearly swayed juries and guided them against people who were later found to be innocent. I do not want to go too far into that matter.

The other factor about which I feel strongly is the feelings of the victims; no one else can put themselves in their position. Hon. Members on both sides of the House have mentioned that, especially the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor). Hon. Members have said that among the victims there is a strong feeling that enough is enough; that they are big enough, moral enough and, in many cases, Christian enough to say that, in the interests of progress on peace and putting a stop to violence, they are prepared to forgive—forgive, not forget; they can never forget. It is wrong to try to use victims as pawns in some game.

Many victims say that, in the interests of peace, it is time to consider a new system for prisoners. Despite my gut instincts about the matter, I am in favour of the Bill. There are justifications for its introduction. It has been mentioned that there are no political prisoners in the United Kingdom, but that many people are in prison because of their political motivation. We all know what that means; let us not be hypocrites about it.

The offences were committed under a certain set of circumstances, which I hope are gone for good. We all have to work to ensure that those circumstances vanish. The comments of the right hon. Member for Strangford about young loyalist prisoners can be echoed in respect of young republican prisoners. They realise what a waste there has been, and that violence has not worked and will not work. They want a new system to try to move matters forward. That is the way we should follow.

While I am reluctant to take into account in the peace process the fact that people are in prison for politically motivated crimes, I am realistic enough to learn from examples from elsewhere. Where there has been strife—if not in exactly similar circumstances to those of Northern Ireland, in circumstances that bear some resemblance to them—it has been proved that those who are in prison because of political motivations have carried out acts with the full support of people who have later become involved in the peace process.

It may not be not reasonable, but it is realistic, that the fate of prisoners and how we treat them should be part of the peace process. I know that some people do not like

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that, but, in fairness to the Secretary of State, the legislation can genuinely be regarded as merely equalising systems in the United Kingdom. If it has other benefits as part of the peace process, that is a tribute to the ingenuity of the Secretary of State's timing in bringing the Bill forward now. To recognise the role of prisoners in the peace process is not pandering to the men and women of violence—as I certainly would not—but to accept reality.

I share the worries about rushed legislation. Mention has been made of a number of hon. Members who are not able to be here today. We have to be careful about rushing the measure.

However, there is a consensus. My hon. Friend the Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) referred to that, and generously paid sincere tribute to Conservative Members who are joining that consensus. I have not heard it too often, but I would welcome from the Secretary of State recognition of the part played by those on the Labour Front Bench in that consensus. There is no blank cheque from the Opposition, or from the Secretary of State's hon. Friends, but there is the good will to ensure that we try to make progress.

I shall finish with one or two matters for concern that have been mentioned earlier. Clause 1(3) uses the phrase

"he is likely to commit further offences".

Some would prefer that to read "commit further scheduled offences". I accept in part the Secretary of State's explanation, but surely, with all the expertise and ability at his disposal, some alternative could have been framed that came halfway between the position that he has adopted in the Bill and that adopted by my hon. Friend the Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington).

I do not believe that there is not sufficient ingenuity to find a halfway house that retained the essence of Secretary of State's position but moved away from the apparently dictatorial or autocratic powers that the Bill would give him.

My hon. Friend the Member for Clydebank and Milngavie mentioned clause 1(4)(a) and (b). The good will that the Secretary of State would obtain from reversing the order of those sub-paragraphs would gain a more than fair wind for the Bill, and ensure that he and the Government are seen to be more receptive to concerns about some of the autocratic—even if they are justifiably autocratic—intentions of the Bill.

I welcome the Bill and shall support it for reasons that have been made clear on both sides of the House. I wish the Secretary of State well, not only in equalising laws and regulations within the United Kingdom but, whether it is his intention or not, in ensuring that the Bill is part of the peace process.

6.9 pm

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): The Bill's imperfections to which my hon. Friend the Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington), on the Front Bench, referred would be less serious if we were not about to proceed to the Committee stage. I hope that the Government will respond fully to the half-dozen points raised by the my hon. Friend, and that promises will be made so that those matters are taken on board as the Bill progresses to the Lords and before it returns to us. It is unfortunate that such important and necessary legislation, which needs to be pushed quickly through the House, should have drafting defects.

Second Reading debates are usually concerned not with drafting details but with general principles, and those need to be stressed. The first point of principle about the need for the Bill is that it brings Northern Ireland legislation into line with that of Great Britain. Unless there are overriding reasons for distinctions, we should generally move in that direction. However, people should not make more out of that than necessary.

It may have been just a sideswipe to the point that he was making, but the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. McCartney) said that this was an integrationist measure which brought Northern Ireland and Great Britain legislation into line, and that the Bill therefore began to solidify the notion of integration and the ties that must take place. But integration and Northern Ireland's future and structure are being addressed in the peace process, and will feature in eventual talks.

I accept that the hon. Gentleman may wish to argue from his integrationist platform, but we should not argue that this legislation alters the position and points us in one direction or another. Nor should it be argued that it is a sop to the IRA. Although it may not be voted against, it does not give in to terrorist pressures. Indeed, the reverse is true.

The second point of principle is that the Bill relates to the peace process. The position of prisoners who will be affected by the Bill has changed, as they are less likely to reoffend, for the reasons spelled out by some of my hon. Friends. It should not be argued that the Bill is some sort of deal to try to nudge the peace process forward. Rather, we should consider the impact that the peace process should already have had.

We must advance all those arguments in terms of the principles of the Bill, but must have no illusions about what is taking place in Northern Ireland. The mafia-type activities of paramilitary groups on both sides, and the hideous nature of punishment beatings, should be at the front of our minds.

In an effective contribution, my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) said that he had chaired a meeting on the Labour conference fringe attended by ex-terrorists from the two sides. He explained the problems that they had had, why they had moved in that direction, and the lessons that had been learned since. That is important when we consider the argument that there is now less likelihood of terrorists offending.

I too chaired a meeting on Northern Ireland issues. We were shown a silent video about the impact on a number of people of hideous punishment beatings, which were carried out with sticks, and sticks with nails in them. The video was presented by a group called Families Against Intimidation and Terror, which has stood out bravely against such violence and intimidation.

I do not deny the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith, but that is the other side of the picture. We must put into the analysis the fact that a great deal of unacceptable activity is still going on. The full processes of the law to which the Bill refers must be pursued to ensure that those responsible for punishment beatings or for banishing people so that they are too frightened to return to their homes in Northern Ireland are dealt with.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I hope that the hon. Gentleman agrees that, over the years, many journalists have done a great service to people in Northern Ireland by covering events there. Does he agree that it would be a good idea if the advance guard of north American journalists were to contact Families Against Intimidation and Terror, speak to some of the families who have had members banished, and learn that the punishment beatings are still going on? Those who come with the President could then have a full picture of the improvements that have taken place, and the improvements that are still needed.

Mr. Barnes: Yes. On one occasion, Families Against Intimidation and Terror followed Gerry Adams around during his much-publicised activities in America. That group has had an impact on President Clinton's understanding of the situation. President Clinton has made statements about the nature of punishment beatings and banishments and the issue often attached to that, which is the problem of the bodies of the disappeared.

The relatives of the disappeared want to know where the bodies are so that they can give them normal Christian burials, whatever side of the community they come from. Action could be taken by paramilitary groups. If they detach themselves from punishment beatings and banishments and show where those bodies are hidden, it would help to alter the climate. It would also allow us to tell people on the Unionist side that the circumstances are beginning to shift considerably, and there is no reason why they cannot become involved in discussions with Sinn Fein.

The problem is that there are always two sides to the argument in Northern Ireland. The developing peace process and the changes that it has brought about, and the attitude among prisoners and others, need to be responded to. At the same time, however, a mixture of mafia and criminal non-political activity is still being linked with the pressure for political change.

In some areas, the writ of the RUC, for instance, does not operate, but a paramilitary group—perhaps the IRA—controls law and order and therefore decides who is guilty and carries out the punishments. As punishments are no longer allowed to be carried out with guns, they are done with hockey sticks or sticks with nails, which are often worse than some of the punishments that were carried out previously.

My solution to the problems that have been spelt out is different from that which the spokesman on behalf of the Democratic Unionist party seemed to suggest, when he argued that there were no circumstances in which one should have dealings with Sinn Fein or other similar forces.

There is a climate of change, but I accept that there are massive difficulties involved in initiating a dialogue between people who have suffered from all sorts of violence and intimidation and those who are guilty of such acts. We will not make any progress unless the men and women of violence renounce violence, and those who have suffered from it express a willingness to be reconciled to and enter into dialogue with those who inflicted that suffering. They must do that without feeling that they have conceded and surrendered to those who committed that violence.

Although the Bill may be subject to some redrafting, I believe that it is a correct and just proposal, which will help the peace process.

6.20 pm

Mr. Jim Dowd (Lewisham, West): The last Bill in which I was involved in an official capacity, then as Opposition Whip, was the Environment Bill 1995. It ran to 300 clauses, 21 schedules and nine parts—and two telephone books—by the time it was finished. The contrast with the Northern Ireland (Remission of Sentences) Bill could hardly be more stark. Just because the Bill is made up of just five clauses, and we have had twice as many speakers as that number, does not in any way underestimate its immense importance.

I repeat the Opposition's broad welcome and support for the Bill. As has already been said, we have been pushing for such a Bill for some time. In fairness to the Secretary of State, he made it clear that such a Bill would be introduced at the earliest opportunity. We welcomed that commitment.

Although the Opposition support the Bill, my hon. Friend the Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) described in some detail those parts of the Bill that require clarification or improvement. I hope that the Secretary of State will accept our suggestions in the spirit in which they were made.

We have expressed our concern about clause 1 and the review and appeal mechanism. Many hon. Members have expressed reservations about clause 1(3). The systems governing the treatment of prisoners should no longer be solely within the Secretary of State's ambit. We all understand why it was necessary for successive Secretaries of State to accrue more and more powers over the years, but if the peace process is unfolding as successfully as the introduction of the Bill seems to suggest, those powers should be shed. That should not be achieved in a random fashion, but when a suitable opportunity arises.

Clause 2 relates to the date on which the Bill will be brought into operation. Why is a statutory instrument necessary? We all hope that we do not reach a stage when clauses 3 and 4 were required, as that would presage a grave deterioration in the situation in Northern Ireland. In that event, issues such as recall on licence or the suspension of the Bill would be just two of the matters that we believe the House would need to discuss as soon as possible. I am not aware that anyone has any great reservations about clause 5, so the Opposition can live with it.

The Secretary of State should spend a few moments explaining why the Bill has been introduced hurriedly. The right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) has always been closely involved in Northern Ireland matters, and it was extremely worrying to hear that he did not obtain his copy of the Bill until 2 o'clock this afternoon, particularly, as hon. Members have already said, since the Bill's introduction was expected some time ago. Its preparation and introduction should have been more seemly, if not more timely, than they have been. Although it was published on Thursday, I sincerely hope that the Bill was drafted well before then, but some of our comments about its deficiencies may suggest that it was not drafted much before Thursday.

We must take into account the public view of legislation that is introduced in a hurry and rushed through all its stages, as the Bill has been. People outside think that the House of Commons ignores issues for a long time, and then, in a flurry of activity, rushes through relevant legislation in a matter of hours. We must have regard not

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only to the quality of such legislation, but to the effect that such a speedy process has on the reputation of the House among people outside.

Everyone is aware that the current situation in Northern Ireland is extremely delicate. Recent welcome progress will be sustained only by further progress on a wide range of issues. That process should involve everyone: the Government are far from the only players. Regardless of technical definitions, the reality is that hardly anything is unconnected in Northern Ireland. The hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) made that point with eloquence and authority. The whole process must stick together as a matrix.

The hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) said that the peace process was more robust than many people believed. I noticed that he began his speech by saying that he intended to be moderately helpful. I am not sure whether any hon. Members were able to identify which bits of his speech were moderate and which were helpful. They were well concealed, if naught else.

Mr. Wilshire: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to his new post. If he had been in it longer, he would have heard me being unhelpful, which is distinctly different.

Mr. Dowd: That is a pleasure, I presume, which I have yet to enjoy. I look forward to it with interest.

If the peace process is as robust as the hon. Gentleman has suggested, we need have no fear, but it is incumbent on all involved to ensure that they do all they can to move the process along. Generally, I believe that it will move along according to the convoy principle—at the pace of the slowest—or at least, we hope so. It is incumbent on us to ensure that the pace of the slowest is not so slow that the convoy comes to a grinding halt. To maintain momentum will not be easy, but given the sensitivities and delicacy of the process, it is imperative that maintaining that momentum remains an ever present discipline on us all.

We are all committed to the fastest rate of progress, but we have heard the conflicting views today on so many of the matters involved. We have heard the Bill described as a concession bordering on a sell-out, while others have argued that its aim is immensely modest. Although that is symptomatic of how many issues affecting the people and politics of Northern Ireland are viewed, between the two extremes lies the nature of the subject we are dealing with.

The Labour party does not believe that the process needs to be a zero sum gain. We are aware that progress must be achieved on a broad front; it must be maintained, and must offer reassurance to everyone. They must be reassured that their interests are not being neglected, and that their past sufferings are not being made light of. It is a great credit to the Government and many others that they are taking the opportunity to break away from the fixed attitudes of the past, and to attack the causes of conflict. Those causes of fear, confrontation, distrust and injustice cannot be wished away, but the Bill is essential if we are to remove those causes.

I am sure that no one in the House could do other than listen carefully to the right hon. Member for Strangford, who has suffered so criminally and cruelly at the hands of terrorists. He described the enormity of the task before us, and the circumstances that still prevail in large parts of Northern Ireland.

The enormity of the task must not paralyse us into inactivity. It is precisely because of the enormity of the task that we believe that we must approach that process carefully and thoughtfully but none the less deliberately. We should never be afraid to take risks for peace, but we must never take risks with peace. Those people who genuinely follow the difficult road of peace have our support; those who would undermine or obstruct it will find no friends in the Labour party.

Our worries are about the effectiveness of the measure. The Secretary of State knows the way in which every statement and action relating to Northern Ireland is scrutinised for perceived bias, lack of even-handedness or even lack of understanding. That is why we keenly look forward to what he has to say to us. We shall respond to what he says to us now when we return to the matter in Committee.

6.29 pm

Sir Patrick Mayhew: We have had an exceptionally thoughtful and fruitful debate. It warrants from me a longer or more detailed response to the arguments that have been made than I had intended. I nevertheless hope that my speech will be short.

There has been universal support for the Bill, and for that I am grateful. It has been shaded, in one way or another, by one or other hon. or right hon. Member during the debate, but the principle of the Bill is undoubtedly supported.

The aspect of the Bill that attracted the greatest support is the progress that it makes towards diminishing differences between Northern Ireland's jurisdiction and the other jurisdictions in the United Kingdom in the context of the treatment of terrorist offences. There is no doubt, as I said at the outset of my opening speech, that that is the purpose of the Bill.

The purpose of the Bill is achieved by restoring a position that obtained between 1976 and 1989, whereby there was an entitlement to release at the time that the halfway mark was reached. The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) mentioned the Labour party's bipartisan approach to the Government's policy on security in Northern Ireland, and I am very glad to acknowledge that with appreciation. He said that the Bill is fair and principled, and observed that exact equality between the jurisdictions is not possible, by reason of, to begin with, the absence in Northern Ireland of a parole board system.

The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie asked several questions. Specifically, he asked what impact the proposals announced by my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary would have on the Bill.

The Bill affects relatively few prisoners, whose position is unique. The ideas of my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary will need, as he has acknowledged, to be worked up into firm proposals for the jurisdiction for which he is responsible, after which they will be considered very generally, not least by Ministers with responsibilities for Northern Ireland.

There is no reason why developments in either jurisdiction are necessarily appropriate to the other, so we need to consider what may emerge during what the Home Secretary acknowledged would be a substantial period.

The hon. Gentleman asked what the impact of the measures would be on lifers. The impact on lifers does not follow as a matter of law from the Bill's provisions. However, the ceasefires represent, or have occasioned, a reduction in the perceived risk of further terrorist offences being committed, and that perception will have a bearing on the manner in which the life sentence review board considers questions coming before it in respect of mandatory life-sentenced prisoners because one of the criteria that it takes into account is the risk of re-offending.

The hon. Gentleman rightly said that the procedure that we are inviting the House to adopt for the Bill warranted the taking of what, in other circumstances, might be some Committee points, and I entirely accept that. He asked about the licence provisions in subsection (2) of clause 1 and asked if there was to be freedom to create any conditions that seemed fit to the Secretary of State.

The answer is that there is no conditional licence. No conditions will be attached to the licence. The substantive law will provide that, in the words of subsection (3):

> "The Secretary of State may revoke a person's licence . . . if it appears to him that the person's continued liberty would present a risk to the safety of others or that he is likely to commit further offences".

That is to be distinguished from the conditions that apply to a licence that the parole board in England and Wales habitually makes.

Mr. Soley: That is what puzzles and perhaps worries people. I understand that a person can be recalled if they are believed to be a security risk again, but if, for example, a person who is released is seen to meet someone who is known to be a security risk—it might be a one-off meeting or there might be two or three, perhaps in the context of family or friends—the power to recall would appear to be entirely a matter of judgment for the Home Secretary, depending on whether he considers that such a meeting was a breach of the licence. That is the difficulty.

Sir Patrick Mayhew: That is the aspect of the Bill on which most questioning has focused. In the case of the Home Secretary, there is the parole board's recommendation to consider. In the case of a mandatory life sentence, the Home Secretary also has the power to consider the impact on public confidence and other matters of public interest, and the ultimate decision whether the prisoner shall be released on licence rests with the Home Secretary.

In Northern Ireland, as has been accepted, we have no parole board. Someone must make that decision. It has been suggested that it is unsafe to give carte blanche to the Secretary of State in those circumstances. It was suggested that it should be limited to scheduled offences only. May I say, in the first instance, that we are considering here whether there needs to be reassurance for people who view with misgivings the reform that the Bill proposes, as it affects those offenders responsible for very serious terrorist-related offences.

The Government believe that reassurance is needed, and that there is a need for a licensing provision to apply during that period—from the 50 per cent. mark to the two thirds mark, at which the offender would, in ordinary circumstances, be released on remission. We are talking only of fixed, determinate sentences.

We believe that reassurance is needed. Very well. Who is to undertake the decision whether to revoke a licence? That power is necessary, in our opinion.

It is difficult to envisage how that can effectively be done otherwise than by the Secretary of State in the circumstances of Northern Ireland. However, I invite the House to consider whether there are not, in practice, substantial safeguards. It cannot be done without reasons being given to the offender. I recognise that there would be a legitimate anxiety if those reasons were not to be given in writing. That is not in terms specified in the Bill, but I am perfectly prepared to give an undertaking in the House that in practice those reasons always will be given in writing. I do so in the knowledge that the recent jurisprudence shows that it is open, on judicial review, for a court to have regard to what is said by a Minister in my present circumstances, and that that will be relevant in judicial review proceedings. That is something that I can tell Opposition Members who have raised that anxiety, and I think that it goes a significant way towards meeting their concern.

Mr. Worthington: The Secretary of State is making a helpful response, but his legal expertise is much greater than mine. He says that the matter will be subject to judicial review; but can he give us some idea of the time lapse between the revocation of a licence—and the unhappiness of the person concerned about that revocation—and the likely judgment following a judicial review? How long would that person have been "inside" during the judicial review?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: That is a very proper question. The courts are able to hear very quickly an application to grant leave for a judicial review where questions of personal liberty are concerned. It is certainly open to a court, where it gives leave, to suspend the revocation until such time as the judicial review is heard, or to achieve that effect by granting bail. Here I speak without the advice of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General. What the Bill does is say that detention—or redetention—shall be proper once the licence has been revoked. A large document has just been handed to me.

We shall see.

Mr. Mallon *rose—*

Sir Patrick Mayhew: I must say "We shall see", for this reason. It is never possible to set out, in precise and comprehensive terms, the circumstances in which an executive decision will be overturned on judicial review. It is possible to set out the criteria that a court will apply: in a nutshell, it will apply the test of fairness. It all boils down to the question, "Was the Executive action fair?" If it was capricious; if it was based on a wrong direction in regard to the law; if it took into account matters that were irrelevant, or failed to take into account matters that were relevant—in those instances, the courts would generally consider the action unfair. Judicial review thus represents a substantial safeguard against what Opposition Members have properly identified as a potential danger.

Mr. Mallon: Is there not a parallel between what the Secretary of State is saying now and the position relating to exclusion orders that existed under the Prevention of Terrorism Act? Yes, the Secretary of State was making the decision; yes, the Secretary of State gave reasons; yes, the Secretary of State gave those reasons in writing. To my knowledge, however—I stand to be corrected—at no stage did a Secretary of State ever give the type of

[Mr. Mallon]

evidence that a person would require as to why that person should be excluded, or, in the present instance, returned to gaol.

Is there not some merit in the idea of re-examining all those cases of exclusion orders to establish the existence of anything other than a bland written connection with a paramilitary organisation, rather than evidence that would stand up under other scrutiny?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: I will not go into all the jurisprudence concerning exclusion orders, for the excellent reason that I am not familiar with all the details. I do not know whether an exclusion order has been overturned on judicial review; what I can say is that exactly the same principles as those that I have just described would be applied by the courts—and doubtless were applied by the courts that considered judicial review of any exclusion order.

I recognise the proper concern that has been expressed. I do not think that the public would be sufficiently reassured, however, if we limited the power to revoke and recall to a subsequent scheduled offence, and the likelihood of the commission of such an offence. That is exactly the reason that the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. McCartney) gave in an intervention in my opening speech.

Again, I give an assurance—in the knowledge that it can be referred to in subsequent court proceedings—that the power is intended to operate only in the case of serious offences: if there is a likelihood of a serious offence being committed. That ought to go without saying, but I say it. When someone's liberty has been restored on licence, no one wants that person to be returned to prison for some trivial or insubstantial reason. That assurance should meet the anxieties of Opposition Members, in conjunction with the undertaking in regard to written reasons.

The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie made three suggestions. First, he asked whether paragraphs (a) and (b) in clause 1(4) should be reversed. There is a technical reason for them to be in that order—or, at least, it is highly desirable for them to be. A change would be possible, but the provisions are set out in this way to shorten the drafting, and I do not believe that there will be any substantial consequence. *[Interruption.]* I think that that is the case.

Mr. Worthington: My hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Dowd) spoke earlier of the lengthy Bills with which he has been associated. I find it extraordinary that trade union considerations seem to have become involved in a five-clause Bill—"We are not drafting any more today; it is getting too long." Surely the logic is that the person concerned should be informed of the reasons for the revocation in writing, and that he should then have a right to make representations. It should not be the other way round.

Sir Patrick Mayhew: It is a matter of elegance and drafting clarity, rather than a matter of substantive effect. If that ranks high in the list of the Opposition's serious objections to the Bill, I do not think that we are doing too badly.

Mr. Eric Illsley (Barnsley, Central): Let us examine this logically. Subsection (4) states:

"If a person's licence is revoked . . . he may make representations in writing to the Secretary of State",

and afterwards,

"he shall as soon as is practicable be informed of the reasons".

Will we not find that, if a licence is revoked, representations are made to the Secretary of State before the licensee has been given the reasons for its revocation in the first place?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: The Bill makes it clear by the use of the words

"as soon as is practicable"

that the person must be told at the time when the revocation is acted on and, as I have said, that will be done in writing. In practice, it always is done in writing: no decision of this character, whether in Northern Ireland or in Great Britain, in the case of mandatory life sentences, is taken without much consideration, and such decisions are put in writing. I do not think that this matter should detain the House for long. If it were of any consequence in terms of the Bill's effect, I would wish to consider it.

Mr. Worthington: I am puzzled. Those who drafted the Bill thought it necessary to state:

"he may make representations in writing to the Secretary of State".

We are merely asking the Secretary of State to put the reasons for the revocation in writing. Why cannot that provision be contained in paragraphs (a) and (b)?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: I recognise why the representations are being made to me—although not in writing. I have already given a binding undertaking that all reasons will be given in writing by the Secretary of State. Are the Opposition really suggesting that the Bill should not proceed to another stage in the light of my undertaking? I think that, upon reflection, they will realise that I have answered their objections. I understand why they raised those objections, but there will be no practical difference in view of my undertaking.

The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie then asked why the Bill had proceeded with such haste. In my opening speech I explained that at the earliest opportunity—given that it is 12 months since the ceasefires—it is necessary for the Government to show that they are not reluctant to respond in a positive, prudent and practical way to the perceived reduced risk. That is why I did not want to wait to introduce the legislation in the new session when the House will be anxious to proceed with the highly desirable measures that will be set out in the Queen's Speech.

The hon. Gentleman then said that there must be some judicial input in the process—perhaps an intermediary body. He acknowledged that the probation service in Northern Ireland is not equipped to perform that task. I have dealt with the matter already and I hope that he will accept that I have given a satisfactory assurance. He next said that there was no reference to legal aid for people whose licence was revoked. Legal aid is certainly available in cases of judicial review—at least where leave has been granted. I hope that I have allayed his anxieties in that context.

The hon. Gentleman then asked whether clause 2, the commencement clause, was really needed. That rather surprised me. It is necessary in order to ensure that the release of prisoners can be managed in an orderly way. That is an important point. The hon. Gentleman then asked whether someone who was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for a scheduled offence and who would expect to be released on licence in seven and a half years under the terms of the Bill would be "caught" if the Bill were revoked. A person's release will not be revoked automatically; it will be revoked only if circumstances special to him warrant it. I emphasise what I said at the outset: circumstances special to the offender will determine how the Bill's provisions affect him.

The hon. Gentleman then asked why clauses 3 and 4 were in the Bill and said that the House should be recalled. I do not think that that should be obligatory. Clauses 3 and 4 set out the way in which suspension or revival of section 1 can be carried out. The House must give its affirmative approval to a draft order, except in conditions of urgency and that special exception has long been incorporated in the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1991 in another context. I hope that the House will forgive me for taking some time to answer the hon. Gentleman, but it was necessary in view of the quality and the character of his inquiries.

My hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter), who takes a particularly careful interest in the affairs of Northern Ireland, said that the Bill's provisions were justified in their own right, that the timing was correct and that the Bill represents a small but significant step in normalising life in Northern Ireland. I am grateful for his support and I agree with his remarks. He is in favour of the Bill for two reasons: it is a step towards normalising life in the Province; and it is a step forward in an area that is important to many people. That is absolutely correct. He observed that current terms were imposed when circumstances were very different. That is also true, as I endeavoured to point out in my opening speech.

The Bill does not offend any principle. The ceasefires have modified the position and the measures may help to consolidate the peace, but that is not their purpose. The purpose of the measures is to respond to the new circumstances and to make further progress towards closing the gap between what applies in Northern Ireland and what applies in other jurisdictions in the United Kingdom. My hon. Friend rightly pointed out that the provisions may be reversed if circumstances demand it.

The right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) said that his party would not oppose the Bill, and I am grateful for his support. He asked why the Bill had been introduced so hastily and I have dealt with that question already. He also inquired about the difference between the Home Secretary's proposals and those in the Bill. I hope that I have already dealt sufficiently with that query.

The right hon. Gentleman has long experience in this area and he encouraged the House by saying that he remained confident that the ceasefires were "for real". I was very glad to hear that. We have adopted a working assumption that they will be permanent and we hope that our assumption will be verified.

The right hon. Gentleman said, however, that the IRA is still there, it is retaining its arsenals and it still has the means to recommence violence. That is undoubtedly and disgracefully true. The right hon. Gentleman also pointed to the apparent stalling in the prosecution of terrorist offences in the past 14 months. He said that there had been only three prosecutions for murder since the ceasefires. That matter is entirely within the jurisdiction of the Attorney-General, who superintends the Director of Public Prosecutions; it is not a matter for the Executive arm of Government. I point out, as I did in my speech, that there have been only two deaths as a result of terrorist activity since the ceasefires. One of those involved the case of Constable Jim Seymour who was injured 22 years previously. That factor has a bearing on the right hon. Gentleman's statistical contrast.

The right hon. Gentleman asked whether release would be automatic at the half-way mark and said that his party did not like that idea. It is an automatic release and one might ask: why not simply revert from a third to one-half remission? The answer is that a technical consequence of remission at 50 per cent. would be the end of the sentence at 50 per cent. That would prevent the provision of a licensing consequence, which we want the Bill to confer.

The right hon. Gentleman said that his party disliked the distinction that would be associated with terrorist offences and he said that the provision should extend to licensing for all serious offenders. The answer to that, I fear, is that we do not have the resources or the structures in Northern Ireland to extend licensing so broadly. That might be a matter for another day and for consideration in another context.

The right hon. Gentleman then asked a very proper question about consequences for the prison service. We have the highest regard for the contribution that the prison service has made during the years of the emergency. It is difficult to say what prison jobs will be required in the future because we do not know what the circumstances will be. The answer will depend on other factors, such as rates of offending and conviction, but we shall consider the matter in light of full consultation with those in the prison service who have served us so well.

My hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire), who takes an equally careful interest in Northern Ireland, said that he would support the Bill and I am grateful for that. I warmly agree with him that it is never proper to trade prisoners for talks or for any political advantage and we act upon that principle. He gave his support on the assumption that all the Bill does is treat all the prisoners in the United Kingdom in the same way even if there are some exceptions, as undoubtedly there have to be, given the structural differences and I am grateful to confirm that. He asked whether it was paving the way to further relaxations. It is not. He correctly asserted that it was not an amnesty and that the motivation was not to allow further concessions. It is not. I can reassure my hon. Friend that there is no acceptance of the political prisoner status. I can also reassure him that there will be no relaxation in the diligence of the RUC in seeking out crimes of this character and that the Bill is not about prisoners of a special character.

I was disappointed to hear the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) speak in slighting terms of the character and quality of justice administered by the Diplock courts. I agree with the point that was made in rebuttal of that by the hon. and learned Member for North Down (Mr. McCartney). I have never heard the quality of justice in the Diplock courts seriously questioned. I think that it was Lord Justice MacDermott who said in the Republic last weekend that it had proved possible to administer a higher quality of justice given the absence of a jury in certain types of case by reason of the circumstances particular to Northern Ireland at the moment. We would all like to see the day when jury trial can be fully restored, but it has not yet been fully restored in the Republic of Ireland.

[Sir Patrick Mayhew]

The right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) has kindly explained why he cannot be here. I agree with him that the Bill is a step towards restoring parity of treatment with other Great Britain jurisdictions and I am grateful for his support.

The right hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) welcomed the Bill. Together with the right hon. Member for Strangford, he has suffered much by way of actual attack or by threat and the House listens to him with particular respect in consequence. He made an eloquent appeal for imaginative responses to the change that has occurred by reason of the ceasefires. I agree with him that the proposals were not a sign of weakness or a signal of the Government's political response to peace. He spoke of there being two arbitrary discretions for the Secretary of State. I hope that I have dealt sufficiently and sensibly with that.

The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley)—again a close student of Irish affairs over many years—spoke of the criterion for recall on licence. I shall not repeat myself. I have taken seriously the points that have been made and I believe that the answers and assurances that I have given ought to be sufficient to allay the concerns that have been expressed.

I have already referred to the interesting speech by the hon. and learned Member for North Down. He rightly observed that terrorist crime is continuing. He spoke of the disgraceful intimidation and the terrible injuries inflicted in bullying beatings and he paid tribute to standards of justice administered by the courts. He asked us to remember the feelings of the victims and I am glad that I included in my speech a passage with that purpose, which I meant most sincerely. I am glad that he does not believe that we are bringing forward the Bill for some political purpose. He is right in that regard.

That brings me to the speech of the hon. Member for Mid-Ulster (Rev. William McCrea). To my regret, I detected a rather sour note in his understanding of the motivation of the Bill. He asked whether it was right for the feelings of those who are victims to be taken into account. Had he found it possible to be present when I made my speech, he would have heard me say that those very proper feelings should always be present in our minds. I am anxious to bear in mind all the concerns of victims of terrorism by whatever means.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy) spoke with much knowledge and conviction about the Bill's provisions. He expressed misgivings about its character in some respects—which I entirely understand—but came down in favour of it because of the necessity imposed by the special circumstances in Northern Ireland. He too expressed anxiety about the Secretary of State's discretion to revoke and I hope that I have sufficiently satisfied him there.

Lastly, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) spoke of drafting defects. I hope that I have dealt sufficiently with those. He also adverted to the wicked punishment beatings and other manifestations of intimidation which still disfigure the scene in Northern Ireland at the hands of terrorist organisations that act in that way for political purposes.

I do not think that I need apologise for having dealt with the points raised, given the circumstances in which we are inviting the House to deal with the remaining stages of the Bill. I dealt with the scope and content of the Bill in opening and I do not need to repeat that now. It is emphatically not a concession to terrorism. It is not a reward to terrorism nor an inadequate begrudging response to the changes that have been brought about by the ceasefires. Instead it is a positive but proportionate and prudent response to the continuance of the ceasefires and the reductions in the risk of terrorist reoffending. Those factors permit a closing of the gap with the position obtaining in the other jurisdictions of the United Kingdom.

I attach the utmost importance to the responsibility resting upon the Government to protect the public from risk and the possibility of further reoffending, but I believe that the measures proposed in the Bill will have a positive and beneficial impact on the future of Northern Ireland and I commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House.—*[Mr. Willetts.]*

Bill immediately considered in Committee.

Clause 1

RELEASE ON LICENCE OF PERSONS SUBJECT TO RESTRICTED REMISSION

7.8 pm

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Worthington: I welcome the Secretary of State to the salt mines of the Committee stage. It must be a long time since he was down here with us in Committee. I am grateful to him for his response to the points that I raised on clause 1. I should like to take some of them a little further.

I was pleased to hear that there were to be no conditions to the licence. In a sense, that is not true because the condition is that prisoners will lose their licence if they are involved in behaviour that presents a risk to the safety of others or if they are likely to commit further offences, but it would be contentious, difficult and unacceptable if people on licence had to turn up at RUC stations or had restrictions on their liberty.

I welcome what the Secretary of State said about serious offences, which would be extremely important if there were any challenge. He said that revocation of the licence would apply only for serious offences. I assume that that would be especially important in terms of serious scheduled offences, although to some extent I recognise the difficulty of including scheduled offences.

On Second Reading drugs and the involvement of paramilitaries were mentioned. If a layman knew that someone was involved in drugs but could not prove it to the satisfaction of the court it would be tempting to use the route of revoking the licence rather than assembling evidence. We shall have to watch that and think about the matter. I hope that it is possible to amend the Bill in some way either here or in the Lords to convey what the Secretary of State said about serious offences. However, from a reading of clause 1(4)(a) and (b) I appreciate the difficulties. It seems that as the Bill has been printed it will not be changed. The points that we made about that clause were sensible and the subparagraphs should be in a different order.

We welcome the Secretary of State's remarks about judicial review. He recognises that he is not simply operating on his own, that the judiciary is watching over his shoulder and that he has to justify his behaviour. But, with respect, it is bad law and bad politics for a Secretary of State to take all these powers to himself and, inevitably, to rely upon restricted sources of information on which he would then make a judgment and say to people, "You can appeal to me." In political terms it is difficult for a judgment, once made, to be reversed.

The Secretary of State should think again about looking for an intermediate body. Perhaps at this moment he cannot think what the intermediary would be, but he is about to announce the setting up of a review body to look at the emergency legislation in general. A sensible part of the remit of that body could be to examine the necessity of distancing the Secretary of State from some parts of the process. I do not think that a Secretary of State of whatever political party should be in at every stage in the process. As a matter of routine, the people affected by the law should recognise that they will be able to appeal to a body that has not already made a judgment upon them. I hope the Secretary of State can assure me that the review body will be asked to look at this matter.

In the context of clause 1, I asked about legal assistance and the Secretary of State said he thought that he had answered me by saying that if there was a judicial review, legal aid would undoubtedly be available. But I am thinking about the stage before a judicial review when a person has had his licence revoked and wants to make representations to the Secretary of State. What legal assistance would that person receive to enable him to make such representations? If legal assistance is available only for a judicial review one would immediately be tempted to go for that. At the moment a person may have his licence revoked and lose his liberty—hardly anything could be more serious—and he has no guaranteed access to a lawyer. That seems inadequate and I await the Secretary of State's response.

Mr. Soley: I should like to build on the arguments put by my hon. Friend the Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington). I suspect that it is too late for significant changes to the Bill. That is one of the dangers of fast-track legislation and my hon. Friend's recommendation that a relevant body should look at the issue is a good idea.

I certainly support the notion of legal aid being available. If a person who is to be tried for an offence that is likely to lead to five years or more in prison is allowed legal aid it is odd that he should be denied it for a matter that could return him to prison for the full period of his sentence. In some circumstances the term could be life and it is hard to argue that such a person should not be granted legal aid.

7.15 pm

The substantive point is the difficulty surrounding the withdrawal of a licence. If someone who is subject to a licence wanders the streets with a loaded Armalite he will be recalled and there will be no doubt about it. But there are many reasons for thinking that the matter will rarely be as clear cut as that. The security forces may say to the Secretary of State, whoever he may be, that Mr. A is regularly associating with another person. In the context of Northern Ireland the other person may even be a relative. They may say, "We know that this person is involved in punishment beatings or perhaps the planning of another campaign of violence by a splinter group." Although that person may be a relative or a friend, will the Secretary of State recall the person on licence?

If the security forces recommend recall and if the Secretary of State has to give reasons in writing—to which he is committed, which is right—the second stage of the operation will be when the Secretary of State says, "I am recalling you because you are associating with people who we have reason to believe are connected with the planning of paramilitary offences or some other serious offence." I make it clear that I am not too worried about the offences being scheduled or wider because I understand that they may sometimes be wider.

If a person is recalled because he is associating with another over a period of time and because there is reasonable suspicion, the Secretary of State can be challenged. I am not a lawyer and the Secretary of State will know more about these matters than I do, but I suspect that he could be challenged by judicial review, and that the issue could go all the way to the European court. I doubt whether the Government would win, although I may be wrong. Recall under licence—even in the traditional setting here, where there is a parole board and probation officers and intermediaries—is difficult and leads to all sorts of dubious interpretations that are difficult to work out. Without a body, other than that of the security forces, between the Secretary of State and the person who is being recalled, the Secretary of State may well lose.

Sir Patrick Mayhew: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) for his welcome for the absence of conditions attaching to a licence. He welcomed my assurance that we intend to use revocation where there is an expectation or likelihood of serious offences being committed. He asked whether some way could be found for the Bill to be amended here or in the Lords to make that clear. I am afraid that I cannot give any commitment about that in another place. In any event, it is not necessary to do so. The assurance that I have given is binding and can be relied on in any judicial review proceedings to which it is relevant. I am therefore afraid that I cannot be helpful in that regard.

The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie welcomed my assurances about the availability of judicial review, but he made the point, which I understand very well, that it is difficult, or perceived to be difficult, for those working in an Executive capacity to reverse their own judgments. He asked me to think again about an intermediary body. He made the interesting suggestion that the review of the emergency provisions legislation might provide the means by which the matter could receive fuller consideration. I think that it might very well receive fuller consideration from the reviewer. It is a helpful suggestion that should be drawn to his attention. We should be very happy to give that undertaking, but, at the moment, I cannot take the undertaking any further along the lines that the hon. Gentleman wishes.

[Sir Patrick Mayhew]

The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) mentioned legal aid. The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie was talking about legal aid in drawing up the representations against the revocation of the offenders' licence. I wonder whether we are not getting into a slightly artificial position. The Bill states that the licence can be revoked only if the Secretary of State is prepared to give particulars in writing to the effect that it

> "appears to him that the person's continued liberty would present a risk to the safety of others or that he is likely to commit further offences".

I have now undertaken to restrict that to "serious" offences as a matter of practice.

The offender—the recalled person, or licensee—is going to be presented with those reasons in writing. It is for him to know whether there is a justifiable, factual basis for those reasons and it is for him above all others to say whether there is substance in them. It is not a matter on which, it seems to me, he will be assisted by legal advice. It is a matter that he and he alone is best able to deal with and can do so without the benefit of legal advice.

Where legal advice becomes important is when the licensee is conducting an application for judicial review. In that instance, as I have said, the legal aid scheme will provide it. I think that that is a satisfactory explanation of the Government's attitude to the proposal. I am afraid that I can give no further undertaking.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2

COMMENCEMENT

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Dowd: I shall not detain the Committee too long. The Secretary of State said earlier that clause 2 had been included to permit the orderly release of prisoners. I am sure that the House regards that as a desirable end, but I do not understand how that is connected with the contents of clause 2. Surely, it would be simple if the Act came into force on the day of Royal Assent and would have the virtue of clarity. I am not sure quite what else the statutory instrument envisaged in clause 2 would contain.

Given that the Secretary of State said that he envisaged the Act having effect by Christmas, and therefore being passed by early December, I should appreciate a little expansion on the reference to permitting orderly release.

Sir Patrick Mayhew: I have outlined the substantial numbers of prisoners who will benefit immediately from the provisions. We hope that Royal Assent will be granted quickly, but a substantial number of practical administrative arrangements must be undertaken before the prisoners in question can be released. It is our intention that they should be released before Christmas and as soon as is practicable, but I have to provide, as I do in clause 2, for an orderly and timely undertaking of the arrangements that have to be made. There is nothing more to it than that.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 3

SUSPENSION AND REVIVAL OF SECTION I

Question proposed, That the clause stand part of the Bill.

Mr. Dowd: As the Secretary of State said earlier, the power granted in clause 3 will come into effect only in very serious circumstances, or at least we imagine that to be the case and hope that such circumstances will not arise. However, clause 3 seems rather a blunt instrument. We understand why it is included, but it is all or nothing. We can envisage circumstances, for example, in which one particular group could so upset the current progress in Northern Ireland that its prisoners could not be released. Would that then mean that the Secretary of State was forced to take such blanket action against everyone, even prisoners associated with other groups that were not necessarily involved in jeopardising the progress?

Clause 3 seems entirely unselective, but clause 1(2) states:

> "A person to whom this section applies shall be released".

There is no discretion in clause 1(2); does clause 3 not provide any either?

Sir Patrick Mayhew: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's interesting contribution. I understand what lies behind it, but the problem lies in part in the difficulty of precisely identifying an affiliation with one particular group or paramilitary organisation. Sometimes that affiliation is abundantly clear and admits of no shading; in other instances, there is shading.

The right way to proceed is to provide what the hon. Gentleman rightly describes as the blanket power to suspend, or later revive, the operation of clause 1 but to bear in mind always that the effect of the revocation will not be retrospective on someone who has already been licensed and that the revocation of the licence of someone who has already been licensed will depend on the circumstances pertaining particularly to that person. Those two factors, I think, avoid the risk of taking too broad an approach. I think that that is what lies behind the hon. Gentleman's submission.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 4 and 5 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Motion made, and Question, That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put forthwith and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(9) (European Standing Committees),

TOURISM

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 6871/95 and the Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum submitted by the Department of National Heritage on 5th July 1995 relating to tourism, and supports the Government's objective of ensuring that proposals take fully into account the impact on tourism without recourse to additional competence or resources.—*[Mr. Willetts.]*

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(9) (European Standing Committees),

ADVERTISING

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 6591/94, relating to comparative advertising, and supports the Government's view that harmonisation of the rules on comparative advertising is to be welcomed, that the draft Directive should contain only those restrictions which are essential, and that the current draft test will require amendment before it can be considered acceptable.—*[Mr. Willetts.]*

Question agreed to.

CATERING

Ordered,

That Mr. Anthony Steen be discharged from the Catering Committee and Sir Donald Thompson be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. MacKay, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]*

Aircraft Noise (Windsor)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Willetts.]*

7.29 pm

Mr. Michael Trend (Windsor and Maidenhead): The House will know that parliamentary private secretaries are restricted in what they may speak about in the Chamber in relation to matters covered by their Departments. Until recently, I had the honour of being PPS to my right hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney) when he was Secretary of State for Transport. I am delighted that he has gone on to become our party chairman and was astonished, but very grateful, when he asked me to go with him to become the party's deputy chairman.

That move meant of course that my right hon. Friend and I were sadly deprived of the good company and sense of my hon. Friend the Minister for Transport in London. My hon. Friend will know, however, that I frequently brought up the concerns of my constituents in Windsor about aircraft noise when we met at the Department. Now that I am released from the obligations of being a PPS, I shall raise those concerns in the Chamber. Indeed, if my hon. Friend thought that I was something of a pest during our private conversations, I trust that he will find me an even greater nuisance in our public debates.

In raising this matter on behalf of Windsor, I should like to associate myself with the cause of my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay), whose constituents in Datchet and Horton are similarly affected by the noise pollution created by planes landing at Heathrow from the west. I am delighted to see my hon. Friend, who is of course a member of the silent service, in his place on the Treasury Bench.

It is a rather complex argument, and it would perhaps be easier if I gave compasses to all the hon. Members who are present. Indeed, I need to establish a few opening points if the House is to follow my main argument, which is that it is high time that greater priority was given to alleviating aircraft noise over Windsor.

First, there are two runways at Heathrow—the north and the south, which both run east-west. In all but the most exceptional circumstances, planes take off from one, while landing takes place on the other. Both take-offs and landings take place in the same direction against the wind. So if the wind is in the west, planes will take off westwards from one runway, while those landing will come into the other runway from the east. Since the wind is more frequently in the west, that indeed is the pattern for the great majority of days of the year. But when the wind moves to the east, planes take off towards London and therefore land over Windsor. It is that pattern on which I wish to concentrate.

It is a historical misfortune that Windsor and the other places that I mentioned lie directly under the approach to one of Heathrow's runways, the north runway. When planes land, they use a complex very high-frequency instrument landing system known as the ILS, which guides them very precisely along a straight line down on to the runway. It is a measure of technological advance that planes now pick up that direct line many miles away from the airport. That is known as establishing the ILS.

[Mr. Michael Trend]

I can tell the House from great personal experience that that straight line is established well before most planes reach Windsor when they are landing from the west. Indeed, only yesterday, when conditions meant that planes were landing from the west, I stood in my garden in central Windsor and verified once again the monotonous regularity and precision of planes coming in to land at Heathrow.

The din created by the planes right overhead is appalling, and that is especially true when the weather is good, when people wish to open their windows and sit out of doors. Much of the best weather in the south of England during all seasons is brought about by the very conditions that dictate planes landing from the west: when the wind is in the east or stable.

The House will understand the serious problem that afflicts Windsor when planes are landing over the town. The planes are very low in the sky; it is simple task for people of averagely good sight to read off the identifying numbers. Moreover, many planes come over with their undercarriages lowered and their engines straining in that especially annoying, whining way that characterises high-powered machines working hard.

I hope that I have established to the House's satisfaction that there is a serious problem for my constituents. Before I go on to suggest how things might be improved, I need to raise two other wider matters.

First, there is still a general perception that take-offs, rather than landings, cause the greater offence in noise terms. There was a time when take-offs were the more serious and immediate problem, but I believe that that has changed. Great efforts were made to reduce the noise impact of take-offs, and they have been very successful. Now, however, the noise of planes landing should be seen as a much greater problem and I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to encourage the British Airports Authority, Heathrow and the carriers that use the airport to give much higher priority to alleviating the problems of landing noise.

At the moment, landing noise from the west seems a low priority to the airport authorities. While I accept that Heathrow has a greatly improved system of monitoring the noise impact of individual planes using the airport, it is clear from the location of the monitoring points on the ground around the airport that the problems associated with landings from the west are not taken sufficiently seriously.

My second point concerns the relief from the regular switching of runway use when the airport's movements become set for a while in one particular direction. Such switching is known as the runway alternation pattern. It happens only when the movements are in one direction and means that take-offs and landings are switched between the runways as planes are coming in and going out east to west.

In such conditions, planes taking off and landing switch runways at 3 o'clock every afternoon. That brings considerable and instant relief to those living in west London under the previously used flight path for landings, who are battered by the noise during the time preceding 3 o'clock. It is of prime importance to understand that that does not occur when the planes are landing from the other side—from over Windsor. When planes land from the west, they come down on only one runway, the north runway. There is therefore no switch; no relief for my constituents.

I said before that planes landing over Windsor do so with monotonous regularity and precision. To that I would add that they are relentless as well. Why is that? It is because when the wind is in the east, planes are permitted to take off only from the south runway, so all incoming planes have to land on the north runway, which, as I explained to the House, is the one in direct line with Windsor.

I have often asked why that cannot be changed, and the answer that I am given is that it is impossible because of a so-called Cranford agreement. The name refers to the settlement immediately to the east of the north runway. At an uncertain moment lost in the mists of time, it was decided that planes could take off only on the south runway when the airport's direction was west to east, and should not take off over Cranford.

But I have told the House already that circumstances have changed greatly in recent years. The so-called agreement may have seemed reasonable in the days when take-offs were regarded as a much more serious problem than landings, and before the advances that mean that planes now use much less of the runway to get airborne and rise much more quickly into the air. But it is no longer fair to hold to that so-called agreement against the interests of my constituents in Windsor.

As I said, the inflexible effect of the ILS means that we are subjected to the noise of all the planes coming in from the west without respite, which, certainly, was not the case in earlier times when landing practice was not nearly as precise as it is now.

Before I leave that particular topic, I should like to tell the House why I keep referring to the agreement as "so-called". I do so because I suspect that the agreement is in fact a convenient fiction. I have frequently asked to see a copy of the agreement. Unless my hon. Friend happens to have a copy tucked away in his pocket tonight, I must reach the conclusion that it simply does not exist. Can my hon. Friend please shed some light on the matter?

I would like my hon. Friend, therefore, to investigate the possibility of allowing planes to land on the south as well as the north runway when the airport's direction is west to east. I am asking only for the conditions that exist when planes are moving in the opposite direction. This is one thing that could be done to improve matters, but there are others.

I spoke earlier about the VHF technology that lays down that planes fly low and in a straight line over Windsor. I believe that an even more modern technology may, however, offer a new hope to my hard-pressed constituents. I understand that the system currently used at Heathrow may be replaced in the not-too-distant future by a new microwave system. It is my understanding that such a system would mean that planes would be able to lock on to a navigational path that was not necessarily laid down in a straight line. That is to say, a microwave ILS could bring planes in at different angles.

I am not advocating the dramatic change of course that those fortunate enough—if "fortunate" is the right word—to have landed at Hong Kong airport will have experienced. A microwave system could produce gentle curves that would be acceptable to passengers and much better for those who live below the present flight path. My hon. Friend will know that there are many areas around Windsor, where there are no large settlements, where that system might usefully be deployed. I ask my hon. Friend whether that is his understanding of the possibilities of a microwave instrument landing system. If so, are those developing the system looking closely into environmental concerns as well as the convenience of the carriers?

I know that my hon. Friend would be surprised if I did not mention one more matter—the vexed question of night flights, although I understand that in his present position, he will not be able to give me any assurances. He knows that I am utterly opposed to any night flights and that I energetically contested the decision to allow some to continue. Surely it is not unreasonable for my constituents and me to expect a good night's sleep. Other than for safety reasons, I would like all night flights to be stopped and I would like a wider definition, in terms of hours, of the word "night" in this context.

In bringing the matter of aircraft noise over Windsor before the House, I do not want my hon. Friend to think that what I have been doing is a simple exercise in airport-bashing—what one might call nombyism, or not over my back yard. I willingly recognise that Heathrow is one of our greatest national assets and that it is very important to its surrounding area, both as an employer and as a magnet for a vast number of firms that are deliberately located nearby.

One often hears people bewail the loss of our once-great ports and of our former maritime strength. When I hear this, I reply, "If you want to see evidence of how the great trading spirit of our enterprising people continues to thrive, just visit Heathrow." Moreover, I regard both BAA and British Airways as tremendous success stories, both in terms of Government policy and in terms of how their work force and management have transformed their companies. In this party, we recognise what is of real value for the future of the country and we hate to see our success stories knocked.

I am sure, however, that my hon. Friend will understand that local anger over night flights and anxieties over the proposed fifth terminal must be seen in the context of current conditions. I am sure that if the people of Windsor could feel that progress was being made to alleviate their present problems, good relations with Heathrow could be maintained. We want nothing other than a happy and flourishing relationship with the airport, but unless the matter of landing noise over Windsor is addressed, the relationship can only be difficult.

I remind my hon. Friend of the specific matters and questions that I have raised tonight. I would like much greater priority given to alleviating noise created by planes landing at Heathrow going over Windsor. I would like to know once and for all whether there is such a thing as the Cranford agreement. I would like to know why, in the changed circumstances that I have described, the present use of only one runway for landing from the west should not be varied. That should be looked into as a matter of urgent priority. I would like to be assured that the alleviation of noise nuisance over Windsor is at the front of the minds of those looking into a microwave landing system for Heathrow. I would like an assurance from the Minister that pilots bringing planes in from the west to land are under appropriate instructions to ensure that present noise levels are kept to an absolute minimum. I promised my hon. Friend at the start that I would be a nuisance. I trust, in a kindly meant way, that I have not disappointed him.

7.44 pm

The Minister for Transport in London (Mr. Steve Norris): My hon. Friend the Member for Windsor and Maidenhead (Mr. Trend) is entirely right; he has been a nuisance, but only in the charming way for which he is renowned. It would be remiss of me if I did not first congratulate him on his recent appointment. I, too, was astonished, but not a little pleased at the great honour bestowed on him. In all seriousness, I know that he will discharge his duties admirably. Indeed, he has done so tonight in raising the important issue of aircraft noise, especially in relation to his constituency of Windsor and Maidenhead.

I shall start, in a sense, where my hon. Friend finished, by acknowledging the importance of Heathrow airport as a major national asset. We ought not to forget that it continues to be the largest international airport in the world. This year, Heathrow airport will cater for more than 51 million passengers and 962,000 tonnes of freight. It is a workplace for 52,000 people directly and 26,000 people indirectly, including, I have no doubt, many of my hon. Friend's constituents. Heathrow contributes greatly to the prosperity of the area immediately surrounding the airport and to the wider national economy. I accept entirely that, whenever we consider these issues, that consideration has to be uppermost in our minds.

Equally, however, there is a downside to those activities. As my hon. Friend said, aircraft noise is probably one of the most obvious and unneighbourly attributes of any airport on a constituency doorstep. The noise, of course, is not constant, but it is, when it arises, extremely irritating. I live in Camberwell, south London, and although my home is not classically assumed to be among those affected by Heathrow, it none the less experiences considerable aircraft noise when wind and weather produce the particular conditions that bring the noise in my direction.

My hon. Friend said that the noise of landing aircraft is worse than the noise of aircraft taking off, and explained why in an interesting way. One would have assumed that the noise of an aircraft taking off at full thrust and gaining altitude would be greater than that of an aircraft on a steady rate of descent, simply coming in to land and losing height as it did so. My hon. Friend is right to say that, in recent years, there have been tremendous developments in the technology associated with maximum thrust and take-offs, which has substantially reduced the differential between the two aspects of airport movement.

My hon. Friend will accept that, frankly, people's perceptions of which is the worse activity depend on where they happen to be in relation to the runway. I acknowledge my hon. Friend's point, but I believe that his is not a unique perception; there are other points of view that contradict his. I shall recap some of the technical data that my hon. Friend introduced into the debate. He is correct to say that, for technical and safety reasons, aircraft operate into the wind and that at Heathrow, the prevailing winds are south-westerly. That means that the airport operates in a westerly direction for approximately 75 per cent. of the time. In other words, aircraft depart to the west and approach to land from the east over the city of London.

Aircraft leaving Heathrow are required to follow noise preferential routes—the so-called NPRs—which are designed as far as possible to avoid the most populated

[Mr. Steve Norris]

areas. Pilots are required to follow NPRs—unless otherwise specifically instructed by air traffic control—until they have attained an altitude of 4,000 ft. Only two of the NPRs in use during westerly operations might affect my hon. Friend's constituents, although they are designed to avoid Windsor and Maidenhead; the first lies roughly between Windsor and Slough and the other lies between Windsor and Old Windsor. The two NPRs are designed to minimise whatever noise may be in that area.

Since the noise track-keeping system at Heathrow became operational in 1993, it has been possible to monitor how well aircraft conform to routes and the system has shown that track-keeping on both of the routes is of a high standard.

Mr. Trend: Does that include take-offs?

Mr. Norris: The point is that landing aircraft require different characteristics. I shall refer to the microwave landing system—to which my hon. Friend referred—later, but my comments on NPRs are concerned with take-offs. To summarise, a pilot is obliged to follow one of two exit paths if he is travelling in a westerly direction until he reaches 4,000 ft. My hon. Friend knows his constituency intimately, and he will recognise that one route is designed to pass between Windsor and Maidenhead, while the other passes between Windsor and Old Windsor. I hope that that is clear to him.

It is difficult to apply the same principle to landings. Windsor is between five and eight miles due west of Heathrow—in the sense that the town is about three miles in diameter—and lies directly under an extended centre line of the approach to the northern runway. During easterly operations, a measure of overflight by landing aircraft is, I am afraid, unavoidable.

During daytime operations, aircraft must join the final approach at a minimum altitude of 2,500 ft approximately eight miles from the runway threshold. That is a minimum joining point and aircraft—particularly during busy periods—will in practice join the final approach further from the airport. For some time, it has been standard practice during night-time easterly operations to move the minimum joining point some two miles further from the airport, so that aircraft join the final approach at a minimum altitude of 3,000 ft, with a consequent reduction in disturbance. A trial use of that procedure during westerly operations was initiated in early September to try to bring similar relief to parts of west and central London.

Once an aircraft is established on its final approach, it is in a stabilised descent which requires less engine power. Pilots are also required wherever possible to adopt what is called a low-power, low-drag procedure as a further means of reducing noise disturbance.

Since 1972, during westerly operations, a system known as runway alternation has been operated. Essentially—as my hon. Friend outlined—under that system, one of the two main runways is assigned for landing aircraft and the other to departing aircraft. If the alternation lasts between 7am and 11pm, the switch is normally made at 3pm. The purpose of that is to give areas to the east of the airport predictable periods of relief from the noise of landing aircraft. Alternation is not operated during easterly operations due to the existence of the Cranford agreement, to which my hon. Friend referred.

I hope that I can clarify the status of that agreement. There is no secret about it. It is a long-standing arrangement to avoid—as far as possible—take-offs to the east over Cranford from the northern runway. My hon. Friend, with his natural sense of fairness, will accept that the community of Cranford is far closer to the runway than any part of my hon. Friend's constituency. That is a matter of fact. In the many years that the Cranford agreement has existed, neither Cranford nor Windsor—as far as I know—has changed its geographic location. My hon. Friend may be aware that surviving records of the agreement are far from complete, and no formal written agreement—if such a thing ever existed—can now be found.

In 1952, a senior official, with ministerial approval, gave the Cranford Residents and District Amenities Association a verbal undertaking that overflight of the area immediately to the east of the northern runway would be avoided as far as practicable, except during peak periods. Initially, that applied to both take-offs and landings, but subsequently the undertaking was confined to aircraft taking off over Cranford. It has not been possible to establish exactly when that change occurred.

Since the agreement was made, both runways have been extended at the western end. That has brought the communities of Poyle, Stanwell and Stanwell Moor to within similar distances of the end of the runway as Cranford was in the 1950s. The consequence of the Cranford agreement is that during normal daytime easterly operations, the northern runway is used for landing aircraft and the southern runway for departures.

Mr. Trend: I said that much had changed since 1952 when the understanding was reached, and I am delighted to hear my hon. Friend confirm that there was no proper agreement. If it is now possible to land aircraft over Cranford, why—with the change in technology associated with take-offs—can take-offs not also be considered for the area?

Mr. Norris: I shall reflect on the points that my hon. Friend has made, and I have listened with care to his arguments for the practical abandonment of the Cranford agreement. Abandoning the agreement would constitute a change to airspace arrangements, which would have a significantly detrimental effect on the environment, and would thus require the approval of the Secretary of State for Transport, whom I see in his place. I will reflect on my hon. Friend's observations.

Despite the absence of a formal written agreement, the undertakings were given in an entirely different climate when the airport and airlines were under nationalised control, but the commitments are honoured in the spirit in which they were made and on the understanding that they represent significant relief to the communities hardest pressed by their immediate proximity to the airport. Despite the need to operate into the wind, Heathrow operates a westerly preference. In other words, aircraft continue to operate to the west even when there is a small easterly wind component. That practice has been in place for at least 30 years, and was introduced for operational and noise-mitigation purposes. From an operational standpoint, it reduces the need to switch between westerly and easterly operations, which is a disruptive procedure from an environmental point of view, and which reduces the number of departures in an easterly direction over densely populated areas of west london and—as a consequence—reduces the number of landing aircraft overflying Windsor.

The air traffic control procedures operated at Heathrow, which my hon. Friend also raised, are, of course, those which are possible with current equipment. My hon. Friend suggested that the proposed microwave landing system might permit revisions to be made to landing procedures. That may be the case. As my hon. Friend said, the technology allows at least the potential for different approach paths, although it is doubtful whether that would be of any use closer to the airport. I assure my hon. Friend that the Government will consider all possible measures proposed by the national air traffic services in examining the potential of the system. However, as I hope my hon. Friend will appreciate, those are matters for the future and not ones on which I can give him any immediate comfort.

As my hon. Friend is undoubtedly aware, the royal borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has joined again with the London borough of Richmond upon Thames and four other local authorities in seeking leave to apply for further judicial review of the night flying restrictions. Obviously, as my hon. Friend generously assumed, that precludes me from commenting on the detailed points that he has made tonight or those made in another context. I shall say just two things on the subject.

First, I regret very much that the local authorities involved feel the need to pursue the matter further in the courts. I regret it very much if anyone was misled by the wording of the consultation paper that we published in January 1993, but we have attempted to set matters right, as it was proper for us to do. My hon. Friend will be aware from his association with the Department and its work that all the consultation papers were issued in good faith and without any intention to mislead the recipients. Indeed, the whole point of a consultation paper is to set out options and listen to what people say, whether they agree or disagree with the premise inherent in the original consultation.

I repeat what I said about a complete ban on night flights when I announced the restrictions on 16 August. A complete ban, as requested in some of the responses to the consultation, would not be justified. It would upset the balance that we aim to maintain between the interests of local people and those of the airline industry, including its customers. A ban was given serious consideration in 1976, but after consultation it was decided to allow night flights to continue, while seeking to ensure that eventually they would be carried out by quieter types of aircraft. That policy was confirmed in the November 1987 consultation papers for Heathrow and Gatwick and again in the January 1993 consultation paper. I decided against a departure from that policy and it is continued by the arrangements that I confirmed on 16 August. Similarly, as my hon. Friend will know, I rejected the abolition of all restrictions on night flying because I was clear that that would be entirely unreasonable.

I have answered the specific questions that my hon. Friend addressed to me in his peroration. I assure him that we take aircraft noise by night or by day extremely seriously. Almost all current generation aircraft are typically half as noisy on departure, weight for weight, as their predecessors. They have greatly improved climb performance to limit their noise footprint. While natural retirement has removed older, noisier chapter 2 jet aircraft, tough action has been taken to hasten that process. Legislation is now in place to enforce the phasing out of those aircraft between now and 2002.

We can take credit for the part that we played in the many negotiations needed to secure international agreement to that. It will be the single most important contribution to improved future noise levels around airports. I assure my hon. Friend that our concern does not end with chapter 2. We are playing a full part in current discussions about further and tougher standards for noise and emissions. We intend to proceed with that policy vigorously.

I conclude by acknowledging the strength of feeling expressed by my hon. Friend and demonstrated by the presence of my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State about noise levels, particularly in the environs of Heathrow. I hope that my hon. Friend will appreciate that we attempt to deal with such matters in as full and proper a way as possible, while acknowledging that the issue of noise is never likely to be one on which it is possible to satisfy all parties.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at four minutes past Eight o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 31 October 1995

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES (NO. 2) BILL *[Lords].*
(By Order)

Order for Third reading read.

Amendment agreed to.

Read the Third time, and passed, as amended.

Ordered,

That the Lords Message [26th October] relating to the Bodmin Moor Commons Bill *[Lords]*, King's College London Bill *[Lords]*, and the London Local Authorities Bill *[Lords]* be now considered.

LOCH LEVEN AND LOCHABER WATER POWER ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

Considered; to be read the Third time.

Oral Answers to Questions

HEALTH

United Leeds Hospital Trust

2. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of underfunding of the United Leeds Hospital trust in this financial year on waiting lists. [38212]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Tom Sackville): Leeds health authority is not underfunded. It has been allocated £4.5 million over and above its weighted capitation target for this year.

Mr. Battle: Does the Minister realise that Leeds local medical committee revealed in a recent survey that, contrary to his claims, orthopaedic outpatients have to wait for between 44 weeks, minimum, and 144 weeks for a first appointment? Whatever the reason for that, is it not totally unacceptable? Is it not time that the Minister took action to ensure that his health trusts provided for the health needs of our constituents—or will they be told that they must continue to suffer in silence?

Mr. Sackville: I certainly agree that a wait of 44 weeks is unacceptable; we have made that clear—to Leeds health authority, as well—by setting a target that no one should wait more than 26 weeks. The hon. Gentleman knows that waits for orthopaedic treatment in Leeds are not new, and that action is being taken to ensure more accurate and better referring by general practitioners, taking that into account.

The House should know, however, that those waits are not representative of waiting lists across all specialties in Leeds. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman has seen the overall figures, and he will know that 86 per cent. of patients are seen within 13 weeks and 96 per cent. within 26 weeks. That is close to the target that we set.

Mrs. Roe: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the patients charter means that, for the first time ever, patients, whether in Leeds or elsewhere in the country, have a guarantee of the maximum time that they should have to wait for an NHS operation?

Mr. Sackville: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and we look forward to all health authorities meeting those targets.

Mr. Barron: Do not patients, not only those in the United Leeds Hospital trust but in hospitals throughout the country, wait longer than the Department's patients charter standards? In the quarter ended 30 June 1995, the targets for new out-patients waiting times were not met—neither the 13-week nor the 26-week standard. Would not patients in Leeds and throughout the country be better served if some of the millions of pounds spent on internal market bureaucracy were spent instead on front-line patient care?

Mr. Sackville: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would care to notice that, over the past year, the number of people waiting more than 12 months for non-emergency treatment in Leeds has fallen from more than 1,200 to 200. That represents considerable progress, when not only non-emergency but emergency demand has increased sharply. It is about time that Leeds and other health authorities received some credit from the Opposition.

GP Fundholding Practices (London)

3. **Mr. Merchant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner fundholding practices there are currently in Greater London. [38213]

The Minister for Health (Mr. Gerald Malone): Three hundred and twenty-five general practitioners' practices in Greater London are currently fundholders, serving over a quarter of the population. This is due to rise to 578 practices serving 40 per cent. of the population from next April.

Mr. Merchant: Is my hon. Friend aware of the pioneering work in fundholding being carried out by Elm House surgery in my constituency? Is he aware of the popularity of that work with patients? Does that popularity partly explain the dramatic leap in the number of applications for fundholding status in London this summer?

Mr. Malone: I am aware of the practice to which my hon. Friend refers, and I met a number of the practitioners involved when I visited Beckenham hospital in my hon. Friend's constituency some time ago. We want such services to be extended throughout London—in the teeth, sadly, of opposition from Labour.

NHS Budget

4. **Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the NHS budget was spent

on management, administrative and clerical staff (a) in 1989 and (b) in the latest year for which figures are available. [38214]

13. **Mr. Miller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the variation of the proportion of NHS trusts' budgets spent on management and administration. [38224]

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Stephen Dorrell): Expenditure on management and administrative staff as a proportion of total hospital and community health service expenditure was 8.8 per cent. in 1989-90 and 9.8 per cent. in 1993-94. I announced on 11 October that I am seeking a 5 per cent. cash reduction in the costs of running health authorities and in NHS trust management costs in 1996-1997 compared with planned spending in 1995-1996.

Mr. Hoyle: When the changes were made, we were promised that there would be a growth in efficiency. Instead, there has been a huge growth in bureaucracy, and resources that could have been spent on patient care and medical staff have gone to accountants and managers. How does the right hon. Gentleman account for the squandering of public money that has resulted in waste, inefficiency and more red tape?

Mr. Dorrell: That line would come a great deal better from the Opposition had it not been for the fact that they opposed the abolition of the regional health authorities, which added an extra and unnecessary tier of bureaucracy to the health service.

Mr. Miller: That line comes not just from the Opposition, as the chairman of a large trust in my area wrote to me this morning to point out the differences in the Secretary of State's position now from when he was a junior spokesman in the same Department. Will the Secretary of State now undertake unequivocally to ensure that his Department carries the can for all the inefficiencies which have been built into the system as a result of the ridiculous growth in management expenditure?

Mr. Dorrell: My position on this issue is exactly the same now as it was when I was a junior Minister at the Department of Health, and it is this—the traditional health service was under-managed. That view was shared by the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) until she moved to her other responsibilities. We have built up the management function of the health service, and we are now requiring that management function to pass the same tests of efficiency as every other aspect of the health service.

Dame Jill Knight: Is it not the case that efficient management has achieved a much quicker input of patients and much shorter waiting lists, and that trusts hold their management costs at 3 per cent? Is that not extremely good value for money?

Mr. Dorrell: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. It is remarkable that the Opposition—or at least the Opposition's previous health spokesman—at least recognised that the traditional health service needed its management function to be strengthened, and yet opposed every single strengthening of that function. They now talk about administrative costs as though they were avoidable. Yet when we come forward with proposals to abolish excess administrative costs—as we did earlier this year—they oppose them.

Mr. Sims: I commend my right hon. Friend for his attempts to reduce bureaucracy in the NHS. Does he agree that occasional incidents where patients are left on trolleys for unreasonable lengths of time suggest that there is scope for improvement in the quality of management? What steps is my right hon. Friend taking to achieve that improvement?

Mr. Dorrell: I announced the squeeze on 11 October because I believe that it is necessary that the management and administration functions in the health service are subject to the same efficiency drive as every other aspect of the service. My hon. Friend referred to patients waiting for admission from accident and emergency departments, and he will know that that is a specific subject on which my predecessor as Secretary of State announced a tightening of patients charter standards, which will be effective from 1 April and towards which trusts are working.

Ms Lynne: Does the Secretary of State agree that, at the same time as so much is being spent on bureaucracy and administration, it is an absolute disgrace that so little is being spent on breast cancer research—£3 million precisely—when 300 women die of breast cancer a week? Can he make some commitment today, on the launch of the UK National Breast Cancer Coalition, that he will do something to address that problem?

Mr. Dorrell: As the hon. Lady has raised the subject of breast cancer on a question about administration costs, we might have expected her to welcome the fact that the national health service is a world leader in the development of a breast cancer screening service. It offers a service to British women that is not available in the huge majority of other equivalent countries. Why did she not mention that fact?

Mr. Atkins: Is my right hon. Friend aware that, in certain parts of England, notably Chorley and South Ribble, the increase in administrative staff that has come about as a result of the opening of Chorley and South Ribble hospital, which my right hon. Friend visited recently, goes down extremely well, is extremely popular and is further evidence of the amount of money that the Government are putting into the health service locally as well as in London?

Mr. Dorrell: My hon. Friend is right to mention the health service's investment programme. The hospital that we visited in his constituency is a result of, first, the Government's commitment to investing in the development of the NHS and, secondly, the commitment through effective management to ensure that those resources are used to deliver a high-quality service throughout the country.

Mr. Milburn: While the Secretary of State talks about a 5 per cent. cut in management costs, is not the reality that spending on managers has rocketed by 300 per cent. since the Government's changes to the health service? Is it not the case that millions of pounds of precious public resources continue to be lost from front-line patient services simply to finance the administration of that internal health market? Can the right hon. Gentleman explain how more managers but fewer nurses add up to a national health service in which the patient comes first?

Mr. Dorrell: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to his responsibilities. When he has had a little more time to think about them, perhaps he would like to tell the House which of the policies espoused by the predecessor of the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms Harman) he disagrees with. Does he disagree with her acceptance of the fact that the traditional health service was under-managed, in which case he supports the investment in management in the health service, or does he disagree with the stance that she took to oppose the abolition of regional health authorities? How does it help management and administrative efficiency in the health service to insist on maintaining an outdated regional health authority structure?

Mr. Hayes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is outrageous that managers are the latest scapegoat for the Opposition—managers who have worked hard to bring down waiting lists to the lowest level since records began and many of whom are regraded nurses? The Opposition's proposals would bring in more bureaucracy but, worst of all, political placemen.

Mr. Dorrell: My hon. Friend is almost right, but not quite. He is wrong in his suggestion that the Opposition would change anything substantial in terms of the administrative costs of the health service. Actually, they have opposed the changes that we introduced, the effect of which is to reduce the administrative burden on the health service.

NHS Dental Practices

5. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dental practices are no longer accepting new NHS patients. [38215]

Mr. Malone: As dentists are independent practitioners, information in this form is not available centrally. However, at June 1995, there were 15,616 dentists in England providing general dental services. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will welcome the fact that that is 190 more than three years ago.

Mr. Pike: Whatever the Minister says, does he not recognise that it is increasingly impossible for people to get national health service dental treatment? Does he not accept that the Government are presiding over the destruction of the NHS dental service and that they need to do something about it now?

Mr. Malone: What the hon. Gentleman says is a lot of nonsense. In his own constituency, for example, there are nine dentists in four practices, who all accept NHS patients. In the adjacent village of Padiham, a further five dentists are accepting new patients. National health service dentistry is alive and well and growing in the hon. Gentleman's constituency. That is happening in the majority of places throughout the country, although in a number of isolated and difficult areas, we are seeking to encourage family health services authorities to employ salaried dentists to deal with local problems.

Mr. Nicholls: Would my hon. Friend like to remind the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) that there is an overriding obligation on the national health service to provide dental services, and that if those services are not provided by local dentists because they want to operate a cartel, salaried dentists are employed by the national health service to plug the gap? I am extremely grateful to my hon. Friend for ensuring that those services are provided in Teignmouth in my constituency, and I hope that I shall not have to write to him about Newton Abbott in due course.

Mr. Malone: I thank my hon. Friend. In his constituency, there is a good example of how a shortage that manifests itself locally can be tackled through the salaried dental service by the family health services authority, with determined results. I was delighted to find that there is now a mobile service at Teignmouth hospital, which has been secured for the future.

Mr. McLeish: Will the Minister apologise to the House for the fact that nearly 1 million people have been taken off NHS dentist lists in the past three years? That is an attrition rate of 6,000 a week. Does he accept that that is a scandal and tragedy for those who want access to NHS dental care? Of course, he could give an undertaking to the House today that he will once and for all put patient access and preventive health care above the dogmatic pursuit of privatisation.

Mr. Malone: As we are having a lot of welcoming of hon. Members to their portfolios, I extend a warm welcome to the hon. Gentleman to his portfolio and to the Dispatch Box. If he is going to ask me in future about deregistration of people in NHS dentistry, it would be helpful to the House if he understood, and pointed out, that registrations take place at the same time. The figure for those registered between 1992, when the deregistration campaign started, and now stands at some 27.3 million. In fact, when it comes to child registrations, the figure has gone up.

On the second point, of course oral health is an important strategy. It is widely recognised throughout the country and by dental practitioners in particular that our oral health strategy has been a success, and dentists are happy to work with the Government in taking it forward.

GP Fundholding Practices (Suffolk)

6. **Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of general practitioners in Suffolk are in fundholding practices. [38216]

Mr. Malone: About 30 per cent. of general practitioners in Suffolk are fundholders serving 34 per cent. of the population. A further 4 per cent. of GPs serving a further 4 per cent. of the population are preparing to join the scheme from next April.

Mr. Spring: Is my hon. Friend aware of the increase in services to patients from GP fundholders in Suffolk, including the provision of surgery-based physiotherapy, new equipment for electrocardiograms and to test for glaucoma as well as additional support for community nursing services? Does my hon. Friend agree that this attests to the tremendous success of GP fundholding not only in Suffolk but right across the country?

Mr. Malone: Yes, I agree with my hon. Friend that GP fundholding introduces a tremendous new range of services for patients at local level. I have visited fundholding practices in East Anglia and would add to what my hon. Friend said by pointing out that many out-patient services are now provided in the context of a primary care setting, which is extremely important in rural constituencies.

Children's Homes

7. **Ms Coffey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to improve the quality of care provided by small unregistered children's homes. [38217]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. John Bowis): Responsibility for the care of children rests with the placing local authority.

Ms Coffey: As the Minister will be aware, the recent study by the social services inspectorate showed that a high proportion of private, small, unregisterable children's homes did not meet acceptable standards. The Minister has the power to legislate to ensure that those homes are properly inspected and registered, as happens with all other children's homes. Why will he not do so when his own inspectors have told him that children are at risk in those homes?

Mr. Bowis: As the hon. Lady knows from our persistent duet across the House on the subject, this is a matter that our overall review of inspection will be considering. In the meantime, she is quite wrong to suggest that the social services inspectorate report did anything other than highlight some good practice among small children's homes as well as some poor practice. It also highlighted that the failure was of local authorities to use their powers under the placement of children regulations—regulations designed to protect children wherever they may be placed.

Lady Olga Maitland: Will my hon. Friend confirm that his Department will keep constant vigilance over local authority social services, reminding them of their statutory duty to carry out rigorous inspections of children's homes?

Mr. Bowis: Yes, my hon. Friend is right. Sadly, we have recently seen the results of occasions on which such duties have not been carried out properly. There is a duty on local authorities to inspect and visit children's homes, and a responsibility on elected councillors to ensure that that happens. Everyone associated with a child in the care of any local authority anywhere has a responsibility to ensure that the child is safe and protected and that, if the child needs help, help is brought to him or her.

GP Fundholding

8. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about the future of general practitioner fundholding. [38218]

10. **Mr. Hanson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of general practitioners in the United Kingdom are currently fundholders. [38220]

Mr. Dorrell: General practitioner fundholding is central to our plans for the future of the national health service. We expect more than half the GPs in the country to be fundholders from next April and I recently announced a further extension of the total purchasing pilots.

Mr. Hinchliffe: Can the Secretary of State explain why my constituents who are waiting for certain treatment at Pinderfields hospital, Wakefield, are asked whether they are the patients of fundholding or non-fundholding GPs? Why does it appear that fundholding patients are able to get certain treatments, which are being denied to patients of non-fundholding GPs? Will he join me in welcoming the fact that the Labour party is committed to ensuring that patients are treated on the basis of clinical priority and, as a consequence, will get rid of fundholding once and for all?

Mr. Dorrell: As we are in the business of welcoming hon. Members to different parts of the House, I begin by welcoming the hon. Gentleman to a position on the Opposition Back Benches—one of his own choice. It no doubt allows him to tease out some of the differences about fundholding among those on the Opposition Front Bench, which he previously had to obscure from the world.

The hon. Gentleman asked whether I welcome the fact that those on the Opposition Front Bench are committed to ensuring that care in the national health service is available on the basis of clinical need. He will have seen that precisely that commitment is given by the Government Front Bench. In terms of the hon. Gentleman's constituents, that commitment was given to the hon. Gentleman by both Wakefield health care trust and the Wakefield fundholders in exercising choice in the use of their funds.

Mr. Hanson: Will the Secretary of State confirm that the two-tier system—the inefficient, bureaucratic system referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe)—also costs an additional £200 million in bureaucracy? Will he welcome the Labour party's commitment to abolish fundholding and put that money back where it belongs, into patient care?

Mr. Dorrell: I shall certainly make no commitment to abolish fundholding because to do so would put back the cause of patient care. The evidence is clear. The Opposition keep calling for extra research because they do not like the results of the research that has already been carried out. It shows clearly that, for a small increase in transaction costs, we deliver substantial savings and improved patient care. That is the result not of the Government's assessment but of repeated independent assessments of the effect of fundholding.

Mr. Key: My right hon. Friend will be aware that the majority of fundholders in my constituency provide a better service for their patients. However, will he now look at a problem that has arisen and advise my national health service trust? Where that trust literally runs out of money, it is beyond doubt and political banter that patients suffer because non-fundholders cannot have equal access to the national health service trust.

Mr. Dorrell: With respect, my hon. Friend must face the fact that the resources available to treat patients, whether of fundholding practices or not, are exactly the same. The assurance given to patients of fundholding GPs, by both trusts and GPs, fundholding and non-fundholding alike, is that access to urgent and emergency care is dealt with from a single waiting list. The availability of non-urgent care within the health service reflects different purchasing decisions taken not merely by different fundholders within the health service but by different health authorities within the health service. That is part of the exercise of local choice, exercised in the interest of all patients of the NHS.

Mr. Congdon: Does my right hon. Friend agree that firm evidence now suggests that devolving financial power to GPs has enabled them to deliver improved care to their patients? Does he agree that the best means of improving the position of all patients would be to extend GP fundholding to them, thereby levelling up rather than levelling down, as espoused by the Labour party?

Mr. Dorrell: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend's desire to take the benefits that come from fundholding and generalise them. I entirely agree that that is surely how, in practice, one continues the rate of improvement of patient care within the NHS. Those who argue that we should abandon fundholding must explain to what is now a majority of GPs in the NHS why it is in their interests and those of their patients to abandon a scheme that has been shown by repeated analysis to deliver better value care and better quality care not merely to fundholding patients but to all NHS patients.

Ms Harman: Is the Secretary of State aware of the situation in his own Minister of State's constituency? Although the patients of GP fundholding practices get their hip replacements in less than 10 months, the patients in non-fundholding GP practices have been told by the Winchester and Eastleigh Health Care trust that they will have to wait 18 months or more. What does he say to those patients who are in pain and have been told that they have got to wait more than 18 months, while other patients are treated in less than 10 months? Is that not evidence of a two-tier system and of the unfairness of Tory health reforms? Will he join me in thanking Dr. Andy Coates, all the local GPs and the local NHS hospital trust for working together to try to mitigate the unfairness of those Tory health reforms?

Mr. Dorrell: One of the things that the Labour party must get used to about its new health spokesman is that she cannot see an elephant trap without walking into it. What has happened in Winchester blows sky high her theory that fundholders do not work for the benefit of all NHS patients. The deal to which the hon. Lady referred clearly reveals that the GPs of the district, fundholders and non-fundholders, are working together to deal with a problem that has emerged in the district, and was caused by an 8 per cent. increase in accident and emergency admissions. I do not remember that the hon. Lady predicted that. What has happened in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Minister of State is evidence that the case of the Labour party is wrong—fundholders do not desert NHS patients. All the GPs of that district have worked together to look after all the local patients, as the hon. Lady had the grace to admit in the closing sentence of her question.

Mr. Day: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, if the Opposition were correct in their assumption that patients registered at fundholding practices benefit far more than other patients, surely the obvious answer is for the Opposition to see to it that that successful mode of GP practice is extended throughout the NHS?

Mr. Dorrell: My hon. Friend is not only right, but echoes the views of the majority of GPs operating in the NHS. That is why the predecessor of the hon. Member for Peckham, the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett), found herself faced with a rather hostile audience when she recently attended the fundholding doctors conference. She had to explain to those doctors why the Labour party is committed to abolishing a scheme that allows the majority of GPs in Britain to improve the health care available to their patients.

Drug Abuse

9. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what new proposals he has to reduce abuse of prescribed drugs. [38219]

Mr. Bowis: Any drug, prescribed or otherwise, can cause serious harm if misused. We will take whatever action is necessary to tackle the misuse of drugs. Recent measures have dealt with the serious problem of temazepam misuse.

Mr. Flynn: As 200 people died last year as a result of paracetamol use—twice the number of people who died as a result of heroin use—and 30,000 people were admitted to hospitals as a result of paracetamol overdoses, what is the Minister doing to unblock the ban on the sale of the safe paracetamol that includes an antidote that prevents liver damage? Is it not true that drug companies are campaigning against safe paracetamol because they know that the only way in which to market the safe product is to draw attention to the deadly peril of the existing paracetamol products?

Mr. Bowis: We will always look at the safety of medicines as the subject is brought to our attention, and there are proper procedures for considering such matters. The hon. Gentleman is trying to confuse several types of drugs that could be perfectly safe if used properly, but can be very dangerous if misused. That is why we have taken action on temazepam. I should have thought that he might start by welcoming the steps taken when a drug is perceived to be a danger to the public—the fast steps to remove the gel-filled capsules and to reschedule that drug.

Many issues surround the hon. Gentleman's messages about drugs. On the whole, his message that cannabis, for example, is something to be taken without hesitation is something that the House would reject.

Mr. Fabricant: In that very connection, I was wondering what representations my hon. Friend has received from the shadow Secretary of State for Transport, the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms Short), regarding cannabis, and has she said whether or not she inhales?

Mr. Bowis: I would say to my hon. Friend, to the hon. Member for Ladywood and to Opposition Front Benchers that, if they came with me and saw some of the results of cannabis use, if they came and saw children trying to find the courage to say no to drugs, if they came and saw young people struggling to get out of the black hole into which they have fallen as a result of trying drugs—and trying cannabis among them—they would know that they are not helped by the Labour party's line of "soft on drugs, soft on criminal abuse of drugs", as expounded by the hon. Member for Ladywood in her capacity as a member of the shadow Cabinet.

Mr. Flynn: In view of the disgracefully complacent and libellous nature of the Minister's reply, I intend to raise that matter on the Adjournment.

Prescription Prices

11. **Ms Church:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the increase in real terms in the price of prescriptions since 1978; and if he will make a statement. [38221]

Mr. Dorrell: Roughly eightfold.

Ms Church: Does the Secretary of State share the anxieties of the British Medical Association and general practitioners in my constituency that, when low-income patients have been prescribed two or more items, they actually ask their GP which of the items is the most important for them to take? Does the Minister not understand that, when two items are required, a matter of £10.50, or three items, a matter of £15.75, that is not an inconsiderable chunk out of the family budget for many of my low-income constituents? Will he join Labour Members in requesting a review of the prescription system so that we have a much more equitable system for low-income families?

Mr. Dorrell: I shall take the Labour party's commitment to a review of the prescription system a great deal more seriously when Labour Members tell us what the results of that review will be. In the meantime, the hon. Lady's low-income constituents are protected by the exemptions that already exist, which cover more than 80 per cent.—more than four out of five—of all prescriptions dispensed.

Mr. Nigel Evans: Will my right hon. Friend give a commitment that the money raised through the increase in prescription charges this year, which I believe to be £300 million, will go directly to front-line health services? That could pay for about 75,000 hip replacement operations or 235,000 cataract operations.

Mr. Dorrell: My hon. Friend expresses precisely the dilemma confronted by any of those Labour Members who may think that we could afford to do without prescription charges. Those charges are part of the financing of the health service—my hon. Friend has the right number: £300 million is raised by prescription charges and is invested in precisely the sort of patient care that he described.

Mr. Galbraith: What is the Government's position on the prescription of beta-interferon? As the Secretary of State knows, that is a drug of unproven value and its unrestricted prescription would hinder future knowledge of it. We may never find out whether it—or, indeed, any of the other available drugs—is of any value.

Mr. Dorrell: As the hon. Gentleman knows, the drug has not yet been granted its market licence. We have been working closely, both with the patients' organisations and with the profession, against the possibility that the drug will receive a licence. If it receives a licence, we have agreed with them protocols to ensure that the drug is available from those clinicians who are best qualified to make judgments about which patients are most likely to benefit from it.

Waiting Times

12. **Mr. Mark Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in reducing waiting times in Somerset and the south-west. [38222]

Mr. Sackville: Excellent progress has been made in reducing waiting times in Somerset and the south-west generally. At 31 March 1995, there was no one waiting more than 12 months for non-urgent treatment in Somerset and only 66 patients waiting that long for treatment in the south and west region.

Mr. Robinson: I thank my hon. Friend for that excellent reply. Will he confirm that average waiting times have come down? Does that not give the lie to the Labour party's opposition to the creation of hospital trusts and its current desire to abolish fundholding? In fact, Conservative reforms are working.

Mr. Sackville: My hon. Friend is absolutely right to say that not only have the numbers of those waiting come down but the time that they wait—the important figure—has also come down. In his district, the figure for those waiting more than six months for non-emergency treatment has come down by a full 40 per cent. I would certainly say that his constituents enjoy a high-quality health service that is matched only by the quality of their parliamentary representation. *[Interruption.]*

Madam Speaker: Order. The House must come to order. It is far too noisy: I can hear neither questions nor answers.

Hospices

14. **Mr. Hutton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about the funding of hospices. [38225]

Mr. Bowis: Our commitment to hospices and specialist palliative care services has been demonstrated by a sixfold increase in funding—from £8 million in 1990-91 to nearly £48 million in 1994-95. From 1994-95, that funding has been built into health authorities' general allocations.

Mr. Hutton: Is the Minister aware of the increasing financial pressure under which many hospices are operating? That is partly as a result of the fall in voluntary giving due to the national lottery. Will he take action to relieve that financial pressure by restoring the ring-fencing of hospice funding and ensuring that the 50:50 joint funding guidelines issued to health authorities are honoured?

Mr. Bowis: The hon. Gentleman refers to an overall target of 50:50 funding nationally. The change in the formula will enable local authorities to be more flexible in their approach. I think that he would join me in congratulating the voluntary effort that goes into financing and resourcing the hospice movement, both in his St. Mary's hospice, Ulverston—a subject which he and my right hon. Friend the Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Jopling) have raised with me—and in Trinity hospice in south London in my constituency. It is the combination of voluntary effort and the health service that enables those excellent facilities to continue. *[Interruption.]*

Madam Speaker: Order. The House must come to order. I can hear individual private conversations. I want to hear questions and answers.

Mrs. Peacock: May I ask my hon. Friend to look again at the possibility of departmental funding for children's hospices, such as Martin house in Yorkshire, as that funding would assist them in their excellent work?

Mr. Bowis: I am very happy to join my hon. Friend in supporting children's hospices and children's palliative and long-term and life-threatening illness care. I am sure that she is aware of our £5 million programme of support for children's hospices, which I am certain will help the movement to expand in that respect.

Prescription and Patient Charges

16. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to make an announcement about increases in prescription and other patient charges. [38227]

Mr. Malone: An announcement will be made at the appropriate time.

Mr. Corbett: Does the Minister agree that it would be a charge on other patients if the North and South Birmingham health authorities were to agree to make public funds available to general practitioner fundholders to buy appointments in nine weeks and operations within six months while other patients must wait a minimum of 13 weeks and nine months for their treatments? Is that not evidence of a two-tier health service?

Mr. Malone: I would have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome the fact that targets for waiting lists are being met. Waiting lists are coming down, to the benefit of many people. The hon. Gentleman fails to recognise the agreement that was reached with the professions in introducing health service reforms which ensure that everyone receives the same quality of care. The majority of people are admitted at once as emergencies, and clinical need determines when people will be treated. I am astonished that Labour Members are carping on when waiting lists are coming down and more people are being treated more quickly.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 31 October. [38241]

The Prime Minister (Mr. John Major): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Winnick: Why did the Prime Minister in his meeting with the French President not condemn French nuclear tests, which have deeply offended British and international opinion? Did the Prime Minister not take such action because the British Government have connived with the French in a dirty deal whereby information arising from the nuclear tests will be passed on to this country? If that is the case, it shows the dishonesty of the Government.

The Prime Minister: It is not the case. As I have said before, no information from the French nuclear tests will be passed to us—indeed, given the nature of our weapons, it would not be of use to us. There is no deal; I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept that and withdraw his allegation.

At least the hon. Gentleman is consistent in his views. He has been a member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and he is, and he saluted the courage and determination of anti-nuclear demonstrators at Greenham Common. *[Interruption.]* I trail my coat to find out where Labour Members' hearts are, and now we know.

Q2. **Mrs. Lait:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 31 October. [38242]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Lait: Will my right hon. Friend join me in welcoming the announcement that one of London's most popular grant-maintained schools, the Oratory school, will be able to build a choir school, thanks to its self-governing status in the public sector? While that may be music to the ears of the parents with children at the school, how does my right hon. Friend think that the rest of the Labour Front Benchers will react?

The Prime Minister: Of course I welcome that news. Grant-maintained schools have a greater freedom to develop their strengths because power is put where it should belong: with the school head, the school governors and the parents who know best what is in their children's interests.

Mr. Blair: Is it—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Stop this barracking—particularly from Ministers.

Mr. Blair: Will the Prime Minister confirm as a matter of fact that what the chairman of the rail users' watchdog as well as the Transport Select Committee have said is true: that, as a result of privatisation, an extra £700 million of taxpayers' money will be paid to the subsidised, privatised railways?

The Prime Minister: I think the right hon. Gentleman knows that over the years we have increased resources to the nationalised British rail industry. Contrary to what has been said by some people, the Government have supported record levels of investment. We made it clear when we decided to proceed with privatisation that we would support lines that were socially necessary—partly at the request of Her Majesty's Opposition. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman does not believe now that we should not do that.

Mr. Blair: Is it not right that the Select Committee attributed the extra £700 million to privatisation, not to paying for socially useful routes, and that hundreds of millions of pounds of City fees are involved? Is it not also true that investment in the railways today is half what it was two years ago and that, as a result of privatisation, 5,000 manufacturing industry jobs have been lost and the unified railway network has been broken up into 70, 80 or 90 companies?

When will the Prime Minister, just for once, stop pandering to the right wing of the Conservative party? *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members may want rail privatisation: the British people do not. When will the right hon. Gentleman stop pandering to the right wing of his party and, instead, listen to and speak up for the British people, who want their railways run as a public service?

The Prime Minister: I wondered whether the right hon. Gentleman would get round to his "lurch to the right" campaign, launched so inexpertly—one might almost say he made a hash of it—by the new shadow Chief Whip.

If the right hon. Gentleman thinks the policies we are following, of bringing choice to parents and opportunity to children, are a lurch to the right, the country will not agree. If he thinks that spending more on patients' health is a lurch to the right, the people will not agree. If he thinks that dealing with asylum abuses, or standing up for Britain in Europe, represent a lurch to the right, he is wrong. The right hon. Gentleman knows that the centre right of politics is our ground and there is no way a squatter like him can rest on it. He may regard himself as the Trojan horse of socialism, but he will find that it is our land on which he is parking and there is no room for him on it.

As for the right hon. Gentleman's specific point, and pushing aside the points on which he was inaccurate, I would tell him that there have been record amounts of investment in recent years—£1.5 billion in 1992-93, which was the highest for 30 years. Investment is still running at more than £1 billion in the current year, and every privatisation that we have introduced has provided better service.

I see the new shadow Chief Whip in his place. It was he who once referred to the privatisation of British Airways as the pantomime horse of capitalism. It is now the most successful privatised air service in the world.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: Does my right hon. Friend agree that positive discrimination in favour of women is both unnecessary and patronising? Will he comment on the policy of the Labour party, which has imposed by diktat from Walworth road—

Madam Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister is not responsible for the attitude of the Labour party. I am sure that he has caught the first part of the hon. Lady's question and is perfectly capable of answering it.

Mrs. Winterton: Will my right hon. Friend assure me that we will never impose women-only shortlists, as has been done by diktat of Walworth road in six constituencies in the north-west of England?

The Prime Minister: I can assure my hon. Friend that I believe that we should seek equality of opportunities for everyone, for women in the House of Commons and elsewhere. It is certainly our policy to do so. My hon. Friends needed no special discrimination to get here. As to the latter part of my hon. Friend's question, I can promise her—not only in this but in other matters—that we will not follow the policies of the Opposition, because, apart from anything else, daily they seem to be following our policies.

Mr. Ashdown: Will the Prime Minister consider these three dates? On 11 July, Srebrenica fell and 8,000 young men were taken away and massacred. On 31 May, I asked the then Secretary of State for Defence, in the House, to assure me that the policy on the defence of Srebrenica had not changed, and he gave me that assurance. It is now revealed, or claimed, that on 24 May, with the full knowledge and acquiescence of the British Government, the UN decided to abandon Srebrenica to its fate. Is that correct?

The Prime Minister: I think that the right hon. Gentleman, just occasionally, might do the British forces and the British Government the credit of acknowledging what they have done. What the right hon. Gentleman is saying is not correct. He has been wrong throughout the whole of this episode time after time. He has denigrated what the British Government have done and what the British armed forces have done. I will tell the right hon. Gentleman this: there are hundreds of thousands of people alive today in Bosnia because of what was done by the British Government and the British armed forces.

Mr. Elletson: May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on a successful conference this year in my constituency? Is he aware that next year the Labour party will be in Blackpool? Will he take this opportunity to reassure parents and police in my constituency that under a Conservative Government cannabis cigarettes will never be for sale?

The Prime Minister: I can certainly give my hon. Friend that assurance and I will tell the House why very clearly. The vast majority of people—between 80 and 90 per cent.—who move on to hard drugs graduate to hard drugs having first experimented with soft drugs. Any sensible person realises the danger of doing that and realises that any responsible person in public life would discourage the use of soft drugs because of the danger of moving to hard drugs. I am sorry that some Opposition Members with some responsibility in public life should choose to take a different view.

Q3. **Mr. Dowd:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 31 October. [38243]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Dowd: Given the Government's latest response to the recommendations of the Nolan committee, when will the Prime Minister stop his feeble backtracking on his alleged intention to improve the standards of conduct of Ministers and stop trying to defend the snout in the trough behaviour of so many on the Benches behind him?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman knows—or should know, if he took an interest in our matters—that the Nolan report is at present being considered by the Select Committee. It will very shortly be brought before the House, when we will have the benefit of the deliberations of the Select Committee and when the House can then vote on all the recommendations that emanate from it.

Q4. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 31 October. [38245]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hughes: Has my right hon. Friend seen the letter—the characteristically pompous letter—from the leader of the Liberal party, inviting Conservative Members of Parliament to back his party on education? Does my right hon. Friend agree that the best response to that has come from a Harrow Liberal councillor, Bernadette Murphy, who says that the arguments for the Conservative education system are unanswerable and that every party should understand that? Will he congratulate her on reinforcing her message by resigning from the council and causing a by-election and giving such a clear steer as to how people should vote in that by-election?

The Prime Minister: I did see the letter from the right hon. Gentleman, which he displayed so widely among my colleagues. I recall that the letter also said:

> "This is the moment to stand up for what is right and to put Britain first."

Clearly, Miss Murphy did.

Q5. **Mr. Sutcliffe:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 31 October. [38246]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Sutcliffe: Does the Prime Minister agree with the Deputy Prime Minister that Britain requires a job skills audit? We have fallen from 21st to 24th in the league, according to the World Economic Forum's report on skill shortages. Is that because the Government do not invest in education and training? Is it not about time that the Government recognised that education and training are vital to our economy?

The Prime Minister: I think that the hon. Gentleman has just demonstrated a skill shortage in answering questions. [*Laughter.*] It is clear—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: It is clear that Opposition Members' new standards of behaviour are only for certain occasions.

Of course my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister is right to examine the level of skills. He has done that to enable us to ensure that we can build on what has already been done to improve skills in the country. That is the purpose of the changes that have been made. That is the purpose of the training and enterprise councils; that is the purpose of investment. It is because of the increasing skills and increasing investment that our exports—not least in manufacturing—are performing better today than they have for many years.

Points of Order

3.31 pm

Mr. Michael Fabricant (Mid-Staffordshire): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. You are a defender of the liberty of individual Members of Parliament, and I also agree with your advice that hon. Members on both sides of the House should show each other more courtesy. You will be aware, Madam Speaker, that during the recent by-election certain representatives of the Labour party were very beastly to the—

Madam Speaker: Order. What is the point of order for me? I am not involved in by-elections; I need to know the Standing Order and the procedure with which the hon. Gentleman wishes me to deal.

Mr. Fabricant: The point of order, Madam Speaker, is that people have been very beastly to the Liberal Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Davies), and have been questioning his recommendations that people should use cannabis and that it should be legalised. Is that not very unfair, as the Opposition Front Bench is now making the same recommendations?

Madam Speaker: That is a total abuse of the House's time. I shall take no similar points of order; points of order must relate to questions with which I can deal, as Speaker of the House.

Mr. Matthew Taylor (Truro): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. The House may be aware by now that, after what has been internationally condemned as a show trial, Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa, the international environmentalist and social campaigner, has today been sentenced to death with no right of appeal. That is a matter of great concern. Has there been any indication, Madam Speaker, that a British Minister may respond, bring pressure to save the lives of Mr. Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues and make a statement in the House?

Madam Speaker: I have not been informed by any Minister that he or she is prepared to make a statement today.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I would appreciate a ruling on what is said in "Erskine May" about the abuse of Prime Minister's Question Time. Page 287 clearly states:

> "Questions which seek an expression of an opinion, or which contain arguments, expressions of opinion, inferences or imputations, unnecessary epithets, or rhetorical, controversial, ironical or offensive expressions, are not in order."

In recent weeks, Conservative Members have asked an increasing number of questions that should really be addressed to the Leader of the Opposition. Many of my hon. Friends would approve of the idea of a Leader of the Opposition's Question Time, but we do not have one. Prime Minister's Question Time should be precisely that, but the Prime Minister is increasingly dodging legitimate questions by employing dubious devices originating from the Whips Office to ensure that questions are addressed to the Leader of the Opposition which only the Prime Minister can answer.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Gentleman will have noticed that today I cautioned a Conservative Member that questions put to the Prime Minister must not relate to the Opposition. All Ministers are responsible to the House for the workings of the Government and Departments, not for the attitude of the Opposition or any of the minority parties. I hope that my words will be noted by all concerned and that, in future, questions will be put to Ministers on matters for which they have responsibility and accountability to the House.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. A Member of the House receives £5,500 from ASLEF in sponsorship and has booked a room in the Parliamentary Estate on Thursday to meet a number of my constituents in connection with the £5,500 that the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Ms Jackson) receives. Is that not corrupt use of House of Commons facilities and should not it be stopped because it is a Labour party meeting for the benefit of the ASLEF sponsorship that the Member receives?

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order. I think what the hon. Gentleman is trying to raise is further to the point of order. Serious allegations have been made by the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw). I ask him to put them in writing to me so that I may respond properly because I am not quite clear about what he is insinuating. Such points of order must be put in writing so that the allegations are clear.

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose—*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: It is not true.

Madam Speaker: Order. It may or may not be true. I wish to see the evidence supporting the allegations so that I may deal with them.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Have you had any representations from the Deputy Prime Minister who has now been geared up with a £150,000 machine with which he is wired up to every Cabinet Minister? Has there been any request for him to answer questions for every Minister? He has a spy in a cabin over there and the taxpayers are having to foot the bill for his £150,000 desk diary. In Derbyshire, that would buy a desk, a diary, a roof to put over people's heads, five rooms which could be stuffed full of furniture and a Rover Sterling car to put in the garage. It is an abuse of taxpayers' money and it ought to be condemned by all of us.

Madam Speaker: As the hon. Gentleman and, I hope, all hon. Members are aware, this matter will appear in the estimates. When they are debated, no doubt Members will notice it. In the meantime, there may be opportunities for an Adjournment debate on the matter. The estimates will come before the House for debate.

Mr. Nick Hawkins (Blackpool, South): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Have you received any request from the shadow Secretary of State for Transport to make a statement in the House on the alteration of her policy, which clearly shows that the Labour party is now soft on the greatest cause of crime? Have you received any such request to show that the Leader of the Opposition proposes to dispense with that shadow Secretary of State following his demotion of her predecessor? To lose one shadow Secretary of State may be a misfortune. To lose two looks like carelessness.

Madam Speaker: Order. This is a totally disgraceful abuse of the House's time. I will not take the trouble to respond to questions such as that which do not come near a point of order.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. You will have observed from the remaining Orders of the Day that there are no fewer than five pages of closely printed amendments to Standing Orders, most of them amending matters that are not contentious, such as Wednesday morning sittings and those which save the time of the House. However, you will recall that, when these matters were debated a year ago, there were three or four Divisions on matters of principle because some hon. Members believed that even the experimental orders permanently removed the powers of private Members as against the Government. In addition, the one that slipped through was for the removal of the opportunity for private Members' ballot motions to be debated in the House, and I understand that that is something of an historic privilege.

I have given notice to the Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House suggesting that, due to the importance of those amendments, which are to be permanent, the time given on Thursday, prior to an important debate that the whole country wants to watch and know about, will be inadequate for a proper consideration of the amendments, that we should take the precedent of a Bill and have at least a weekend before we can debate them, and that we should therefore debate them early next Session, rather than in a hurried and controversial manner on Thursday.

Madam Speaker: I note what the hon. Gentleman says and that he has given notice to the Leader of the House on this matter. If he wishes, however, to alter our practice concerning the period of notice before motions are debated, I suggest that he asks the Procedure Committee to consider the matter. As to the timing of the debate on the motions to which the hon. Gentleman has referred, may I remind him that, on Friday last and without objection, the House ordered that all necessary questions to dispose of procedures on the motions should be put after two hours' debate on Thursday 2 November.

Mr. Charles Hendry (High Peak): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. After all the attention over the summer given to the spread of the Internet, have you had any requests to install in the Chamber computers linked to the Internet, not least to ensure that Opposition spokesmen know the line from their party leader and the spin doctors, rather than being encouraged to speak their own minds?

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Can you establish whether the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) gave notice to my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Ms Jackson) that he intended to raise in this House an issue that he knew not to be true?

Madam Speaker: I take it that the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) did give notice, as is usual in the House, but he is here and can now speak for himself.

Mr. David Shaw: The facts with that information came through immediately before I came into the House. May I point out to Opposition Members that the hon. Member—

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman will resume his seat. I take it from that that no notice was given.

Mr. Shaw *rose—*

Madam Speaker: Order. Did the hon. Gentleman conform with the courtesies of the House is all I am asking.

Mr. Shaw: On that point of order, Madam Speaker, you will recall that I wrote to you to make the point that that particular hon. Member did not inform me before visiting my constituency.

Mr. Denis MacShane (Rotherham): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. On Thursday, Monday and Tuesday, we will debate the important questions relating to Nolan. Before each of those three debates, will it be in order for you to say to all Members that they should declare what consultancies and directorships they have and, in particular, what moneys they earn from outside businesses?

Madam Speaker: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman was not present in the House yesterday. *[Interruption.]* Is he listening—he has just put a point of order to me. Perhaps he was not present in the House yesterday when I made it clear that, in any debates of that nature, I expect all hon. Members—that is, Members on both sides of the House—to declare any pecuniary interests.

Mr. Jim Dowd (Lewisham, West): Further to that point of order, Madam Speaker. Will you clarify then and say that hon. Members must name each specific interest that they have, rather than—

Madam Speaker: Order. I am going no further. Hon. Members know precisely what is expected of them when they declare an interest.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. It has become abundantly apparent in recent months that points of order are used to name hon. Members in a way which, if broadcast outside and found not to be true, would give rise to substantial libel damages. The courtesies of the House also require that, in every case, notice is given to an hon. Member who another Member proposes to name. Clearly, that has not been done in many cases. Might not this be an opportunity for you to reconsider the rules of the House and to make giving notice mandatory?

Madam Speaker: We have a great many privileges in the House. What disturbs me enormously is that responsibility is not matched with the privileges that we have. Members of Parliament choose special times of the day and special days of the week in which what they say across the Floor of the House will be highlighted by the media. I deprecate very much many of the exchanges that are not at all genuine points of order which take place across the Floor of the House to attempt to seek publicity. I hope that Members will reflect on what I have said, and in future will put to me only real points of order that deal with our Standing Orders, proceedings and other matters with which the Speaker of this House can properly deal.

Water (Conservation and Miscellaneous Provisions)

3.44 pm

Mrs. Helen Jackson (Sheffield, Hillsborough): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the conservation of water by the establishment of mandatory water leakage targets for water undertakers and by encouraging the installation of water efficient fittings in homes; to provide for the review of abstraction licences which affect sites of nature conservation value; to give domestic consumers greater choice as to methods of charging for the supply of water; and to provide for the payment of compensation in relation to drought orders.

I am grateful for the chance to introduce the Bill, which, although a small Bill, is made significant by the failure of the water industry to cope with this year's hot dry summer. Its object is to place conservation at the heart of water management, in a way that both protects wildlife and ensures constant supplies to meet all our needs in homes and industry without the use of crude price rationing for the poor and more vulnerable.

Behind that objective lies the fact that, whatever the industry's management structure, water belongs to us all, and is in true common ownership. To squander that precious resource affects not only us but every plant, bird and animal.

The Bill seeks to achieve that objective in four ways, the first of which concerns leakage. Public anger spilled over this summer as company after company sought drought orders, hosepipe bans and, in the Yorkshire area, stand-pipes and cut-offs. That anger was fuelled by the growing awareness that because of leaking pipes, half a million gallons of treated drinking water is wasted every minute of every day—enough to serve the daily needs of an extra 26 million households.

Labour's campaign to highlight that scandal has now been backed by the National Rivers Authority report, "The Drought of '95", published last month, which said:

> "Leakage is an area where in knowledge, the UK is without doubt a world leader, but in practice has some of the highest leakage rates in the world".

My Bill calls for mandatory targets to be set, monitored and enforced by the Government through the Environment Agency, in close consultation with the companies and the water regulator. The power to penalise companies for failure would rest with the new agency rather than with Ofwat, whose approach to leakage has been disappointing, constrained by its limited focus on economic factors rather than the wider conservation picture.

Two weeks ago, in a letter to the Secretary of State, the Water Services Association promised an enhanced programme of leakage reduction at no extra cost to customers. That is most welcome, and recognises for the first time that leakage reduction is the prime factor in water conservation. My Bill will ensure that those fine words are followed by effective action and investment.

Secondly, my Bill examines how homes could be designed to conserve water without changing usage patterns involving hygiene and our basic needs. Plentiful use of clean water remains the foundation for a high level of public health. The Bill seeks to minimise people's need for water by promoting water-efficient fittings in the home, rather than by using blunt economic tools simply to drive down demand.

For example, a programme to replace all the nation's older 9-litre toilet cisterns with new 6-litre varieties would in itself save more than 10 per cent. of present household usage. If half the baths that we take were replaced by showers—I do not advocate the Yorkshire Water chairman's advice to forgo baths and showers altogether—we should save a further 4 per cent.

Those savings are technically simple to achieve and permanent, and they would be popular because they cause no added inconvenience to customers. They are also more equitable than metering, as they are not made at the disproportionate expense of poorer customers, and are cheaper than the £200 per property cost of metering, especially as there are no continuing billing costs.

My Bill uses the new duty inserted into the Water Industry Act 1991 by the Environment Act 1995, adding a clause requiring water undertakers to devise grant schemes to help with the cost of installing the efficiency measures.

Customers who respond to the call for greater water efficiency would then be rewarded by a reduction in their bills to reflect their lower consumption. Companies would receive both the benefits of reduced demand, and their success or otherwise would be a recognised factor in price negotiations. The Government document "Water Conservation" endorses some of that approach, stresses the value of transferring to low-flush toilets and suggests that water byelaws and building regulations should be used to enforce the fitting of water-saving devices. We look forward to further work on this.

The Bill attempts to offer the necessary incentives to companies and customers to get some action. One response of the water companies to the summer shortage was to rush to the Secretary of State for drought orders, which would enable them to do two things—to take more supplies from the rivers and to escape liability for compensation. The Bill addresses both areas.

Section 79 of the Water Resources Act 1991 deals with the payment of compensation where a drought order has been made. There is no provision in the accompanying schedule for compensation for interruptions in supplies brought about by emergency drought orders. Moreover, interruptions in supply caused by ordinary drought orders are exempt from the provisions of the guaranteed standard scheme, unless covered in a specific contract with a particular business.

The horrendous threat of 24-hour cut-offs hangs today over the people of Halifax and Bradford in Yorkshire. The courts need to prepare for countless test cases for financial loss—or worse—in the event of a fire which might cause injury, or even death, which might have been prevented had a source of running water been available.

The action proposed in my Bill on compensation has been endorsed strongly by all the consumer bodies, and only last Friday by Ofwat's customer services committee.

But we cannot simply rob the lifeblood of fish, otters and other wildlife and drain the rivers dry in response to our failure to conserve the nation's resource. The Bill places water conservation at the heart of environment policy, where it belongs. It instructs the Environment Agency to review every abstraction licence

> "which may be having a significant damaging effect upon a site of nature conservation value".

Where such damaging effect is found, the Bill will seek to revoke or vary the licence accordingly.

Many hon. Members will remember that half an hour before the end of the debate on Report of the Environment Act 1995—at 11.55 pm precisely—and after 75 hours of debate in Committee, the Government tabled a new clause about water conservation. There was no time for a considered amendment and no time for a proper debate. The Bill seeks to put that right, and it has the support of all the officers of the all-party parliamentary group on water and many outside organisations. I commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mrs. Helen Jackson, Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock, Mr. Paul Tyler, Ms Joan Ruddock, Mr. Richard Burden, Mr. David Nicholson, Ms Jean Corston, Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mr. David Jamieson, Mrs. Anne Campbell, Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe and Mr. Max Madden.

WATER (CONSERVATION AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS)

Mrs. Helen Jackson accordingly presented a Bill to provide for the conservation of water by the establishment of mandatory water leakage targets for water undertakers and by encouraging the installation of water efficient fittings in homes; to provide for the review of abstraction licences which affect sites of nature conservation value; to give domestic consumers greater choice as to methods of charging for the supply of water; and to provide for the payment of compensation in relation to drought orders: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 3 November, and to be printed. [Bill 185.]

Disability Discrimination Bill (*Ways and Means*)

3.54 pm

The Minister for Social Security and Disabled People (Mr. Alistair Burt): I beg to move,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Disability Discrimination Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment of any fees received by the Secretary of State into the Consolidated Fund.

This resolution covers amendment No. 62, which relates to fees charged as part of the procedure for ensuring that public service vehicles are accessible to people with disabilities. The Bill provides for two means by which manufacturers may have their vehicles certified as accessible. The first approach, and one that we expect to be used most often, provides for individual vehicles to be certified as meeting accessibility requirements. That is closely modelled on the existing procedures for ensuring that buses and coaches meet the necessary safety and environmental standards—the certificate of initial fitness procedure.

The second approach, which will be available to manufacturers producing vehicles in larger volume, is a system under which a type vehicle is approved and manufacturers may then produce subsequent vehicles without individual inspection, so long as there are satisfactory arrangements to ensure conformity of production. That too mirrors existing arrangements for the type approval of buses and coaches. There is also a system of review and appeal when a manufacturer is aggrieved at the decision of a vehicle examiner not to issue a certificate.

The new clause, amendment No. 62, simply provides for fees to be levied to cover the Government's costs relating to the approval and certification procedure. That approach is well precedented in existing vehicle construction legislation.

3.55 pm

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): The Minister has set the scene for the Government's U-turns and climb downs on so many issues on disability, which we will be debating this afternoon. In that spirit, I welcome what he had to say at the eleventh hour, and invite the House to agree.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Disability Discrimination Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment of any fees received by the Secretary of State into the Consolidated Fund.

Orders of the Day

Disability Discrimination Bill

Order for consideration of Lords amendments read.

Ordered,

That the Lords amendments be considered in the following order: Amendments Nos. 1 to 29, Amendments Nos. 31 to 170 and Amendment No. 30.—[*Mr. Burt.*]

New clause

Past Disabilities

Lords amendment: No. 1, after clause 1, to insert the following new clause—

(".—(1) The provisions of this Part and Parts II and III apply in relation to a person who has had a disability as they apply in relation to a person who has that disability.

(2) Those provisions are subject to the modifications made by Schedule (*Past disabilities*).

(3) Any regulations or order made under this Act may include provision with respect to persons who have had a disability.

(4) In any proceedings under Part II or Part III of this Act, the question whether a person had a disability at a particular time ("the relevant time") shall be determined, for the purposes of this section, as if the provisions of, or made under, this Act in force when the act complained of was done had been in force at the relevant time.

(5) The relevant time may be a time before the passing of this Act.")

3.56 pm

The Minister for Social Security and Disabled People (Mr. Alistair Burt): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Madam Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss also Lords amendments Nos. 2, 3, 67 to 70, 72, 74, 77, 79, 91, 97, 98, 113 to 123, 129 and 130.

Mr. Burt: This group of amendments relates primarily to part I of the Bill. The main changes involve extending the Bill's protection to cover people who have had a disability; putting human immune deficiency virus on the face of the Bill as an example of a progressive condition; introducing an additional power to make regulations stipulating effects on normal day-to-day activities which are to be treated as being, or, as the case may be, not being, substantial effects; and making the clause 2 guidance subject to the negative procedure. The remaining amendments are of a minor nature and are largely for clarification.

I shall speak to a couple of the more substantial amendments in the group, which will extend the provisions of the Bill to people with a past disability and honour a commitment made on Report on 22 May by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, who was then Minister for Social Security and Disabled People. He said that the Government accepted that the Bill should confer protection against discrimination on people who have had a disability that meets the Bill's definition.

Hon. Members will recall that the Bill did not initially protect people against discrimination related to a disability from which they had recovered to the extent that they no longer experienced a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

We were persuaded that people who have had a disability need the same degree of protection as will be available to disabled people. It is an important part of the recovery process to be able to participate in social activities and to engage in employment. Discrimination, which undermines recovery by blocking access to employment or services, would be particularly damaging.

Amendment No. 121 places on the face of the Bill

"infection by the human immunodeficiency virus"

as an example of a progressive condition. It has always been our policy that people who have such a condition will be protected by the Bill from the moment that it leads to an impairment that has any effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, whether or not the effect is substantial. The examples included no viral conditions and the amendment has helped to correct that omission.

We have made it clear before that people with HIV will be covered by the Bill only if they meet all the requirements of schedule 1(7), that is, not until the first effect on normal day-to-day activities manifests itself. As the great majority of people with HIV infection are symptom-free, they would not be covered. HIV is a progressive condition and Lords amendment No. 121 gives it as a fourth example of such a condition.

Sir Michael Neubert (Romford): I am indebted to my hon. Friend for drawing attention to the innovation embodied in Lords amendment No. 121 at a time when concern has been expressed in connection with another Bill. Could he estimate what the cost to the state will be as a result of the change?

Mr. Burt: The number of people expected to be brought under the Bill is negligible because the Bill, in its original form, was intended to cover people with progressive conditions anyway. The inclusion of HIV in the Bill has not changed the Bill's intentions towards progressive conditions or towards people who may have had HIV in any case. It uses HIV as an example of a viral condition and makes it clear that people can come under the terms of the Bill even if they have such a condition. The amendment only established that on the face of the Bill. Therefore, there is no extra cost.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): The hon. Gentleman said that the cost of what is proposed is minimal. At what stage does he expect to be able to say anything about the total cost of the Bill as amended? Has he any idea of what the total cost of what the Government are proposing will be?

Mr. Burt: That is not really at issue. As the right hon. Gentleman knows, the total cost of the Bill will depend, to some extent, on the speed with which regulations are brought into effect. The main difference between the Bills offered by the Government and the Opposition has been that to introduce the Bill too rapidly would increase the costs to those who are going to be expected to provide goods and services in future. Our method of introducing the Bill over a period will mean that the costs will be reasonable for industry, while still matching the aspirations of disabled people.

Mr. Morris: I am grateful to the Minister, who, as always, was as helpful as was possible. I mentioned the total cost of what is proposed because such great play was made about the cost of my Bill—the Civil Rights

(Disabled Persons) Bill. It was said repeatedly that that would cost £17 billion. If the Government felt able to make that costing, how long will it be before they can cost what is proposed in this much different Bill?

Mr. Burt: As I courteously said to the hon. Gentleman, the great difference between the costings—and the resistance from the Government to his Bill and to similar Bills—resulted from the fact that they lacked the flexibility of this Bill in terms of its regulation-making power to introduce matters within the remit of the Bill over a period of time. The problem with the hon. Gentleman's Bill and other Opposition Bills was that their requirement to introduce provisions at a very early stage substantially increased the costs to employers and business—by so much that it would have made life awkward.

Mr. Alan Howarth (Stratford-on-Avon): With great respect to the hon. Gentleman, that is simply not correct. The Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill envisaged that its provisions should be brought in over variable periods to be decided at the discretion of the relevant Secretary of State. There was a lot of Government propaganda that said that it all had to be done within five years at the staggering cost of £17 billion, but that was disinformation. The comparison that the Minister is seeking to make is wrong.

Mr. Burt: We have heard the arguments about the merits of the respective Bills many times. It was the considered view of Conservative Members—and this view prevailed—that the cost would be prohibitive because of the way in which the previous Bill was drawn. We do not need to go back over those arguments. We are dealing today with a series of amendments to this Bill—a Bill that will substantially advance the cause of disabled people. If we concentrate on that, the merits of the Bill, as it will be amended, will become clear.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): I see much logic in the case that the Minister seeks to present on behalf of the Government, who have clearly changed their position. However, the House be unable to decide on these matters unless we know whether, by definition, those affected by the Bill accept the decision of the House of Lords on amendment No. 30. What is the Government's view on that amendment?

Mr. Burt: The hon. Gentleman knows our view on amendment No. 30 very well. We seek to overturn that amendment, as we have made plain from the moment that it was passed in the House of Lords.

Amendment No. 116 inserts into the Bill a power to make regulations stipulating effects on normal day-to-day activities, which are to be treated as being or not being substantial adverse effects. Hon. Members will be aware that the Bill defines "disability" as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

We believe that businesses, disabled people, and courts and tribunals will, in the vast majority of cases, know who is and who is not protected by the Bill. However, experience may show that express provision is appropriate to clarify the position in relation to some conditions. This power enables that to be done without the need for further primary legislation. It complements other regulation-making powers covering other aspects of the definition that were in the Bill when it left this House. I therefore commend the amendment to the House.

Mr. Tom Clarke: This is the first of several occasions when I hope to catch your eye, Madam Speaker, to welcome the Government's climbdowns during the progress of the Bill. We have witnessed a series of concessions and U-turns, and the defeat in another place on a major principle. Ministers have been forced to recognise that the Bill which left this House seven months ago was simply not adequate to tackle disability discrimination. Nowhere is that clearer than in the area covered by the Lords amendments.

We argued day after day in Committee about the definition of disability. We argued that the protection offered by the law should not be confined by medical definitions of disability. We argued that protection should be extended to those likely to suffer discrimination because of a history of or reputation for disability. We also argued for protection for those likely to suffer discrimination on the grounds of future disability, not just those with conditions such as multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy but those infected with HIV.

Ministers resisted those arguments throughout the Committee stage, and the evidence exists. The right hon. Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Hague) said in Committee that he did

> "not think that we could justify to the country including in the Bill people who were thought to have HIV".

He said that to do so would make the Bill too broad because it would include people who were not

> "understood to be disabled in any generally accepted sense of the term".—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 7 February 1995; c.83.]

On protection from discrimination for those suffering from HIV, I am delighted that the Government have now given way. But notwithstanding their U-turns, we are bound to seek reassurances on the implementation of their commitment. We know from experience of the Act sponsored by my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) in 1970 and my Act in 1986 that Ministers cannot always be relied on to implement every aspect of existing disability legislation, so we must be sure that there is no reluctance on their part in this matter and that the law will be fully implemented to protect those to whom protection has been offered only at a relatively late stage.

We also welcome the addition of those with past disabilities, as contained in the amendments, subject to the same proviso that more needs to be said about implementation. With specific reference to the regulations and guidance, which define "substantial adverse effects", we seek Ministers' assurance that that phrase will be interpreted in a flexible way. Will Ministers assure us that the fluctuation in levels of the adverse effects suffered by many disabled people will be taken into account when the regulations are made?

Subject to those comments, we welcome the amendments. My only regret is that Ministers have not accepted that perceived disability should be considered at this stage and included in the Bill. I regret that, following my intervention, the Minister confirmed his decision.

Credit should be given where it is due. Many thousands of people will benefit from the Government's concession, made even at the eleventh hour. I congratulate all those

[Mr. Tom Clarke]

representatives of organisations of disabled people and others who lobbied the House on a cold, uncomfortable day. What has been achieved is their success and their victory. In that spirit, I welcome what the Minister has said.

Mr. Alfred Morris: The Minister was not personally involved in the Committee, but he will know that we were repeatedly blocked in trying to include in the Bill what the amendments now propose. In particular, we discussed HIV at length, and of course we welcome the Government's belated conversion.

The Minister used the words "We were persuaded" to explain the Government's conversion. We accept that compliment, which justifies our stance in the debates today in supporting further changes to the Bill, as now drafted. That is not unreasonable when we recall that the Bill left the Commons in March. It was 44 pages long, but there are 47 pages of Lords amendments. They are amendments to a Bill that the Government were quite satisfied was well drafted before it left here. We hope that the few further improvements that we are seeking today will be readily granted against that background.

Mr. Neil Gerrard (Walthamstow): I should like to discuss amendment No. 121, to which the Minister and my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) referred, which relates to the inclusion of progressive conditions and HIV in the Bill.

The Minister repeated the assurance given by his colleague in Committee that the Bill, as originally drafted, covered people with AIDS and symptomatic, but not asymptomatic, HIV. The recent concession by the Government is a welcome change of heart. I have always believed that it was important that the Bill should offer a clear recognition of the true medical significance of the progressive nature of HIV.

The concession will help to offset some of the hysteria that still surrounds discussion of the subject. That was evident earlier in the summer, when the press got hold of the story that the Government had agreed in another place to make the amendment. There was dreadful press coverage about that, in the *Daily Mail* in particular. As I recall, matters were not helped by certain Conservative Members.

It could be argued that it is of marginal importance whether something is dealt with in the Bill or in regulations, but it is not of marginal importance to those people with the HIV infection or those working with them. It is not a trivial matter. The Bill as amended still does not allow for the creation of a disability commission with teeth; instead, it relies on advisory councils. It is therefore important that as much as possible is spelt out in the Bill so that employers, providers of goods and services and those who may be discriminated against know that they are covered by its provisions.

I still believe that the Government's approach to the definition as it relates to asymptomatic HIV leaves something to be desired.

However, asymptomatic HIV is not covered by the Bill, and I continue to be unaware of any reason why the legislation will prevent employers who want to do so demanding pre-employment tests and, on the basis of those tests, discriminating against people who turn out to be HIV-positive but do not yet show symptoms. That is a remaining loophole, which I am afraid some employers will continue to use to bar some applicants.

As survival rates increase, as the efficiency of drug regimes to help people who have HIV infections improves, I can foresee that becoming more and more of a potential problem in future as long as that loophole remains.

4.15 pm

The fundamental flaw in the Bill, even with those welcome amendments, is that it continues to rely on medical models with a medical approach to disability, defining disability purely in terms of people's physical impairments. It says nothing about attitude. It says nothing about the physical and social arrangements that discriminate against people and build barriers against them. It says nothing about perceived disability. I am glad about the change of heart on a history of disability, but those flaws remain.

I believe that the Minister used the words "any impairment". Later, when he described some of the clauses in more detail, he made it clear that we were continuing to use the definition of "substantial and adverse impairment" and effects on day-to-day activities. I should be grateful if he would say something about the way in which he envisages the regulations being framed.

Undoubtedly, some people's conditions vary from time to time. That certainly applies to the issue that I have spent most of my time talking about—people who have HIV infections, who may sometimes be perfectly well for a time but who then will be quite ill for a time. There are people with sight impairment whose conditions are not constant and vary from time to time.

It would be interesting to hear from the Minister the way in which he envisages dealing with people with problems that vary in intensity, in the regulations that will put into effect the definition of substantial and adverse effects.

I welcome the improvements in the definition, which have been dragged out of the Government during the Bill's passage. It is a pity that the Government continue to resist the civil rights based approach and insist on the approach to definition that remains in the Bill. However, it is perhaps better than when we started.

Mr. Roger Berry (Kingswood): In one sense, the group of amendments that we are discussing reflects the Government's whole approach to legislation.

On the one hand, there has obviously been movement. That group of amendments shows that the Government have moved significantly in relation to definition.

In Committee, we were told that it was necessary to have the narrowest possible definition, and that, if we were to include history of impairment in the category, it would open the floodgates and cause enormous problems. I am pleased to say that the Government have now recognised that they had to move to accept a broader definition of disability—just as I am delighted that the Government have moved from their position of 15 months ago, when they felt that no legislation at all was necessary on that subject.

Although movement is always welcome, the problem in relation to the definition of disability—as indeed for the legislation as a whole—is that, when the Government have moved, they have moved too little and too late.

It was always the case that, when the Government consulted on definition, their idea of definition had very little support. Several of us have referred, on occasions, to the red book—"Consultation on Government Measures to Tackle Discrimination Against Disabled People". I find that red book—the outcome of the Government's consultation exercise on the Bill—almost as interesting as the Red Book that the Chancellor places before the House every year.

One reason I find it so interesting is that it states that, of those who offered a view on the definition, only five supported the Government's original approach. The vast majority of people felt that a much broader definition was necessary. I welcome the fact that this group of amendments accepts that argument—we shall discuss amendment No. 30 later. I regret that the Government have not gone much further and taken a sensible approach.

A number of us have referred to the definition used in the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was used in the Rehabilitation Act 1973, and thus goes back 22 years in the United States. We have used that legislation to invoke the argument that we need to include those with a history of impairment as well as those perceived as having an impairment. Those two aspects are closely related, which is why I hope that I am not out of order in making my point.

The Government now accept that it should not be lawful to discriminate against someone with a history of impairment, if that is the reason for the discrimination. The Government accept that disabled people should be protected from unfair discrimination for that reason.

But let us suppose that an employer says, "This person has applied for a job with my company. This person has a history of mental illness, which is over—it is history—but that history suggests a finite probability that the illness might recur. If the illness recurs and I employ this person, I may have to make reasonable adjustments to the accommodation in order to allow him. Therefore, might it not be reasonable for me not to employ this individual?"

When we talk about a history of impairment, we are often talking about how an employer or service provider now perceives an individual. If a potential employee has a history of impairment, it affects the employer's perception of the future. Will the Minister clarify whether, when he accepts the idea that we should seek to prevent discrimination against people with a history of disability, he seeks to prevent discrimination against someone whose potential employer believes that his or her history may impose a burden on the company?

We must be clear about that. I am worried that, because the Government specifically wish to exclude the notion of discrimination on the grounds of someone's perception of a disability, they might—in the case that I have given—use that exclusion as a reason for not acting against discrimination on the grounds of history.

I hope that I have made my argument clearly. I have made my point as clearly as I can, but it is for other hon. Members to determine whether they understand it. I hope that the Minister will tackle that issue.

I welcome this group of amendments, although they have not gone far enough, which is why we shall have a debate on amendment No. 30. I want to ensure that the Minister's interpretation of history in the context of the amendments we are discussing will not create the problem that I have identified.

Mr. Alan Howarth: I simply want to ask a question of the Minister. When he uses the term "history", does he use it to refer exclusively to an individual person, or to a family history? I should be grateful if he will advise the House on whether his policy is intended to protect those born into families with a history of disability, such as genetically transmitted diseases. Would an individual be protected against discrimination by an employer or a provider of goods and services who is aware that that person may be in the pre-symptomatic phase of a genetically transmitted disease, for example?

Mr. Burt *rose—*

Madam Speaker: Does the Minister have the leave of the House to speak again?

Hon. Members: Aye.

Mr. Burt: I turn first to the issue of HIV. The hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Gerrard) was correct in saying that my predecessor looked at the issue very carefully. The position in relation to asymptomatic HIV remains the same: it is too broad to include in the legislation. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for welcoming the fact that the Bill now covers HIV when symptoms occur and impair.

It is quite important for the House to say that, no matter how conditions are contracted, where there is illness, disability and disease, it will act—as society would—with compassion. That strong statement must appear on the face of the Bill, and it is a central part of the argument. I think that the House would be following a very unhappy route if it were to try to distinguish how people are in certain circumstances—particularly in relation to health and illness—and to explore those circumstances in every case. We would have to open the net extremely wide, and I will have no truck with that.

The Bill recognises that all people who are affected by crippling diseases, however they have been contracted, will be treated in exactly the same way when they manifest symptoms. Everyone is in the same boat, no matter how a disease is contracted. It is important to clarify that point, and I hope that hon. Members will find it useful.

The hon. Gentleman also referred to flexibility, and I hope that I can reassure him and the House on that point. Hon. Members will be aware that the process of establishing the regulations involves extensive consultation before we issue guidance. We recognise that certain conditions fluctuate, and that substantial episodes may occur rarely, with large gaps between them. The regulations will be flexible enough to deal with the fact that substantial episodes may occur at some stage in the distant future.

Mr. Gerrard: Will the Minister clarify how the regulations will work in relation to the 12-month period that is mentioned in the Bill?

Mr. Burt: I think that there has been some confusion about the 12-month period. It does not mean that episodes must recur within 12 months; that is not the issue as far as I am concerned. The likelihood of an episode recurring, not the frequency of the recurrence, is the main factor.

[Mr. Burt]

A person will be regarded as disabled if it is likely that the substantial adverse effect will recur at least once after—not before—a period of 12 months from the first occurrence. If it is clear that an episode will recur, it will fall within the terms of the definition. I think that the hon. Gentleman will find the regulations flexible in that area. There has been a great deal of consultation to ensure that that is the case.

I think that I understood the hon. Member for Kingswood (Mr. Berry) pretty well. He seemed to be getting at exactly what we are getting at in terms of putting history on the face of the Bill. It is important that the Bill protects a person with a history of disability according to the Bill's definition, who may have recovered from that disability, but who may suffer a recurrence. From memory, I think that the circumstances that the hon. Gentleman described would be covered by the Bill.

I want, if I may, to scale down the gung-ho element in this debate. The House is grown-up enough to realise that the process of legislation involves hard debate, on Second Reading and in Committee, and in the Lords. There are times when the Government have to think extremely carefully, and are moved only after the passage of time. That is not the same as a climbdown or a U-turn: it has to do with the process of debate. The Government have to listen to the arguments, here and in another place; they have to deal with lobby groups and others; and if they take some time to produce amendments, that is because it is our duty to weigh these matters carefully. That is the proper process of government.

I therefore hope that, on subsequent amendments, we will not go through this little charade of suggesting that the Government have been ground down and overturned on every point. That is not how it works.

4.30 pm

Mr. Berry: Given the history of the fight for civil rights for disabled people, and the fact that, 15 months ago, the Government were opposed to any legislation, it would be nice if the Minister would now apologise to all the groups who were told 15 months ago that they had no right to protection of any kind.

Mr. Burt: We should also bear in mind the Government's history of passing legislation supporting disabled people, from 1979 onwards. We have a superb record, but it is rarely referred to by Opposition Members.

I said earlier that the Government had grave reservations about the costs—and everything else—involved in previous Bills on this subject. I am pleased to say that our Bill has moved the debate on. The Government are entitled to credit for that, just as all who have persuasively argued their case are entitled to credit for it.

Mr. Tom Clarke: As the Minister seems to be seeking absolution, should we agree to that until he has made a full confession? Will he answer one simple question: when tabling today's amendments, did he consult the right hon. Member for Chelsea (Sir N. Scott)?

Mr. Burt: My right hon. Friend is and will remain a firm friend, who has done a great deal for disabled people. I have no doubt that he would be in favour of the Bill and of all today's amendments. He remains a strong voice for disabled people in the United Kingdom.

My memory has now recovered somewhat in relation to the costs of the Bill, which temporarily slipped my mind when I was discussing the matter earlier. The original estimates of the costs of introducing this Bill are between £300 million and £1.2 billion. The range is so wide because of the timetable, but, as hon. Members will understand, this Bill costs much less than previous Bills—

Mr. Berry *rose—*

Mr. Burt: I will give way to the hon. Gentleman for the last time. If I keep giving way, we will not be able to make progress.

Mr. Berry: We all want to make progress, but the Minister has just made a throwaway remark about the costs of previous Bills, clearly referring to the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill. May we hear again on the record that the Government's estimate of £17 billion was outrageous and wrong, and opposed by the all-party disablement group and by every organisation that looked objectively at the figures? It amounted to a smear on our Bill.

Now I am happy to make progress.

Mr. Burt: The hon. Gentleman seems to have got that off his chest. He can put it on the record if he wants to. The Government's view remains different from the hon. Gentleman's; that is why we have this Bill and not the hon. Gentleman's.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 2 and 3 agreed to.

Clause 4

MEANING OF "DISCRIMINATION"

Lords amendment: No. 4, in page 3, line 3, leave out from beginning to ("cannot"), in line 4 and insert

("to whom that reason does not or would not apply; and

(b) he")

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Employment (Mr. James Paice): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael Morris): With this, it will be convenient to discuss also Lords amendments Nos. 5 to 16, 18, 29 and 31 to 42, Lords amendment No. 43, Government amendment (a) thereto and Lords amendments Nos. 44, 45, 104, 106, 132 and 133.

Mr. Paice: This group of amendments deals with reasonable adjustment to the meaning of discrimination within the Bill.

Under the Bill, disabled people are protected from less favourable treatment which is for a reason relating to the disability and which is not justified. Lords amendments Nos. 4, 32 and 41 change the test of when treatment is "less favourable". As amended, the Bill will regard treatment that is for a reason relating to the disability as being less favourable if it is less favourable than the treatment of people to whom that reason does not apply. For example, where someone does not get a job for a reason connected with his or her disability, that person is less favourably treated than the person who does get that job. The employer would then have to justify that treatment. That seems to us to be the right comparison.

The remaining amendments provide a simpler and clearer test of "justification" for less favourable treatment. The changes were made following concern raised by hon. Members as well as noble Lords in another place that the original test in the Bill placed too much weight on the opinion of employers, and it was too complex. Indeed, that concern was raised both in Committee and on Report. The use of the undefined and broad word "unsuitable" also led to adverse comments.

The amendments to the employment provisions substitute for a fixed list of specific justifications a principle that can be applied much more easily in the wide and varied range of circumstances that can arise in employment. Less favourable treatment of a disabled person would be justified only if the reason for it was material to the circumstances of the particular case and if it was substantial.

In part III of the Bill, the concept of a reasonably held opinion and a fixed list of justifications is retained, although the drafting has been much simplified, as in part II. Government amendment (a) to Lords amendment No. 43 alters the regulation-making power that deals with the question of what is reasonable, in the context of the provisions on premises in part III, to rely on one of the justifications for less favourable treatment. The Government amendment brings the premises provision into line with those relating to service providers in amendment No. 34. We are satisfied that this different approach continues to be right and relevant in the very different context of premises. Service providers often have to take quick and, perhaps, less informed decisions when serving someone, so an opinion-based approach remains appropriate.

In the case of the clauses about employment and provision of services, the amendments also provide that a failure to comply with a duty of reasonable adjustment itself counts as discrimination, unless justified within the relevant provision.

The amendments also make it clear, in new subsection (7), that regulations made under subsection (6) for less favourable treatment may stipulate that additional cost is a valid ground for justification. They also make it clear that regulations can enable uniform rates of contribution to be maintained. I can assure hon. Members that we do not intend that a trivial degree of extra cost should amount to a justification for less favourable treatment. The nature of an assessment makes it very unlikely that the regulations will fix precise figures for the level of extra cost that would amount to justification; instead, they are more likely to set out the considerations that should be taken into account.

We are committed to consultations on the content of regulations that relate to occupational pensions and other regulations under the Bill. My hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security and Disabled People will expand on the provisions relating to occupational pensions when the House considers the next group of amendments. I hope that hon. Members will wait until then to raise issues on that matter.

We believe that, with these amendments, the Bill provides the right balance between ensuring that an employer can recruit the best person for the job and that a provider of services can do so in a sensible way, and preventing unjustifiable discrimination against disabled people.

Amendment No. 8 ensures that the duty of an employer to make reasonable adjustments, where any physical feature of premises causes substantial disadvantage to a disabled person compared with those who are not disabled, refers only to an employer's own premises.

Hon. Members as well as noble Lords and employers expressed concerns that the criteria for reasonableness in making an adjustment should be more clearly established. The Government reflected on those concerns and concluded that it would be helpful to list in the Bill the key factors to which employers shall have regard when making decisions about a "reasonable adjustment". That is now done by Lords amendment No. 10.

As my noble Friend the Minister of State, Department for Education and Employment explained in another place, we believe that a number of principal factors should be taken into account in determining whether it is reasonable for an employer to take a step. The code of practice would, of course, give further examples and guidance on the question of reasonableness. As amended, the Bill would continue to reflect the Government's view that the duty on an employer to make an adjustment should provide a fair balance between what can legitimately be asked of employers, and the needs of disabled people.

Lords amendments Nos. 14, 15 and 16 ensure that, should the need arise, certain adjustments can be clearly prescribed as always or never being reasonable. That can be done, when appropriate, by reference to the cost of taking the step concerned.

Section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 enshrines the principle of merit in local authorities' practice. There is an exception relating to the appointment of disabled persons. It currently refers to the quota provisions of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944, which will be repealed by the Bill. Lords amendments Nos. 132 and 133 make it clear that there is no conflict between the requirement that appointments be made on merit and the duty of reasonable adjustment in the Bill. In other words, an authority will still have to appoint on merit, but it will first have to consider whether a reasonable adjustment could help a disabled person to achieve that state of merit.

Ms Liz Lynne (Rochdale): Will the pilot priority interview schemes be allowed to go ahead when the amendments are passed?

Mr. Paice: The priority interview scheme is part of what is being repealed, so the answer is no; but there are a number of other ways in which local authorities, in appointing staff, will be able to take positive action to allow disabled people to demonstrate their merit.

Mr. Michael Connarty (Falkirk, East): Will the Minister give us some examples of what the Government have in mind?

Mr. Paice: There is a range of examples. Local authorities might wish to provide preferential training schemes for disabled people, to encourage them to make the most of their abilities in their employment. They might wish to launch special recruitment drives to encourage applications from disabled people for local

[Mr. Paice]

authority posts. They might wish to encourage applications from disabled people for individual vacancies as they arose. They might wish to interview all suitable disabled applicants. They could do, or continue to do, all those things.

Let me remind the House of the disability symbol scheme run by the Employment Service. One of the commitments that employers must make if they are to use the symbol is to interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy, and then consider them on the basis of their abilities. The large number of local authorities that use the symbol is a clear indication of their freedom to take such action without falling foul of section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act. That is just one of the ways in which authorities are currently able to ensure that disabled people have the best possible chance of making the most of the opportunities open to them. All those opportunities will remain when the Bill is enacted.

The remaining amendments are very minor, improving and clarifying parts II and III of the Bill. I commend all the amendments to the House.

4.45 pm

Mr. Gordon McMaster (Paisley, South): Speaking at this stage in the Bill's passage, I feel a bit of a fraud. Much of the work has already been done by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), and has been recognised by disabled people throughout the country.

I wish to concentrate on the powers of local authorities to take positive action to employ disabled people. During my researches this morning, I concluded that the Government had not acted with malice aforethought, but had merely been caught in their own net. Following the Minister's disgraceful speech about the positive action that can be taken, however, I feel that we must have something strong to say.

Only last week, in the other place, did it become clear that local authorities would no longer be able to take positive action. We thought that that was simply because the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires councils to appoint on merit; but councils seeking to meet the 3 per cent. quota defined in the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 have had the power to take positive action. Following the Bill's removal of the quota, that will no longer be possible.

Before reaching his conclusion, did the Minister examine the hundreds of examples of local authorities throughout the country that have taken positive action to give employment to disabled people? Before my election as a Member of Parliament I was leader of a council, and remember being presented with a "fit for work" award by the Department of Employment because the council had achieved a 1 per cent. quota for disabled people. In fact, we secured that award by breaking the law: we had exceeded the requirement by two thirds. The Minister is simply enshrining the removal of the quota in law; rather than ensuring best practice, the Bill will ensure worst practice.

One of the reasons why the quota was so difficult to achieve was that the duty applied only to registered disabled people. There is a disincentive for disabled people to register, as registration can make it more difficult for them to find employment. Many local authorities tried hard to achieve that 3 per cent. quota, but found it extremely difficult to do so because of the registration problem. They were making progress, but now some of the best practice in the country is to be stopped. The Minister shakes his head, but that will be the effect of the Bill. If local authorities can no longer take positive action, there is no doubt that the number of disabled people who are encouraged to work for authorities will fall.

Local authorities seem to be treated differently from other groups. The Bill contains an exclusion for charities, especially those dealing with disability issues in the voluntary sector, and there is evidence of similar good practice in government which local authorities should be encouraged to follow. During the recess, for example, a new Benefits Agency office was opened in my constituency by Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, Minister of State, Department of Social Security. Although I could not attend the opening, I visited the office a few days later, and noted that the agency was employing blind telephonists. That is an example of good practice.

In some circumstances, there will be nothing to prevent similar action in the future. Local authorities, however, should have the power to state after receiving application forms that they will guarantee an interview and that—all else being equal, and if the applicant meets the minimum or essential criteria—that applicant will be given the advantage of a job. It will seem a bit hollow for the many local authorities that now use the "positive about disabled people" symbol in their letterheads to be told by the Government to be less positive about disabled people. Some local authorities may not want to do that because it would be a backward step. I am disappointed that the Minister has taken that position and I have a few important questions for him.

Will the Minister clarify the exact powers of local authorities to operate guaranteed interview schemes? What powers will local authorities have to operate any other type of positive action to encourage disabled people to enter into their employment? How does the Minister define merit and how will disputes be settled? "Merit" cannot be scientifically defined and, of course, there could be some disputes. Will local authorities be able to earmark particular jobs for disabled people—for example, in the field of equal opportunities units? I hope that the Minister will be more positive in reply to my questions.

Ms Lynne: I was disappointed by the Minister's reply to my intervention. Local authorities that are taking positive measures should be congratulated. We must address the problem of under-representation in the work force of local authorities and what the Minister suggests will not take us far enough on that road. It is wrong that progressive local authorities such as the one in Rochdale will be blocked from taking these positive measures. Rochdale has a priority interview scheme in social services and, although we cannot totally assess it at the moment, according to the local government information unit there is benefit from it in, for instance, educating managers in how to judge a disabled candidate's ability to do a job rather than judging the perceived disadvantages, a practice that has often occurred in the past.

We have to tackle under-representation in local authorities. For decades, they have been as guilty of discrimination as other employers. The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 set a target of 3 per cent., but it has been missed by a long way. Only 1 per cent. of employees of London authorities are disabled people and the average is worse for county councils. Borough and district councils are slightly better, but it is vital to allow local authorities to tackle this problem.

I should like more clarification from the Minister on what he means by positive measures and whether he thinks they will meet the target. Under the Bill, the target is to go. Will the Minister's positive measures get more disabled people into the work force of local authorities? Priority interview schemes should be allowed to continue. The Bill repeals parts of the 1944 Act and changes to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 will prevent local authorities from pursuing such schemes. The Government must give a firm commitment on what will replace them.

Some positive measures are reinforced by the Bill. Clause 10 deals with charities and supported employment being able to take positive action. Why not local authorities? They should be able to take the same action as other employers and should have the freedom to tackle the under-representation of disabled people in the work force. I should be glad to hear the Minister spell that out in more detail because I am extremely worried about it.

Mr. Alfred Morris: Can the Minister guarantee that the powers to make regulations in Lords amendments Nos. 14, 15 and 16 will not be used to undermine the assistance given to disabled people under the access to work scheme? In the view of the Royal National Institute for the Blind, the Government are already putting undue pressure on a whole range of employers to volunteer to pay a contribution to access to work. Would the hon. Gentleman agree that any weakening of access to work would run completely contrary to the intentions set out in the Bill to tackle discrimination against disabled people in employment?

I am delighted to follow in the debate my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. McMaster). He is as true a friend of disabled people as one will find anywhere in this country. He worked with disabled people before he came here and has shown constancy of the highest order in their service since the moment he arrived at Westminster. I count him among my most honoured parliamentary colleagues and wish him all success in what I am sure will be a deservedly long and distinguished Front-Bench career.

The Minister said that it was an important purpose of this part of the Bill to ensure that an employer could appoint the best person for any vacant post. Hon. Members will appreciate that, having legislated so extensively on disability over the past 25 years, I receive a national post from disabled people and their organisations. I am told by disabled people in all parts of Britain that they are refused access to jobs for which they are well qualified due to misconceptions on the part of employers.

I recall the case of a very capable woman who, in keen competition, won a senior post in a big police authority. Having taken the job, she was told that, because of a disability that in no way affected her job, she would be excluded from the superannuation scheme. That was a most important consideration as far as she was concerned. I recall the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation contacting me about that particular case. The Minister's predecessors are aware of case after case where I have been asked to do everything possible to ensure that disabled people who have proved their fitness for jobs are not disbarred by actions taken by unreasonable employers. It is that sort of gratuitous extra handicap that so upsets disabled people. In that particular case, the woman had to decide whether to carry on in the job that she had won in open competition or to look for something else. That cannot be right. We are not absolutely certain yet that there will be fewer opportunities to exploit people in that kind of difficulty if the Bill as drafted becomes law.

I am very glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South talked about the 3 per cent. quota. The quota has not been implemented through legal action since the 1970s. It has many critics. The fact that is very important today for disabled people is that a Bill that seeks to increase the rights of disabled people takes a right away from them that they regard as still very important. They say, "You must not do away with an existing form of protection without introducing something stronger." My hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South knew, from the work that he did among disabled people before he entered Parliament, how important the 3 per cent. quota was in terms of local government employment. He mentioned it today and I hope that the Minister will respond positively on that issue.

Let no one speak in accents of serene satisfaction about what is now proposed. That is not how disabled people see what we are doing today. They want full and enforceable civil rights and they want them without any further delay.

5 pm

Mr. Connarty: When I stand to speak in the debate, I am aware that I follow people who have ploughed a deep and clear furrow in the cause of fighting for people with disabilities, but I wish to support the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. McMaster) and to congratulate him on his first Front-Bench appointment. I look forward to seeing him on those Front Benches for many years to come.

My hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South made the important point that some serious concerns must exist as to the purpose of the Government's removal of the 3 per cent. quota, which was not just a protection, but the only piece of positive and affirmative action contained in the law for disabled persons.

As some people have said, in many respects it had fallen into disuse. Sixteen years of recession since the Government came to power meant that many corners were cut. That is the reality at the sharp cutting edge. People had to choose between an employee who might have had to be cosseted or protected slightly more, or whose productivity was slightly less than others. In the economic environment created by the Government, employers did not choose those people where they did in the past.

It was local authorities, in the majority of cases Labour and other non-Conservative local authorities, that took seriously the 3 per cent. quota. As my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South said, the "Fit for Work" award was often given when the local authority or other

[Mr. Connarty]

employers had not reached the 3 per cent. quota, but were seen to taking affirmative action, not just not to discriminate against disabled persons, but to discriminate in their favour.

Some people would say that the 3 per cent. quota had fallen into misuse. It was clear that employers and often local authorities, I am sorry to say, encouraged people in employment who had a minor injury or minor disability to register as a disabled person to obtain a green card for a broken limb, thumb or finger, but that was not the purpose of the original Act.

I was also a Scottish local authority leader for 10 years. We were proud to receive the "Fit for Work" award, but we did not reach the 3 per cent. target, although we tried hard to do so—not by trying to get people to register for the green card, but by seeking people who would fit that bill and then positively discriminating towards them under the 3 per cent. rule. That power has been removed by the Government in schedule 4: they are removing the positive discrimination and saying that posts must be awarded on merit.

In an intervention, I asked the Minister what the Government would do and he mentioned preferential training schemes, special recruitment drives to encourage disabled people to apply for a vacancy, and interviews of all suitable disabled people for potential vacancies. In reality, however, he is saying that those people should queue up and then be chopped down on the basis of merit.

Someone will be able to say, "I deserve that job on merit, a disabled person does not deserve it on merit, and therefore he has no complaint under the Government's Bill." That is not the spirit that, in my experience, made local authorities use the 3 per cent. quota.

I wish to give an example to the House. When I was leader of Stirling district council, we had a vacancy for someone to operate the switchboard and to work on reception. We were offered many people with minor ailments and disabilities, but the position was so accessible to someone with severe disability that we wanted the disablement officer to find us someone who had the ability but major problems of mobility. The council's attention was brought to a young woman called Jean—I shall not mention her second name, but I am sure that she would be proud to be mentioned. She has also been featured in many articles.

Jean was a seriously disabled person because thalidomide had been taken by her mother; she had foreshortened limbs. She had some trepidation about coming into a job, especially that of a receptionist working on a switchboard and facing the public, but she had a bold character. We made all the amendments necessary to give that young person access to the council.

Within a couple of years, Jean blossomed. She is still working with the local authority in reception, and in an upfront role. She takes the other receptionists to work in her disabled-amended car. She has a pilot's licence for gliding, and in the workplace has taken on board all the skills necessary. She has developed not only the personality for working in the reception and the technical skills, but everything required of her.

That was positive discrimination by the local authority, but it is clear that, under this Bill, no matter how one advertised the post, one would have great difficulty not discriminating positively—in other words, breaking the law—to give someone such as Jean the sort of job that she requires. A local authority, public employer or a large employer deserves a "Fit for Work" award when they positively discriminate, because that is what persons with disabilities are looking for. To receive such an award, it is important that an authority or large employer should be able to hold their head up among people who suffer from severe disablement.

The Minister mentioned the word gung-ho in referring to the Opposition's pleasure at the Government's climbdown on a number of issues in the Lords. Over the past 18 months, we have recognised, from the way that persons with disabilities have come to the House and lobbied, that they have acquired a new, louder voice. Talk about gung-ho—we will see some gung-ho action on this Bill, because those people will fight for every chance to prove that they need more from the Government. They will batter down the doors of the House until they are given equal rights and a positive discrimination framework that gives them access to true employment, which they deserve and which they will undertake with honour.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Amendment No. 4 deals with the comparative for assessing whether an employer's treatment of an individual is less favourable. That is but one instance of a problem that we will have to reflect on and on which the Government owe the House some guidance this afternoon. We are dealing with an extremely complex piece of primary legislation, with further extensive and no doubt complex secondary legislation to follow.

The Government have not made it clear how an employer, a provider of goods and services or a disabled person is to understand what the nature of their obligations is. How is an employer to make his assessment of whether his treatment is, under the terms of the legislation, less favourable or not? The Minister sought to explain the Government's case on that, but did not cast all the light on it that may be needed.

The Minister with responsibility for disabled people told us in a debate the week before last that he had it in mind that there should be a fairly extensive system for provision of information and advice, but I do not think that the details have been made clear. This debate would provide an opportunity for the Government to make more clear to hon. Members and—very important—to the field that they have in mind.

Most of what we know so far is what the Government have ruled out. We know that there is not to be a disability rights commission which would have responsibilities for briefing and education, analogous to those of the Equal Opportunities Commission or the Commission for Racial Equality. We also know that the National Disability Council is not to be involved—certainly it is not to have a role in advising in particular cases and circumstances.

We have been advised that there is to be a central helpline, perhaps located in the Department of Social Security, and we have also been told that there will be some sort of second tier and network around the country whereby advice will be made available. This is an urgent and important point. In all the complexities of this legislation, we will need advice that is clear, consistent and accessible and that is provided on a cost-effective basis, in relation both to the providers and to the seekers of the advice.

It is important that whatever advice is on offer should be readily accessible. It would be helpful, therefore, if the Minister told us a little more about the helpline. For example, will it be a freephone? If somebody seeking to use it is held in a queue of callers, will the courtesy of a return call be offered, or will he or she have to wait, fuming and increasingly impatient and frustrated, in the queue?

What will people find in the local telephone directory when they seek to discover how to take advantage of the service that the Government intend to make available? If they manage to get through and to consult someone, what guidance will be on offer?

Mr. Alfred Morris: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way. He has spent a very great deal of time over recent years assisting people with special learning difficulties. He will be aware of the work of People First, and in particular of Simone Aspis of that organisation. She has asked that this debate should take account of young people with special learning difficulties, who will find it very hard to get the information they need about their rights.

She gives the example of a young person who is refused access to a social club, a youth club, because of having Down's syndrome. A person with special learning difficulties trying to find out her rights under this legislation will have no easy task. I know that my hon. Friend is as seized of the importance of that as are many others on this side of the House.

Mr. Howarth: My right hon. Friend provides an excellent example of the need that I have sought to describe. It is a happy circumstance that the Minister present comes from the newly combined Department for Education and Employment, which has particular responsibility for young people, including those whom People First exists to represent and support. The Minister's Department has responsibility for the youth service—or what remains of it.

Certainly the needs of disabled young people, and the needs of the youth service that seeks to serve young people, represent an important example of an area in which there will be a demand for advice.

I should be grateful if the Minister would tell the House what guidance he and other Ministers intend to give to Whitehall, to Government agencies, to non-departmental public bodies, to quangos and to the rest of our increasingly fragmented system of government, as well as to local authorities.

At present, there is great uncertainty. The CBI suggests that the range of services to be provided will be so extensive that it may include a mediation service. I cannot see how that could be so, but it would be encouraging if it were.

What will be the nature and extent of the advice available? Where will it come from, and what can people expect to be advised upon? Will they be told the nature of their obligations under the various elements of the legislation? Will they be given guidance, for example, on the practical meaning of "reasonableness" in a particular set of circumstances? Will they be advised as to what is "best practice", and about the developing body of case law resulting from tribunal hearings? Will they be told where to go for further advice on technical and specialised matters?

May we be told today about the funding of the system? What resources will be available for a system that must go well beyond the present PACTs—placement, assessment and counselling teams—and CEDPs—committees for the employment of disabled people? I am sure that the citizens advice bureaux will want to play what part they can in the system, and what they can do is invariably most helpful, but traditionally they have not been able to shoulder responsibilities of the sort suggested. If the Government seek to enlist them for the purpose, what will they do to help them? What resources will be provided for them?

There is already a pretty tangled and impenetrable cat's cradle of services, bodies and organisations, so it is vital that everyone concerned should know what they can expect in the way of information and advice.

When my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. McMaster), whom I warmly congratulate on his appointment to the Front Bench, said to the Minister that the Bill as amended would prevent local authorities from taking the positive action that many of them have so valuably undertaken to promote better employment opportunities for disabled people, the Minister shook his head. It is therefore important that, if he has the leave of the House to respond to the debate, the Minister makes it clear what diminution the Government intend in the scope of local authorities to support the employment of disabled people through positive action—or whether he considers that the status quo will be preserved.

5.15 pm

I put it to the Government that public authorities should set the best standards in employment, and should have every assistance and support from the Government in doing so—not only because they are major employers, but because they are public authorities, and it is right that they should set a model.

Too many public authorities do not set a good example. The hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) has over the years tabled a series of questions and elicited much information about the disappointing performance of Whitehall Departments and other publicly funded bodies in the employment of disabled people, and the manner in which they have all too often ignored the quota by which the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 bound them.

However, many local authorities do set a high standard and provide a good model in that respect, with their positive disposition and the positive action that they have been willing to take. The Bill should at least safeguard local authorities so that they are not in a weaker position than private employers if they wish to act positively towards disabled people in their employment practices. After all, local authorities are expressive of their communities, and should take the lead within those communities in supporting those who are disadvantaged and in demonstrating best practice.

Such legislation is enormously important, not only for what it specifically provides but for its more broadly ranging declaratory effect. I mean not words without substance but legislation that articulates the values that we as a society should uphold and seek to realise in practice. Such legislation has an important educative role, and there should be nothing in it that seeks to discourage or restrain employers from best practice in the employment of disabled people.

[Mr. Howarth]

As it is, there are too many equivocations, omissions and vaguenesses in the Bill. As has been said, it is sad that the Government are not willing to embrace the universal principle set out in the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill. We should not at this stage countenance any amendment of the Bill before us that would take us backwards rather than forwards towards the realisation of what should be the objective of all of us—an end to discrimination against disabled people in employment and in the provision of goods and services.

Mr. John Heppell (Nottingham, East): I shall not speak long, but I start by congratulating those who served on the Committee, who have achieved the almost impossible in turning a sow's ear into a silk purse. I say "almost impossible", because there are still omissions from the Bill that I would like to put right. One of those is the absence of a commission, because—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael Morris): Order. We cannot at this stage debate omissions from the Bill. We have plenty to debate as it is.

Mr. Heppell: Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was leading on towards the more relevant subject of the clauses concerned. First, I shall say something about the 3 per cent. quota that has disappeared. Like many other hon. Members, I have been a councillor, and I had the responsibility of being a chair of equal opportunities and the chair of a disability sub-committee. We were able to do things on that disability sub-committee that we could not do in committees on race or gender. I would like the same laws to apply in all areas, and I would like there to be a commission for disability, as is the case for both gender and race.

The 3 per cent. quota is not just a mechanism, and by removing it, the Minister is also removing something from councils. The quota gives a target and a perspective to councils. My council did not have its solicitors in the background on the subject of disability, saying, "We are not sure that the council has the power to do this," in the same way as it did on the subjects of race and gender, but that is what will happen in the future. We can see already that there some things that we can do in terms of positive action, but there are other things that we cannot do. I cannot seen any reason why the 3 per cent. quota could not have co-existed with the provisions of the Bill.

I wish to ask the Minister about Lords Amendment No. 31 which plans to insert the words

> "Except in such circumstances as may be prescribed".

Will the Minister confirm my suspicion that part III of the Bill will not apply to clubs or societies in relation to the provision of services for their members?

Does that mean that a Bill designed to outlaw discrimination will allow discrimination against people who are members of a pigeon fanciers' society? Does proper access and provision need to be made by a garden centre, but not by a gardening club? It seems to me that there is an anomaly there, and the Minister should tell the House what measures the Bill contains to take action against a service provider which limits its services to members while continuing to discriminate unfairly against people with disabilities.

Can the Minister clarify the position of business, and particularly shareholders? Will it be necessary for a company having its general meeting to make sure that the building is accessible to people with disabilities? Will the information to shareholders be sent in a form of communication that suits people—such as braille, large letters or tapes? If not, people will be discriminated against.

Will copyright matters be considered circumstances "as may be prescribed"? I understand from the Royal National Institute for the Blind that some famous authors will not allow their books to be put on tape or made into braille for blind people, thus denying blind people the right of access to those books. That is serious enough, but the fact that those books may form part of a set text for an exam that a blind person might have to take makes the matter even more serious. If that is a prescribed matter, will the Minister tell us what he proposes to do about it? Will the National Disability Council be allowed to investigate the matter further if it is prescribed?

The Bill is in many ways a milestone in terms of disability discrimination legislation, but it is not the end. There are still many things which need to be done if we are to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy the same civil rights as those of us in the Chamber. After tonight, I hope that people will not say that this is the end of the chapter and that we can now forget disabled people. There is still a long way to go to make people with disabilities free and liberated in society.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I wish to make some brief points on this batch of amendments. The Government have again shown that they do not understand local authorities. As employers, local authorities are not the same as businesses. They are elected authorities, with particularly close links with citizens, whose values are shaped by those citizens. They must seek to shape attitudes within an area.

By not allowing the quota system to operate and not allowing positive discrimination, the Government are seriously affecting local authorities. The Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People—an activist body working for disabled rights—is based in Clay Cross in north-east Derbyshire. That group undoubtedly has had a great impact upon local authorities throughout Derbyshire, none more than North-East Derbyshire district council.

Programmes such as "Towards Equality", in which disabled people are trained for jobs with a local authority or another organisation, are very important. Such programmes may now be taken away from local authorities because of a spurious argument about level playing fields and about how disabled people generally are to benefit from the provisions of the legislation. Local authorities are special, because the views of local people are reflected back to them, and we should take that seriously into account.

My hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) visited the Derbyshire Coalition for Disabled People and the district council, and he understands the close connection between them and the impact that that organisation of disabled people run by disabled people has made. It would be a pity if the organisation now found itself fighting a harder battle with local authorities in areas where it has previously had its greatest response.

My second point arises from points raised during the debate on the first batch of amendments. It was mentioned that a cost assessment of the operation of the Bill would be considered. We have always asked how many people are supposed to be covered by the Disability Discrimination Bill.

We know that a cost assessment of £17 billion was made for the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill, and that the number of people to which the Bill applied was 6.5 million, or 10 per cent. of the population. The Government have never stated how many people this Bill is designed to apply to. If a cost assessment is likely to be made, the Government must have some idea of the number of people to whom these amendments and others apply. I hope that the Minister will give us those figures when he replies.

5.30 pm

Mr. Paice: First, I welcome the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. McMaster) to his position. I join his hon. Friends in hoping that he will spend many years on the Opposition Front Bench. In a genuine expression of feeling, I join him in thanking the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), for his work; he dealt with the issues throughout Committee stage with his usual humorous, but nevertheless extremely well-meaning and deliberative, intent.

We have heard a lot about quotas. As you will be aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, provisions for the abolition of the quota and everything that went with it were already a part of the Bill when it left this House. To reopen that debate at this time is hardly appropriate. We debated the quota and the fact that it required registration, and a large number of disabled people did not want to register for personal reasons, some of which were that it stigmatised and categorised them, which they did not like. That is why the priority interview scheme cannot continue. If there is no registration, there can be no scheme as practised.

The hon. Member for Paisley, South and most of his colleagues, as well as the hon. Member for Rochdale (Ms Lynne) have pushed me further about what local authorities can do. They will be able to do virtually anything to encourage and enable disabled people to work for them, as long as they appoint the person who is most suitable for the job after they have made reasonable adjustment.

I must stress that point—it is after they have made the reasonable adjustment. There is no maximum for such adjustment. If the local authority is prepared to invest vast sums of money in making provision so that a disabled person is suitable for a job, that is up to the authority, and it has that privilege. I share the view of a number of hon. Members that local authorities are the ideal organisation to set a good example to employers, but appointing a less suitable person to a job is not a good example to set to anyone.

Mr. Corbett: No one is suggesting that.

Mr. Paice: But that is precisely what has been suggested in Opposition Members' speeches, and what has been practised in a few local authorities. We want every local authority to have the opportunity to do what it democratically decides to do to encourage and enable disabled people to apply, be interviewed and be considered for any vacancies that arise. They can do what they like in the manner of making reasonable adjustment. Ultimately, they must decide on the most suitable person for the job. The one thing that they must not do is to disadvantage someone who is not disabled. They must use the best person, regardless of whether or not he or she is disabled.

Mr. Corbett: I am grateful to the Minister for his kind remarks, and for giving way. May I make this matter as clear as I am able? No one is looking for privileged treatment for people with disabilities. What has been argued today and during earlier stages in the passage of the Bill is that job applicants should be judged by the same criteria for their fitness, and that if the successful applicant happens to have disabilities, that matter should properly be addressed. That is all that was being asked. My colleagues and I might have wanted to go further and ask for positive discrimination, but we did not do so.

Mr. Paice: It is a matter of interpretation. If it is as the hon. Gentleman says, then that is fine. There is no problem with local authorities considering disabled people in the manner that he described and appointing them. I was under the clear impression, however, from a number of the speeches of his hon. Friends, that they wanted to take it much further and to discriminate positively in favour of disabled people at the appointment stage, which would not be permissible under the Bill, for the reasons that I described.

The right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) referred to employers having misconceptions. Under the Bill, any employer would have to ensure that, if he discriminated against a disabled person, the discrimination was not based on any unreasonable misconception, and he would have to justify it according to the new amendments from the other place in this group, which I support.

Every employer will have to be able to stand up in an industrial tribunal, if the case gets that far, and demonstrate that discrimination was justified and that it was material to the circumstances of the case and the reasons for it were substantial. Those are important points. If he has misconceptions and brands all disabled people in some prejudicial way, it will cause him serious trouble. That is the purpose of the law—to ensure that disabled people who might suffer from such misconceptions are protected.

Mr. Alfred Morris: I am very grateful to the Minister for giving way. The case that I raised was not a hypothetical one. It was a real case, which I referred to one of his then ministerial colleagues, who is no longer in the Government.

What it proved was that even employers in very important organisations, such as major police authorities, were not aware that they were piling handicap on handicap for a woman whose disability was totally irrelevant to the job that she was doing. To say, in her case, "You can't belong to the pension fund," really was highly culpable, yet they thought that they were acting properly.

What the Minister is now saying raises the whole question of legal representation. I am sure that he recognises that many disabled people will feel unable to pursue their own cases. More fortunate people will seek the highest legal advice. That is a very important problem for disabled people who cannot afford to do so. It is not one that I am trying to create, but one that they tell me about day by day as we discuss the Bill.

Mr. Paice: I must emphasise to the right hon. Gentleman that we are certainly not encouraging all cases

[Mr. Paice]

to go to an industrial tribunal. I hope that he will not interpret my earlier remarks as saying so. As I made clear on Report, we are trying to change employers' attitudes and thereby change their behaviour towards disabled people.

I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman would rightly challenge this, but what are the sanctions if they do not treat disabled people fairly? Ultimately, employers have to be prepared to defend their case in an industrial tribunal. I have no desire to see thousands of cases go to such tribunals. I want disabled people to be given their proper opportunities by employers the length and breadth of the country.

On the case of the lady to whom the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe referred, will he reflect on what I said about pensions? Although we face a slight procedural difficulty in that one of the amendments in this group refers to pensions, the next group predominantly concerns occupational pensions, and my hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security and Disabled People will reply at length to the right hon. Gentleman when we discuss that group.

In that lady's case, in which disability was irrelevant to the job at hand, discrimination would normally have been unreasonable. Discrimination because of a disability that is totally irrelevant to a person's suitability for a job would normally be considered unreasonable.

A number of other hon. Members spoke—largely about quotas and whether or not positive discrimination was possible. I remind the hon. Member for Nottingham, East (Mr. Heppell) that positive discrimination is not allowed in race or gender legislation either, and that was enacted under a Labour Government.

The hon. Member for Nottingham, East asked about clubs and societies. Disabled people will not be covered by part III, because that is addressed to the general public; membership of a closed club or society is not a service to the public. Again, that mirrors the sex discrimination legislation.

I have responded to the principal points that were raised. I commend the amendments to the House.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 5 to 16 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 17, in page 5, line 20, at end insert—

("( ) This section does not apply in relation to any benefit under an occupational pension scheme or any other benefit payable in money or money's worth under a scheme or arrangement for the benefit of employees in respect of—

(a) termination of service;
(b) retirement, old age or death;
(c) accident, injury, sickness or invalidity; or
(d) any other prescribed matter.")

Mr. Burt: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 27, 28 and 99.

Mr. Burt: Clause 4, in its present form, will cover actions of an employer in providing opportunities to employees for pensions and insurance benefits. These will fall within the existing wording of clause 4(1) and (2). However, the actions of trustees and managers of a pension scheme are not covered, as they are not the employer.

Amendment No. 27 will imply a rule of non-discrimination against disabled people into the rules of occupational schemes. That means that any discriminatory decision taken by trustees will be contrary to the rules of the scheme. A disabled person affected will be able to seek redress through the dispute resolution mechanisms that already exist for pension schemes. The regulation-making powers in sub-paragraphs 3 and 4 of Lords amendment No. 27 modify the existing powers in part II to enable the regulations to make special provisions for trustees of pension schemes.

To go to the meat of the matter, where a disabled applicant has a pre-existing medical condition which is likely to increase the risk of ill health retirement or death in service, it is important that employers should be able to take just as much account of that as they would if the person were not disabled. However, employers will want to ensure that their decisions are based on sound advice, such as actuarial or medical advice. Many disabled people have disabilities that do not affect their life expectancy or likelihood of ill health retirement, and the amendments will make sure that they can no longer be unfairly denied access to an employer's pension scheme.

The amendment to clause 6, Lords amendment No. 17, will disapply the duty of reasonable adjustment for occupational pensions and certain other similar benefits and provides a regulation-making power to prescribe benefits for additional types of risk to be covered by this exclusion. Again, we will consult on the use of that power—for example, as to whether the list of benefits is felt to be complete.

Occupational pension schemes are not the only means whereby employers can make provision for their employees' future. There are also other insurance benefits. Lords amendment No. 28 inserts a new clause on insurance benefits and covers the situation where an employer makes arrangements with an insurance company for insurance benefits such as private health insurance or the opportunity for such benefits to be received by the employer's employees.

The insurance company will act unlawfully against the disabled person under this new clause if it treats that person in a way that would be an act of discrimination under part III if done by the company with regard to a member of the public. A disabled person would be able to take a complaint against the insurance company, and the employer at the same time if necessary, and an industrial tribunal would decide whether there was discrimination by either of them on the basis of a full view of the evidence.

Lords amendment No. 99 provides that the term "occupational pension scheme" is to have the same meaning in the Bill as in the Pension Schemes Act 1993.

The amendments provide the right balance between meeting the needs of disabled people and non-disabled people in occupational pension schemes and placing necessary requirements on employers. I believe that they achieve the Government's objective, and I commend the amendments to the House.

5.45 pm

Mr. McMaster: Now that the Government's Bill is taking its final shape, the United Kingdom's 6.5 million disabled people will judge it against the civil rights legislation that they have wanted so much for so long—

the legislation that was offered by my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris), who was responsible for much of its drafting, and by some of my other hon. Friends since.

Despite the fact that the Bill as it stands today has been improved by the Opposition, following concession after concession, climbdown after climbdown and U-turn after U-turn by the Government—I was not on the Committee, but I have studied its proceedings and it is clear that the Opposition have managed to force the Government to change course since the Bill started out on its parliamentary voyage—the Bill is still a pale shadow of what it could and should be.

The measure of the Bill must be whether it makes disabled people full and equal citizens. Against that yardstick, it does not measure up. One of the great holes in the Bill is its failure to give disabled people full or equal rights in the provision of occupational pensions and insurance benefits. The fact that the Government have introduced amendments, albeit at the eleventh hour, that bring such matters into the ambit of the Bill should have been a good thing, but the effect—and I suspect the purpose—of those measures, is to enshrine in law the discrimination that already exists rather than to outlaw it.

On Third Reading in the other place, Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, speaking on behalf of the Government, suggested that employers and insurance companies will be able to exclude—or limit the benefits offered to—disabled people considered to be higher risk. He said that the Government were

> "preventing the weighting of risk on grounds of disability but retaining it for health".—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 24 October 1995; Vol. 566, c. 1000.]

On Report, he had stated that there would be cases where less favourable treatment would be justifiable. By no stretch of the imagination could that be called full and equal citizenship.

Will the Minister tell us exactly what that means in practice? What criteria will he use to determine the distinction between disability and ill health? Disputes and grey areas are inevitable and people will look to the Minister and his Department to sort them out. In the absence of a powerful commission to enforce the legislation, how will the Minister ensure that the measure is applied consistently, fairly and with equity?

The amendments allow for cost to be a justification for discrimination, yet, according to a recent research report by the Minister's own Department, there is no evidence to suggest that disabled people go off work due to sickness more often than do able-bodied people. In fact, the report shows that 44 per cent. of employers said that they found no difference in absence levels and 32 per cent. said that disabled staff were absent less often.

The amendments exclude occupational pensions and other benefits from the requirement on employers to make reasonable adjustments to assist the employment of disabled people. That exclusion is important. The Bill as it stands lists factors that are to be taken into account when deciding if it is reasonable to expect an employer to make adjustments—factors such as the impact, cost and practicality of the adjustment. To exclude pensions and insurance makes the non-discrimination rule in the amendments little more than window dressing. In the name of anti-discrimination legislation, the Government are institutionalising the unfairness that disabled people already face in obtaining equitable pensions and benefits. To enshrine in law existing discrimination against disabled people is unfair and unjustifiable, but to try to peddle it as anti-discrimination legislation is shoddy and shabby.

The amendments will mean that, where a disabled person has been refused access to a scheme that is lawful under the terms of the Bill, there will be no requirement that the employer seek to make any adjustments to the employee's terms and conditions. On Third Reading in the other place, Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish stated:

> "the employer will not have to consider ways in which his overall remuneration package can be brought up to the level enjoyed by other employees".—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 24 October 1995; Vol. 566, c. 1001.]

It could not be clearer than that.

The Government's substitute for proper civil rights legislation, which they have trailed as an historic advance in the struggle to give disabled people equal rights, in fact makes provisions for disabled people to be forced into a position where they have to sell their labour more cheaply—and to be less well rewarded—than non-disabled people who do the same job, in the same place, at the same time. That is the effect of what Lord Mackay said. He spelled out the Government's position for all to see. Instead of attempting to integrate disabled people into the work place, the Government are attempting to integrate discrimination into the law.

Why should disabled people be less entitled to pensions and insurance benefits than anyone else? The higher risk argument simply does not stand up to scrutiny. It is neither logical nor fair, and evidence produced by the Minister's Department establishes that. The decision on whether a disabled person is eligible to participate in and contribute to a pension scheme is likely to be based on an estimate of risk, but that eventuality may never arise, which means that future benefits would be reduced because of the mere possibility of something happening at some indefinite time in the future.

The Minister will no doubt attempt to justify that by saying that that is how many pension schemes are assessed, but if it is lawful for schemes to exclude disabled people on the grounds of a higher health risk, he must produce evidence to prove that that is the case, because his Department is producing evidence to show the opposite.

There appear to be strong grounds for believing that the amendments seek not to give disabled people an absolute right to enter or enjoy the full benefits of a scheme and that, where people do not join a scheme on starting work but subsequently apply, trustees could refuse access or offer only limited membership. Will the Minister confirm whether that is his intention?

Why are the Government so set against a requirement that reasonable adjustment be made in respect of occupational pensions and insurance benefits? The problems are not insoluble. The Minister has a reputation for achieving what he wants to achieve, so surely it was not beyond his guile to devise some reasonable adjustments. For example, he could have required employers to make equivalent contributions to a private pension scheme. The Government often say that everyone should provide for his or her retirement. It would not have been an ideal solution, but it would have been better than what is on offer today.

Where no private scheme could be found, or where employer and employee could not reach agreement on a scheme's suitability, the Minister could have required the

[Mr. McMaster]

employer to increase disabled employee's wages or salary by an amount equivalent to the normal contribution, thereby allowing the disabled person to buy into a scheme of his or her choice. Again, it is not an ideal solution, but it is better than what is on offer.

Those would have been reasonable adjustments in the light of the now famous Barber *v.* Guardian Royal Exchange decision, in which it was determined that occupational pensions should be considered as deferred pay.

The effect of the amendments is that those disabled people who are deemed ineligible to participate in an occupational pension scheme will not have their pay deferred but will simply not receive that element of their pay. That is unfair and discriminatory. It is a back-door way of reducing the pay of disabled people during their lifetime. It is doubly unfair that many disabled people are likely to be excluded not because of a greater risk of ill health but simply because of a perceived risk.

For example, some schemes might take the ill-judged view that someone with diabetes or epilepsy is ineligible because he or she might—just might—develop complications later. Will the Minister clarify the Government's position as it relates to people with diabetes or epilepsy, for instance?

Yet again, disabled people are being singled out for unfair treatment. Under the amendments, it would be unlawful to exclude them because of risk. When I joined the parliamentary pension scheme, on which my right hon. Friend the Member for Wythenshawe does so well in representing all Members of the House, I was not excluded because I am, I am ashamed to say, a smoker. No one asked me whether I was. The Minister no doubt also belongs to that scheme and was not excluded because he is a member of the House of Commons football team, which is also a high risk. Nor was he excluded when he was Minister responsible for setting up the Child Support Agency, which, at the time, must have been the most dangerous job in Britain.

A survey published in 1992 by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys shows that disabled people are among the least likely to belong to a pension scheme. Some 34 per cent. of those who had a pre-retirement disability before the age of 50 had never belonged to an occupational pension scheme. The study also found that the chances of their ever having joined a scheme or attained rights to one decreased with the increasing severity of disability. The reason is simple: many disabled people simply cannot afford to join. They tend to earn less and must pay the inevitable additional costs of disability. The Bill and the amendments do nothing to change that. Worse, they build that position into the law.

The Minister will be aware that the Disability Alliance and Disablement Income Group have worked hard to produce a cogent, coherent and comprehensive document known as "There May Be Trouble Ahead"—perhaps prophetic words. It shows the inequity that exists in pension schemes and suggests ways of tackling that and other problems. The group is asking for a forum of all the interested parties to be set up. Is the Minister prepared to allow that forum to go ahead?

The Government cannot claim that the Bill is, in any shape or form, a comprehensive piece of anti-discrimination legislation so long as it excludes pensions and benefits. Civil rights mean full and equal citizenship without qualification or exclusion. As the amendments are full of qualifications and exclusions, unless the Minister can convince us otherwise, we shall press them to a Division.

Ms Lynne: I simply wish to make a few comments about the recent research carried out by the Disability Alliance and Disablement Income Group, which shows that disabled people are already less likely to be in occupational pension schemes. More than two thirds of disabled women have not joined such schemes because they could not fulfil the conditions as a result of frequent changes of jobs or interrupted employment. People with pre-retirement disability were less likely to retain any rights to an occupational pension scheme.

On the surface, the Government's amendments look fine, but they do not really deal with the problem. I am extremely worried about amendment No. 17, which, as has already been said, could be the back door to reducing pay for disabled employees. We need reassurance on this matter, although I do not honestly believe that the Minister will give us the reassurance we need.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): I apologise to the Minister for missing part of his opening remarks. If he has covered the point that I want to raise, I apologise doubly.

I am concerned about the amendment that deals with insurance benefits. I realise that this is a fraught area. Although insurance is, by necessity, about the sharing of risks, insurance companies always make it their business to find out as much as they can in order to specify and appreciate the degree of risk in a case. In framing the amendment, have the Government accepted the principle that insurance companies that provide the services described in amendment No. 28(3) can adjust those services in terms of the amount of benefit paid, in line with a known disability or a disability that may occur in the future as a result of, say, a genetic condition?

A new clause moved in the other place does not clarify that. It seems to be possible for an employer, or an insurance company working on behalf of an employer, to discriminate against disabled people, particularly those with a genetic condition, in terms of the insurance benefits that they could receive. If so, they would be discriminated against.

Given the choice between the conflicting interests of getting as much information as possible and the sharing out of risks between all beneficiaries under an insurance scheme, on the balance of fairness and particularly given the ethos of the Bill before us, we should come down on the side of sharing the risks. We should ensure, as far as humanly possible, that insurance schemes are not loaded, either in terms of increased premiums or reduced benefits, against people with a potential disability. I hope that the Minister can offer me some assurance on that.

6 pm

Mr. Burt: With the leave of the House, I shall reply to the debate.

I shall try to do what I can to offer reassurance, but as the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) said, this is genuinely a difficult area. I must clear up one thing. We are talking about individuals as opposed to types or groups. An employer may discriminate where there are clear grounds for believing that a person, including a disabled person, but not necessarily, represents a higher risk to the scheme because of his impaired health, and that higher risk could be justified on the grounds of cost. Any non-inclusion in the scheme's benefit provision will only be as a result of that person's health condition and not simply because the individual is disabled. Disabled persons whose propensity to take ill health retirement or die in service is not materially higher than other members would, of course, be entitled to be admitted to the scheme as normal.

That is the ground rule, but we are talking about dealing with individuals. We are trying to create a differential between two individuals who, although both may be described as disabled, may have different conditions which mean that the likelihood of ill health or risk of early retirement is much greater for one than the other. We can all think of such examples. Where an employee is to be excluded, the employer will have to prove that that refusal is based on substantial grounds, not simply on the mere fact of disability.

The most important question is, why should employers be permitted to discriminate on grounds of health? It is right that employers and scheme managers should continue to be able to make certain decisions on health grounds for a number of reasons. Employers have always been able to discriminate on grounds of health for such benefits. If that changed, employers could be faced with an unjustifiably large extra bill. It is estimated that the additional costs could be hundreds of millions of pounds a year. A significant amount of that additional expenditure would fall directly on the taxpayer, because approximately one third of pension scheme members are in public service pension schemes. Much of the balance would have to be passed on in the form of higher prices.

The pension schemes of many employers are too small to accept large potential liabilities for ill health and death benefits, and therefore those employers insure those risks in the commercial insurance market. Insurance companies operate strict underwriting criteria to control the risk which they accept. Those companies would offer policies that admitted individuals with all potential health conditions at truly prohibitive premium rates. It is more likely that they would not admit such individuals, so, effectively, the insurance route would be withdrawn.

As a result of the significant additional burden of costs and the lack of insurance, employers would seriously have to reconsider their options. There would be a real risk that many employers would restructure their employment packages to reduce or remove altogether any incapacity or death benefits. Some employers, if not permitted to take account of health risks, may simply wind up their schemes. Such are the likely changes in employment practice were the Bill not to allow employers to make decisions on the grounds of health

Hon. Members have asked whether it would be possible to unbundle contributions, and whether an individual disabled person's contribution rate could be reduced if he or she is only receiving age retirement benefits. Such a proposal would not only be completely at variance with the manner in which occupational pension schemes with benefits defined in terms of a member's final salary are operated, but would result in significant extra administrative difficulties disproportionate to any gain to the disabled person.

Such a change could be achieved fairly only after taking medical and actuarial advice. Even then, the resulting adjustment would be subjective and open to dispute by the member. A doctor would be required to certify an individual's life expectancy or the probable length of his working life. On the basis of the medical prognosis, an actuary would then have to consider the value of the residual benefits compared with the total package. Overall, such a requirement would be disproportionately expensive and administratively messy.

Salary pension schemes in the United Kingdom are predominantly operated on what is known as a "balance of costs" basis. Employees pay a fixed contribution and the employer meets the rest of the cost on the basis of advice from the scheme actuary. Typically, scheme members pay only one third of the cost of the scheme benefits.

The employer considers the cost of providing the benefits in aggregate and does not try to isolate the costs for each individual member. The cost of the accruing benefits, however, will vary significantly between individuals according to their individual circumstances—for example, age or sex.

All individuals pay the same member contribution even though they may not be entitled to all the benefits. For example, a spouse's benefits are of no use to a single pensioner, and some benefits may be more valuable to certain members than others. For example, a pensioner who lives a long time will get more valuable benefits than someone who died shortly after retirement.

To suggest that a disabled person, who may get less valuable pension benefits from a scheme, should pay a lower contribution rate would therefore rewrite the way in which final salary occupational pension schemes operate. Other groups could make claims for similar treatment. For example, under current sex equality legislation there is no similar requirement that men should pay a lower member contribution rate because they tend to live less long in retirement than women. Such arrangements would lead to additional costs.

It should be remembered that membership of an occupational pension scheme is voluntary. If an individual member feels that he is going to get less valuable benefits out of a scheme than his own contributions, he can opt out. If he chose to take out a personal pension, he would, of course, be protected under part III.

People with a genetic predisposition are not covered by the Bill. That reflects the views of the Select Committee on Science and Technology, which concluded that labelling that group as disabled was not the right way forward. We will consider the Committee's final report when it is available.

Mr. Wigley: If the report from the Committee on that important matter, which will be published before too long, suggested that the Bill should be changed to avoid discrimination against people on the basis of genetic information gained for insurance purposes, does the Minister have the facility to amend the Bill without having to come back with primary legislation?

Mr. Burt: No, I do not believe there is such a facility. The principle on which the hon. Gentleman will have to rely, and which may emerge from the Committee's report, would operate on an individual basis and the circumstances facing a particular applicant.

As I tried to establish from the start, that principle does not discriminate against disabled people in general. It will not be possible for an employer to exclude someone from

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a pension scheme just because that person is disabled. The employer will have that right only if the nature of the disability is such that it would cause the sort of problem with the pension or insurance scheme as might affect anyone whether he is disabled or not. It is on those grounds that I put the case to the House. The individual is protected unless he has a marked disability which may cause concern.

Mr. McMaster: With the leave of the House, may I say that the Minister has simply reinforced our concerns, so we will divide the House on the amendment.

Question put, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

The House divided: Ayes 290, Noes 249.

Division No. 225] [6.07 pm

AYES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Aitken, Rt Hon Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael *(Selby)*
Allason, Rupert *(Torbay)*
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Rt Hon Robert
Atkinson, Peter *(Hexham)*
Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(North Dorset)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Matthew *(Southport)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bates, Michael
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Beresford, Sir Paul
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Booth, Hartley
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bottomley, Rt Hon Virginia
Bowden, Sir Andrew
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Sir Rhodes
Brandreth, Gyles
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Sir Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Browning, Mrs Angela
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton North)*
Carlisle, Sir Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Ru'clif)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Coe, Sebastian
Colvin, Michael
Congdon, David
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Cormack, Sir Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina *(S D'by'ire)*
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Deva, Nirj Joseph
Devlin, Tim
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Rt Hon Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Duncan, Alan
Duncan-Smith, Iain
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Sir Anthony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Fabricant, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Rt Hon Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus *(Shipley)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Sir Peter
Gale, Roger
Gallie, Phil
Gardiner, Sir George
Garel-Jones, Rt Hon Tristan
Garnier, Edward
Gill, Christopher
Gillan, Cheryl
Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, Sir John
Grant, Sir A *(SW Cambs)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth, N)*
Grylls, Sir Michael
Hague, Rt Hon William
Hamilton, Sir Archibald
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Hannam, Sir John
Hargreaves, Andrew
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Sir Alan
Hawkins, Nick
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, Jerry
Heald, Oliver
Heath, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hendry, Charles
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Sir Terence
Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Hogg, Rt Hon Douglas *(G'tham)*
Horam, John
Hordern, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Sir Ralph *(N Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Rt Hon David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert *(Wantage)*
Jenkin, Bernard
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Bir'm E'st'n)*
Knox, Sir David
Kynoch, George *(Kincardine)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Rt Hon Ian
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Leigh, Edward
Lennox-Boyd, Sir Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lidington, David
Lightbown, Sir David
Lilley, Rt Hon Peter
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luff, Peter
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew
Maclean, Rt Hon David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, Sir David
Maitland, Lady Olga
Malone, Gerald
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr.Brian
Merchant, Piers
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Moate, Sir Roger
Monro, Rt Hon Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Needham, Rt Hon Richard
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Sir Cranley
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Sir Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pickles, Eric
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Rt Hon Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, Rt Hon John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Richards, Rod
Riddick, Graham
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Robathan, Andrew
Roberts, Rt Hon Sir Wyn
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Robinson, Mark *(Somerton)*
Roe, Mrs Marion *(Broxbourne)*
Rowe, Andrew *(Mid Kent)*
Rumbold, Rt Hon Dame Angela
Ryder, Rt Hon Richard
Sackville, Tom
Sainsbury, Rt Hon Sir Timothy
Scott, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Nicholas
Speed, Sir Keith
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spicer, Sir James *(W Dorset)*
Spring, Richard
Sproat, Iain
Squire, Robin *(Hornchurch)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stephen, Michael
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan
Streeter, Gary
Sumberg, David
Sweeney, Walter
Sykes, John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Sir Teddy *(Southend, E)*

Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Sir Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D *(Bexl'yh'th)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trend, Michael
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whitney, Ray
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Sir Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Willetts, David
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann *(Congleton)*
Winterton, Nicholas *(Macc'fld)*
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Dr. Liam Fox and
Mr. Derek Conway.

NOES

Adams, Mrs Irene
Ainger, Nick
Ainsworth, Robert *(Cov'try NE)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald *(Swansea E)*
Anderson, Ms Janet *(Ros'dale)*
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Austin-Walker, John
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Bayley, Hugh
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Beith, Rt Hon A J
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, Andrew F
Benton, Joe
Bermingham, Gerald
Berry, Roger
Betts, Clive
Blair, Rt Hon Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Brazier, Julian
Brown, Gordon *(Dunfermline E)*
Brown, N *(N'c'tle upon Tyne E)*
Burden, Richard
Byers, Stephen
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Mrs Anne *(C'bridge)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ronnie *(Blyth V)*
Campbell-Savours, D N
Canavan, Dennis
Cann, Jamie
Chisholm, Malcolm
Church, Judith
Clapham, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coffey, Ann
Cohen, Harry
Connarty, Michael
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Corston, Jean
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Jim *(Covy SE)*
Cunningham, Roseanna
Dafis, Cynog
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davidson, Ian
Davies, Bryan *(Oldham C'tral)*
Davies, Chris *(L'Boro & S'worth)*
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'dge H'I)*
Denham, John
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Donohoe, Brian H
Dowd, Jim
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Eagle, Ms Angela
Eastham, Ken
Etherington, Bill
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Fatchett, Derek
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(S Antrim)*
Foster, Rt Hon Derek
Foster, Don *(Bath)*
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Gapes, Mike
Garrett, John
Gerrard, Neil
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A
Godsiff, Roger
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Gunnell, John
Hain, Peter
Hall, Mike
Hanson, David
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Henderson, Doug
Heppell, John
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hodge, Margaret
Hoey, Kate
Hogg, Norman *(Cumbernauld)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hoon, Geoffrey
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'rd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley North)*
Howells, Dr Kim *(Pontypridd)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Kevin *(Doncaster N)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hutton, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jackson, Helen *(Shef'ld, H)*
Jamieson, David
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn and D'side)*
Jones, Ieuan Wyn *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Lynne *(B'ham S O)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd, SW)*
Jowell, Tessa
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Keen, Alan
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kennedy, Jane *(L'pool Br'dg'n)*
Khabra, Piara S
Kilfoyle, Peter
Kirkwood, Archy
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Liddell, Mrs Helen
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Llwyd, Elfyn
Lynne, Ms Liz
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McCrea, The Reverend William
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
Mackinlay, Andrew
McLeish, Henry
McMaster, Gordon
MacShane, Denis
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Maddock, Diana
Mahon, Alice
Mandelson, Peter
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester, S)*
Martin, Michael J *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Argyll & Bute)*
Milburn, Alan
Miller, Andrew
Mitchell, Austin *(Gt Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon Alfred *(Wy'nshawe)*
Morris, Estelle *(B'ham Yardley)*
Morris, Rt Hon John *(Aberavon)*
Mudie, George
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Hara, Edward
Olner, Bill
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Pearson, Ian
Pickthall, Colin
Pike, Peter L.
Pope, Greg
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prentice, Bridget *(Lewisham East)*
Prentice, Gordon *(Pendle)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Purchase, Ken
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Reid, Dr John
Robertson, George *(Hamilton)*
Robinson, Geoffrey *(Co'try NW)*
Roche, Mrs Barbara
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rooney, Terry
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Simpson, Alan
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Spellar, John
Squire, Rachel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevenson, George
Stott, Roger
Strang, Dr. Gavin
Straw, Jack
Sutcliffe, Gerry
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Timms, Stephen
Turner, Dennis
Walker, Rt Hon Sir Harold
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N
Welsh, Andrew
Wicks, Malcolm
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan *(Sw'n W)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Wright, Dr Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Eric Clarke and
Mr. Jon Owen Jones.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 18 agreed to.

Clause 7

EXEMPTION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Lords amendment: No. 19, in page 5, line 25, at end insert—

("(3) In this section—

"anniversary" means the anniversary of the coming into force of this section; and

"review" means a review of the effect of this section.

(4) Before making any order under subsection (2), the Secretary of State shall conduct a review.

(5) Unless he has already begun or completed a review under subsection (4), the Secretary of State shall begin to conduct a review immediately after the fourth anniversary.

(6) Any review shall be completed within nine months.

(7) In conducting any review, the Secretary of State shall consult—

(a) such organisations representing the interests of employers as he considers appropriate; and

(b) such organisations representing the interests of disabled persons in employment or seeking employment as he considers appropriate.

(8) If, on completing a review, the Secretary of State decides to make an order under subsection (2), he shall make such an order to come into force not later than one year after the commencement of the review.

(9) If, on completing a review, the Secretary of State decides not to make such an order, he shall not later than one year after the commencement of the review lay before Parliament a report—

(a) summarising the results of the review; and

(b) giving the reasons for his decision.

(10) Any report made by the Secretary of State under subsection (9) shall include a summary of the views expressed to him in his consultations.")

Mr. Paice: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

As the House will know, this is an important clause. We are exempting employers with fewer than 20 employees from the Bill's employment provisions because we recognise that it is likely to be more difficult and burdensome for them than for larger businesses to get to grips with the new right and to have available the advice that they need. However, the Government have listened carefully to the arguments calling for changes to the clause.

Although we have, in earlier debates, rebutted many of the suggested amendments, we have not been inflexible. We amended the Bill on Report so that the power to change the threshold could not be used to raise the threshold above 20. In reaching that decision, we recognised that it was unlikely that there would ever be a need to raise the threshold above the initial number. I gave an undertaking to bring forward a further amendment, which was passed in the other place and, on its own, would have required the Secretary of State to review the operation of the clause within five years of its coming into force and to give Parliament the opportunity to debate the issue. It would also have required the Secretary of State to conduct a review of the effects of clause 7 if, before the fourth anniversary of the clause coming into force, she proposed to use an order to change the threshold number.

However, on Report in the other place, my noble Friend Baroness O'Cathain raised the issue of whether there should be a review before any change in the threshold, whenever proposed. My noble Friend the Minister responsible for the employment of disabled people agreed to consider the matter further, and duly returned with an amendment to that effect on Third Reading in the other place.

The overall effect is that, if at any time the Secretary of State proposes to make an order to change the threshold number, a review must be held, whether the order is to be made within the first four years of the operation of the section or at any later time. A review must be held immediately after the fourth anniversary of the clause's coming into effect, even if no change in the threshold is then proposed, unless a review has by then already started or been finished.

The Lords amendment also requires that any review must be completed within nine months. The Secretary of State would be required to consult employer organisations and organisations representing the interests of disabled people in employment or looking for employment. If the review led the Secretary of State to decide on a change in the threshold, that would have to come into force within a year from the start of the review. If, after a review, the Secretary of State decided not to change the threshold, the amendment would require her to lay a report on the results of the review before Parliament and, at the same time, give reasons for her decision.

The Government have always maintained that it would be best to gain experience of the legislation before considering whether there was a case for widening its scope. We believe it is right to keep the threshold at 20. In the light of the changes, I hope that the House will accept that it is a reasonable position to take.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Once again, I am extremely pleased to welcome a Government climbdown—*[Interruption.]* I shall give way to the Secretary of State for Social Security if he wishes to intervene. He clearly does not, as he does not have the courage of his convictions.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), who supported us so magnificently throughout the passage of the Bill. I regard him as a truly hon. Friend. I know that disabled people are extremely grateful to him for the tremendous contribution that he has made to our achievements.

Earlier today, my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), in the moderate style to which we have become accustomed, said that the Government were parking on Labour territory. I welcome that description of the Government's position. We have been told throughout the passage of the Bill that the exemption of small firms from the obligation not to discriminate against disabled people was necessary. We have been told that such firms should be defined as those employing fewer than 20 people.

The Government opted for the figure of 20, and the Under-Secretary of State for Education and Employment, the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Paice) told us that that figure had been chosen because it reflected the quota legislation. Throughout the Bill's progress through the House, the Minister agreed that 20 was the best figure. Of course a cut-off at 20 for a 3 per cent. quota makes good sense, as 3 per cent. of 20 is a good deal less than one job. I think that even the Minister's mathematics might lead him to that conclusion, but to import that figure into legislation that deals with the rights of individuals rather than percentages of an overall work force makes no sense.

Taken with the abolition of the quota, the measure diminishes the rights of disabled people. However confused the Minister might feel, we have the support of every organisation of disabled people on that issue. The provision introduces the phenomenon of legal discrimination. By the time the Bill had reached Third Reading, Ministers were beginning to sound less convinced. We were told that the threshold should never be raised and that 20 was still the best figure. Now the Government are even less sure. They have finally admitted that the figure of 20 might be wrong and that a review of the principle of exemption will be necessary in five years. The Government did not mention that on Second Reading or throughout the Committee discussions.

I think that the Minister has already concluded that the figure of 20 is wrong. All disabled people should have a right to fair and equal access to the jobs market. I look forward to the day when the denial of employment rights to disabled people in small, medium and large firms will be abolished altogether.

Mr. Alfred Morris: Before my hon. Friend concludes, will he comment on the huge number of employers who employ fewer than 20 people? He has made a powerful point that deserves the attention of both sides of the House.

Mr. Clarke: As always with disability issues, my right hon. Friend is absolutely correct. I have some private regard for the Under-Secretary of State for Education and Employment, even though I believe that he defends the most abysmal of policies. He does not realise that he must stand at the Dispatch Box and defend a Government that would exclude 96 per cent. of firms from employment discrimination policies and present it as progress.

6.30 pm

Mr. Wigley: When he responds to this brief debate, will the Minister clarify whether the Government are to some extent returning to the provisions originally in clause 7? As that clause stood originally, it was possible for the Secretary of State to amend the threshold of 20 immediately by order. I understand that there will now be a built-in time delay of up to 12 months before it can be operational. If the Secretary of State believes that there should be an immediate change, will he be able to implement that change without going through the review mechanism and the time delay that is built into the process by the Lords amendment?

Mr. Paice: The hon. Gentleman could put that interpretation on it, although he refers to the maximum period. We propose that the review must take no more than nine months, and there is no reason why it could not be conducted much more quickly. We are anxious to ensure that any decision to change the figure is made on the basis of a proper examination of all of the issues.

While I appreciate the personal note in the speech made by the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke), it was a case of smiling while wielding the knife—even though the knife proved to be made of rubber.

Mr. Clarke: That is more than the Secretary of State does.

Mr. Paice: I must advise the hon. Gentleman that he is treading on dangerous ground this evening. Every time that he congratulates the Government on what he classifies as a "U-turn" or a "climbdown", he is undermining the Labour Front-Bench campaign that we are lurching to the right. I can only assume from everything that the hon. Gentleman has said this evening that the Conservatives are lurching to the left. The hon. Gentleman could find himself in real trouble with his party.

I announced the decision to re-examine the issue before its fifth anniversary on Report six months ago. The fact that it comes as a surprise to the hon. Gentleman only serves to underline his lack of attention at that time.

What the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) said about the number of businesses is correct, but far more important is where the jobs are. More than 80 per cent. of jobs are in businesses with more than 20 employees, so the job opportunities of the disabled will not be seriously affected by the proposal.

Mr. Alfred Morris: The Minister knows that the Government make a great point of wanting to help small employers. They are very concerned about small employers and, by extension, presumably they are very concerned with the employees of small employers. The Minister's constituency is famous because of Newmarket. Can he tell us how many stables in his constituency employ fewer than 20 employees? It is a very important point and the fact that 96 per cent. of employers are excluded must be a matter of considerable concern. Many people admire the Minister's constituency.

Mr. Paice: I am grateful for the right hon. Gentleman's admiration for my constituency. I must be straight with him and admit that Newmarket is not in my constituency—although my constituency surrounds it and the racing industry is important to it.

I do not know the specific answer to his question, but the nub of the issue is that we are not encouraging small employers to discriminate in any way. In the amendment and the clause that it amends, we are saying that small employers should have their particular difficulties recognised by not being forced to comply with the legislation. We hope that small employers will be enlightened: we hope that they will adopt the same approach as other employers and employ disabled people. The amendment does not encourage or exhort small businesses to discriminate against the disabled.

During the Committee stage, Labour Members suggested that a great phalanx of small businesses were waiting to discriminate against disabled people. They could do that now, but they are not doing it in any great number. We are simply trying to protect them from over-burdensome regulations.

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): I am especially grateful for the Minister's remarks about small firms. He knows that we are disappointed about this and other issues. He said that, although small firms will not be obliged to comply with these provisions, we shall look to those small firms to embrace the Bill's aims. I think that some progress has been made. Will the Minister confirm that the largest growth in jobs in the past few years has occurred in the small firms sector? It is vital to the strength and efficiency of our economy that that should continue into the future.

Mr. Paice: The hon. Gentleman is right: we do look to the small firms sector. The Government are second to

[Mr. Paice]

none in their desire to see the small business sector continue to prosper and expand. However, it will do so only if it is not affected by too many regulations. That is why the Government are anxious to minimise the burdens placed on small businesses across all Government activities and policies, and it is why we are proposing the threshold of 20 at this time.

I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's kind remarks about what I said about encouraging small businesses. If he reads the speech that I gave on Report, he will find that I said it then as well. We want small businesses to adopt an enlightened approach, but we simply do not believe that they should be forced to adopt fairly expensive measures and to understand and follow all of the legislative ins and outs of the Bill. As I have said, the review will take place in five years' time, if not before. I commend the amendment to the House.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 20 and 21 agreed to.

New clause

Lords amendment: No. 22, after clause 11, to insert the following new clause—*Discrimination against contract workers—*

".—(1) It is unlawful for a principal, in relation to contract work, to discriminate against a disabled person—

(a) in the terms on which he allows him to do that work;

(b) by not allowing him to do it or continue to do it;

(c) in the way he affords him access to any benefits or by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford him access to them; or

(d) by subjecting him to any other detriment.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply to benefits of any description if the principal is concerned with the provision (whether or not for payment) of benefits of that description to the public, or to a section of the public which includes the contract worker in question, unless that provision differs in a material respect from the provision of the benefits by the principal to contract workers.

(3) The provisions of this Part (other than subsections (1) to (3) of section 3) apply to any principal, in relation to contract work, as if he were, or would be, the employer of the contract worker and as if any contract worker supplied to do work for him were an employee of his.

(4) In the case of an act which constitutes discrimination by virtue of section 28, this section also applies to discrimination against a person who is not disabled.

(5) This section applies only in relation to contract work done at an establishment in Great Britain (the provisions of section 38 about the meaning of "employment at an establishment in Great Britain" applying for the purposes of this subsection with the appropriate modifications).

(6) In this section—

"principal" means a person ("A") who makes work available for doing by individuals who are employed by another person who supplies them under a contract made with A;

"contract work" means work so made available; and

"contract worker" means any individual who is supplied to the principal under such a contract."

Mr. Paice: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Janet Fookes): With this, it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 23 to 25, 71, 73, 101, 105, 108 and 109.

Mr. Paice: The amendments deal with the coverage by this Bill of trade organisations and contract workers. That is an issue that we discussed at considerable length in Committee and on Report, so I shall draw my remarks to a close. If hon. Members want to pursue the matter, they may.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 23 to 29 and 31 to 42 agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 43 and Government amendment (a) thereto agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 44 to 46 agreed to.

New clause

Lords amendment: No. 47, after clause 22, to insert the following new clause—*("Part IIIA—*

EDUCATION

EDUCATION OF DISABLED PERSONS

.—(1) In section 161(5) of the Education Act 1993 (information relating to pupils with special educational needs to be included in annual report), omit the words from "and in this subsection" to the end.

(2) After section 161(5) of that Act insert—

"(6) The annual report for each county, voluntary or grant-maintained school shall include a report containing information as to—

(a) the arrangements for the admission of disabled pupils;

(b) the steps taken to prevent disabled pupils from being treated less favourably than other pupils; and

(c) the facilities provided to assist access to the school by disabled pupils.

(7) In this section—

"annual report" means the report prepared under the articles of government for the school in accordance with section 30 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 or, as the case may be, paragraph 8 of Schedule 6 to this Act; and

"disabled pupils" means pupils who are disabled persons for the purposes of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995."

(3) In section 1 of the Education Act 1994 (establishment of the Teacher Training Agency) add, at the end—

"(4) In exercising their functions, the Teacher Training Agency shall have regard to the requirements of persons who are disabled persons for the purposes of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995."")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Paice.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 48, 49 and 134.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Once again, I am delighted to welcome a climbdown by the Government. Earlier, the Minister talked about what he thought was an ambiguity about lurching to the right. I must remind him that their Lordships, including hereditary peers whose abolition my right hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) supports, could not for a moment fathom the right-wing approach being commended to them. It was they who brought some reality to this aspect of the Bill.

Throughout the passage of the Bill we have tabled amendments to bring education within its purview. Ministers consistently told us that such amendments were impossible and unnecessary. Once again, the Government refused to budge—until they did. So I welcome the amendments, I accept the Government's climbdown and

I look forward to further revisions of the Bill that will finally ensure genuine equality of opportunity for disabled children and adults in education.

I hope that the Minister will take this opportunity to clarify exactly who and what are included in the continuing general exemption of educational establishments. In particular, we want to know whether all early-years facilities regulated by the Children Act 1989—I led for the Opposition on it—are covered by the Bill.

An amendment was moved by the Opposition in the Lords on this very matter. The Minister who replied complained that raising the issue of day care for the under-fives on Report was making his life "extremely difficult". No doubt it was; sometimes that is the job of an Opposition. The reason why it was necessary was the Government's announcement in July this year that they intended to introduce a pre-school voucher scheme. It is the Government's intention that it should come into force at the same time as the Bill. It appears that the result will be that any place accepting vouchers under the scheme will be treated in law as an educational establishment.

6.45 pm

It is this that has caused our concern, and we are entitled to express it. Many of the places that currently provide day care for four-year-olds and that will be eligible under the proposed voucher scheme also provide places for three-year-olds. Many of them are not schools or educational establishments, but they do employ teachers. My question is therefore relevant. When considering the Bill, we need to know whether it will apply to pre-school day care facilities. Although the question is a simple one, many people outside the House will be interested to hear the Minister's response.

If a day care centre accommodates both three and four-year-olds—those using vouchers and others who do not—will the establishment be entirely exempt under the Bill, or will it be exempt only with regard to the four-year-olds who will be funded by vouchers? It should be easy enough to answer that, with all the departmental resources available to Ministers.

Finally, we believe that the voucher scheme is an ill thought out and hasty proposal. We shall want to ensure that it does not lead to the exclusion of day care centres for young children from the terms of the Bill, and that the definition of exempted educational establishments remains consistent with the provisions of current children's legislation.

Mr. Paice: I might point out that the hon. Gentleman is on his hobby-horse again. I suggest that he read what was said on Report in the House. He will find that my right hon. Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Hague), then the Minister for Social Security and Disabled People, gave the undertaking on education which is now covered by the amendments from the other place that I am proposing to accept—

Mr. Clarke: The Minister knows that I always try to be fair. Of course I recall what the right hon. Gentleman said, but I also remember his White Paper of July, which contained no reference to education. I further recall, on Second Reading, that he rejected the very arguments that the Minister is now pursuing.

Mr. Paice: The world moves on. I should have paid tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Sir J. Hannam), who was behind many of the changes on education. It is therefore false to suggest that we have just seen the light: we made our position clearly known to the House some six months ago.

Hon. Members have argued for the inclusion of education in the part of the Bill dealing with access to goods and services. The amendments propose an alternative way of dealing with the matter, requiring reports and information to be published. I shall not go into all the details, because the amendments are self-explanatory.

The hon. Gentleman specifically asked me about the general exemption with regard to pre-school age children. The voucher scheme is widely welcomed by parents throughout the country as an opportunity for them to get their under-fives into a form of education. We are consulting at the present time about the voucher scheme, and legislation will be brought before the House to enable it to happen. When it comes before the House, these issues will have to be addressed in it. I am quite happy to make that statement.

It is the case at the present time that, as drafted, a day care facility would be covered as goods or services—assuming that it was open to the public—by part III of the Bill, the goods and services clauses. On educational establishments, we are looking at amendments as I have described, and if changes have to be made to resolve the issue with voucher schemes, that will be done at the time of the legislation that the Government will be laying before the House in due course.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 48 and 49 agreed to.

New clause

Lords amendment: No. 50, after clause 22, to insert the following new clause—*("Part IIIB—*

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Taxis

TAXI ACCESSIBILITY REGULATIONS

.—(1) The Secretary of State may make regulations ("taxi accessibility regulations") for the purpose of securing that it is possible—

(a) for disabled persons—

(i) to get into and out of taxis in safety;

(ii) to be carried in taxis in safety and in reasonable comfort; and

(b) for disabled persons in wheelchairs—

(i) to be conveyed in safety into and out of taxis while remaining in their wheelchairs; and

(ii) to be carried in taxis in safety and in reasonable comfort while remaining in their wheelchairs.

(2) Taxi accessibility regulations may, in particular—

(a) require any regulated taxi to conform with provisions of the regulations as to—

(i) the size of any door opening which is for the use of passengers;

(ii) the floor area of the passenger compartment;

(iii) the amount of headroom in the passenger compartment;

(iv) the fitting of restraining devices designed to ensure the stability of a wheelchair while the taxi is moving;

(b) require the driver of any regulated taxi which is plying for hire, or which has been hired, to comply with provisions of the regulations as to the carrying of ramps or other devices designed to facilitate the loading and unloading of wheelchairs;

[Mr. Paice]

(c) require the driver of any regulated taxi in which a disabled person who is in a wheelchair is being carried (while remaining in his wheelchair) to comply with provisions of the regulations as to the position in which the wheelchair is to be secured.

(3) The driver of a regulated taxi which is plying for hire, or which has been hired, is guilty of an offence if—

(a) he fails to comply with any requirement imposed on him by the regulations; or

(b) the taxi fails to conform with any provision of the regulations with which it is required to conform.

(4) A person who is guilty of such an offence is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(5) In this section—

"passenger compartment" has such meaning as may be prescribed;

"regulated taxi" means any taxi to which the regulations are expressed to apply;

"taxi" means a vehicle licensed under—

(a) section 37 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, or

(b) section 6 of the Metropolitan Public Carriage Act 1869,

but does not include a taxi which is drawn by a horse or other animal.")

Mr. Tom Clarke: I beg to move amendment (c) to the Lords amendment, after subsection (2)(c), at end insert—

'(2A) A taxi access order shall be made in such terms as the Secretary of State considers appropriate and may, in particular—

(a) apply to more than one transport facility or class of transport facility;

(b) authorise the owner of a transport facility to—

(i) charge such fees for the admission of taxis to that transport facility as may be prescribed in the order;

(ii) designate places at that transport facility at which persons may be taken up by or set down from taxis; and

(iii) impose such other conditions for the maintenance of safety or the control of traffic at that transport facility as may be specified in the order;

(c) in relation to a transport facility where, prior to the passing of this Act, the owner has entered into a contract or agreement granting another person the exclusive right to provide taxi or private hire car services at that transport facility, postpone that date on which the order is to apply to that transport facility until—

(i) the day following the date on which that contract or agreement expires; or

(ii) such other date as may be prescribed in the order.'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider the following: Amendments (d) to (g), Government amendment (i) and amendment (h) to the Lords amendment, Lords amendments Nos. 51 to 64, Lords amendment No. 65 and amendment (a) thereto and Lords amendments Nos. 66, 90, 92 to 94, 96, 102, 103, 107 and 110.

Mr. Clarke: The amendments apply to the issue of transport. I am happy to welcome the hon. Gentleman to the Dispatch Box from the Department of Transport, and assure him that transport was an extremely important issue when we debated disability matters.

The House will recognise that the Government have now accepted the spirit of the amendments on public transport that the Opposition tabled during the early stages of the Bill. Their conversion, as on others matters, did not come easily. On Second Reading, the right hon. Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Hague) argued:

"The most flexible, sensible and practical way"

to bring about a radical improvement in accessible transport vehicles was

"outside the scope of legislative requirements."—[*Official Report*, 24 January 1995; Vol. 253, c. 153.]

At that stage, Ministers seemed reluctant to accept that regulations based on consultations were indeed flexible, sensible and practical and that they could and should be provided for in the Bill, so we had to persuade them to the contrary, which is what Parliament is supposed to be about. We had to show them that flexible and practical regulation was best done within the terms of the legislation designed for that purpose and that the best and most sensible place to pass such legislation was indeed within the Bill. But, no, they said, they would not back down on transport—until they did.

By the time we reached Report, the right hon. Member for Richmond, Yorks took a different view. He said then, and this is a real exercise in the study of empiricism:

"The Government certainly support the spirit of the new clauses"—[*Official Report*, 28 March 1995; Vol. 257, c. 859.]

which were tabled by the hon. Member for Exeter (Sir J. Hannam) and by me.

I must tell the Minister that the hon. Member for Exeter, who is a distinguished member of the all-party disability group, deserves more than a fig leaf to cover Government inadequacies. He certainly has more respect from Opposition Members than he has from Members on the Government Front Bench. The hon. Member for Exeter and I put forward our views. I will not be churlish: I am glad that the Minister came to the view that we expressed and that we have consequently been able to make progress towards achieving a fully accessible transport system. The Government backed down.

The Lords amendments before us today provide that flexible and sensible timetables should be set within the context of an agreed objective that all vehicles should be accessible to and usable by disabled passengers. We welcome that. Of course we do, having argued for so long to have the principle accepted We welcome the conversion, no matter how late in the day, because it is better than no conversion at all. That being said, I hope that the Minister will take the opportunity today to put a little more flesh on the bones. It would certainly be helpful to have some further indication that the timetable that the Government have in mind on these matters is made known to the House.

I now come to the specific area covered by the amendments to Lords amendments No. 50 and 65, which address the final anomaly on which the Government were most reluctant to back down: access by taxis to the facilities operated by providers of other forms of public transport. We argued at earlier stages and throughout our discussions that it was ludicrous for the Government to propose new requirements for disabled people to enjoy full and equal access to railway and bus stations while the Bill explicitly exempted transport vehicles. That was conceded, but only up to a point. Disabled people were offered access to trains and to stations but were given no guarantee that an accessible taxi would be available on arrival to take them to their final destination. It is to address that anomaly that we tabled our amendments to Lords amendments Nos. 50 and 65.

I must say to the Minister that I seldom take a taxi anywhere in London—I suspect that he agrees with me on this point—without hearing his name mentioned. We are giving him the opportunity tonight to rescue his reputation. I shall even tell the taxi driver tonight—if we leave the House at a reasonable time with yet another victory—that he is not as bad as he is painted in taxi driver circles, but even that will not save his seat at the next general election. Licensed taxis or hackney cabs are covered by this legislation—this is the kernel of the issue—but private hire vehicles are not. The problem is that operators of transport facilities, such as airports, seaports, railway and bus stations, are free to grant a monopoly to private hire as opposed to taxi firms in providing services to passengers.

If the Bill were passed without further amendments, a private hire firm winning such a monopoly would be under no obligation whatever to provide vehicles that were wheelchair accessible. It would be possible for a disabled person to hail a taxi on the street or join a queue at an ordinary taxi rank, confident in the knowledge that the vehicle would be designed to accommodate a wheelchair user, but it would not be possible to have that confidence at a railway station in those circumstances. That is why we tabled our amendments and welcome the fact that the Government have finally addressed the issue by tabling amendments of their own. But it is truly a last-minute conversion.

The text of the Government's amendment first became available to me at 5.15 yesterday evening.

The Minister for Transport in London (Mr. Steve Norris) *indicated assent.*

Mr. Clarke: I am glad that the Minister confirms that point.

My colleagues in another place had raised this question in Committee, on Report and at Third Reading. I am delighted to congratulate those colleagues, those noble Lords and Ladies, on the magnificent job they did.

Amendments were tabled in the other place on Third Reading last week. The Government must have known then that they were in an indefensible position. That certainly seemed clear from the Minister's replies in another place, given by Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, whom I know well from his experience as an elected Member for a Scottish constituency, and the earlier climbdown on my own Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, which was not dissimilar to this evening's events.

He was at his wits' end to find a convincing reason why car services provided by private hire companies at railway stations and airports should not be brought into the scope of the Bill. A few days ago, in another place, he argued that there was no problem, because owners of transport facilities had a commercial interest in ensuring that such services were adequate to meet the needs of all their customers. If that were a sufficient response, however, there would be no need for any legislation governing vehicles. I suspect that, in his heart, the Minister concedes that.

7 pm

The Government have already conceded the principle, which is important. They have recognised that the needs of the minority of the travelling public—wheelchair users—were not necessarily guaranteed by the commercial interests of operators in the maximising of revenue. Yet, for some curious reason, the Government were not prepared to accept that the principle applying to other aspects of transport provision should apply to this aspect as well. Another argument was presented: disabled people, it was said in another place, could book taxis in advance, and there was therefore no need to impose a requirement for accessible taxis to be available on arrival. That is a remarkable view; I know of no disabled people's organisation that would accept it for a second.

It was said that there would be no problem for disabled travellers who booked a taxi and then found that they must pay for the two hours during which the driver waited for an aeroplane that arrived two hours late. In the Minister's experience, there was no problem with planes arriving late—except, he said, those crossing the Atlantic, when there were technical problems with "windage up high". I think that we would find such an expression unacceptable in the present context!

Those are not the arguments of a Government standing firm on a principle that they believe to be right; they are the meanderings of Ministers who discovered that they were creating a legal loophole, and who were reluctant to admit either that they were doing so or that they needed the Opposition to point out the folly of their ways.

The Government have finally admitted the need to act, and—as I have said—the amendments duly arrived in my office at 5.15 pm yesterday. Until then, not even the chairman of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation—RADAR—who has worked hard to convince the Government, had seen the text. The Minister has presented us today with evidence of an unbelievable conversion, verging on the road to Damascus. In a Bill that is now full to the brim with Government climbdowns and U-turns, this is the latest and most hurried concession of all.

Perhaps the Government decided to hold Christmas at Hallowe'en, and give an unexpected present to all disabled people; but they would not have done so without the pressure exerted on them by the Labour party in Parliament, and by organisations representing disabled people. I congratulate the latter warmly, and invite the Minister to do the same.

We are, I think, entitled to ask the Minister to spell out the intention and effect of his proposals. He must tell us why he believes that his amendments are preferable to ours. If he satisfies us that they remove the legal anomaly to which we have repeatedly drawn attention, we shall be happy to withdraw our proposals, in the excellent spirit of co-operation that we have extended to an unwilling Government—but, I must warn the Minister, with the satisfaction of yet another victory won.

Under the Government's amendments, private hire vehicles with monopoly contracts at stations, ports and airports are to be subject to the taxi provisions in the Bill, but with modifications. The key taxi provision in the Bill is that all taxis are to be wheelchair-accessible. We need to know whether the measure will stand in full, or will be subject to modification. We seek the Minister's assurance that a disabled person alighting from a train or aeroplane will be guaranteed that the first vehicle at the rank will be fully accessible, and that all vehicles providing hire car services at stations will be fully accessible on the same terms as licensed taxis plying for trade on the public highway.

[Mr. Clarke]

I hope that the Minister's replies will be in the affirmative. I look forward to the day when disabled people will be able to travel in the same way as others—with the same guarantees of access to cars and other vehicles to allow them to complete their journeys.

Extracting concessions from the Government on the Bill has sometimes been a slow and tortuous process, but the day on which all public transport is truly accessible will make that process well worth the effort.

Mr. Norris: Lest I was in any doubt about what "windage up high" actually means, I fear that the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) has given me an ideal illustration in his extraordinary peroration—including an uncharacteristic and appalling slur on my personal reputation among taxi drivers. He should know that my reputation depends entirely on the part of the country that people visit.

When I attended my party's magnificent conference in Blackpool, the first taxi I entered carried a sign facing the passenger seat, reading "Steve Norris must go". I did not like to say that I had already gone; I relied on the fact that junior Ministers are so obscure that there is not the slightest chance of their being recognised by any taxi driver outside the metropolis, and executed a delicate withdrawal.

My reputation has, in fact, recently received a boost here in the capital. It is true to say that because I—alone among Transport Ministers of any party over generations—have insisted on wheelchair accessibility and on redefining the taxi as a modern vehicle capable of taking disabled people, and have never been prepared to compromise that principle, I would not necessarily come top in a poll among taxi drivers to elect the bloke of the month. They have all had the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) in the back of the cab, but, sadly, an increasing number have also had the pleasure of my own company, and I cannot say that I was able to convince all of them of the rightness of my views.

That, however, was before the arrival of the entirely unlamented hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), who for a period—a sadly brief period, from my point of view—was the Opposition's transport spokesman.

Mr. Tom Clarke *rose—*

Mr. Norris: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will allow me to finish my story, because it is very important, and illustrates why the Government are resisting the Opposition amendment and have tabled their own.

The hon. Member for Oldham, West—who knows nothing about taxis—produced a "position paper" on the subject, which he unwisely read only to a couple of his friends in the Transport and General Workers Union—

Mr. Clarke: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Minister is making a good-natured response, but may I ask him whether he informed my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) that he would refer to him?

Mr. Norris: I certainly did not, because I had not seen the unwarranted attack on my reputation of which the hon. Member for Monklands, West gave me no notice. If he is not to rely on spurious points of order to interrupt my speech, let me just say this. The relevance of—

Mr. Clarke: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the hon. Gentleman sure that it is a point of order?

Mr. Clarke: I think that it relates to an important principle in the House, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am sure that you will confirm that. However light-hearted our exchanges, if an hon. Member wishes to refer to another, he should do that hon. Member the courtesy of giving him notice. That has not been done, and I am sure that you deplore it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The reference to giving notice operates where a Member intends to make some kind of attack or disparaging remark, within parliamentary rules, about another hon. Member. I am not yet persuaded that it is of that order, but I await to hear whether it is.

Mr. Norris: I acquit myself of the charge of dishonour in respect of the hon. Member for Oldham, West, who produced a position paper on taxis. It was so ludicrous that, far from wishing to attack him, I volunteered to send copies of it to every taxi driver in London. Such was its reception that the headline in the taxi press the following week was, "Come back Norris, all is forgiven." I put that on the record to show that I take no lessons from Opposition Members on how to regulate the taxi industry. Without any political division, the House is prepared to accept that we at least know what we are talking about.

Mr. Tom Clarke: I am glad that the Minister retains his good nature despite his unpopularity among taxi drivers, which is increasing from the north to the south. To give evidence of that I should be glad to go tonight with the Minister to Peckham—as long as he pays the fare and takes the judgment that he perceives. I accept that the Minister has been through a rough time. No politician would suggest that we have not all had that experience but he is being a bit ungrateful to the star, if the press is right, of the Conservative party conference—the Secretary of State for Defence—who claimed that it was he who introduced disability provisions for London taxis.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Am I right in thinking that this is an intervention?

Mr. Clarke: It is.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It is so long that I am beginning to wonder.

Mr. Norris: My bona fides in this matter require no further underlining. The most cynical group of individuals known to man—the 22,000 members of the London licensed taxi trade—are a shrewd judge in these matters. As my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) knows only too well, they tend to speak their mind, and, my goodness, they spoke it on that occasion.

Mr. Tom Clarke: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for a Minister to describe all London's taxi drivers as cynical?

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order for the Chair.

Mr. Norris: It is pretty true, in my experience. I think that the number of taxi drivers in my constituency is second only to the number in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North. Many of them are personal friends, and have remained so because they recognise that at least I know one end of a taxi from the other. The hon. Member for Oldham, West clearly did not, but there is hope for any sinner that repenteth on these matters. I am delighted to debate the amendments.

Mr. Alfred Morris: On the matter of the unsolved mystery of the Government's massive conversion, their spectacular change of attitude, am I right in suspecting that that very distinguished official who is respected in all parts of the House, Anne Frye, might have played some part in the change? I suspect that the hon. Member for Exeter (Sir J. Hannam) may share my view that perhaps she is involved somewhere.

Mr. Norris: It is gracious of the right hon. Gentleman to refer to Miss Frye, who is a distinguished official in my Department and who has been recognised for her sterling work on behalf of disabled people in every field of the transport industry. Her whole team is marvellous.

I shall now reply to the substance of the speech by the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke). We started from the proposition that access for the disabled to all forms of transport is wholly desirable, but that what is required to be injected into any legislative programme to require such access is reasonableness as to the speed and extent with which it can be delivered. In the context of taxis, the proposition is relatively straightforward, because by their nature taxis will come to the end of their useful life.

In London, there is a programme for requiring full accessibility, and it will be completed by 31 December 1999. That means that, on 1 January 2000, the whole of London's taxi fleet will be wheelchair-accessible, and the same will be true of taxis in increasing numbers of local authorities.

7.15 pm

Provided that sufficient notice is given to the owner of a vehicle that may not comply to allow him to amortise the useful life of his vehicle and not suffer any unreasonable financial burden as a result, the principle of him ensuring that thereafter he acquires an accessible vehicle is entirely reasonable.

In another place, the noble Lord Gladwin of Clee brought to our attention an issue that I was immediately prepared to acknowledge had some real merits. I shall refer shortly to those merits, but I should first like to refer to the reasons why we cannot accept the Opposition amendment and why the words that we have employed are more helpful. Some doubts about the Opposition amendment are technical. For example, it authorises the owner of a transport facility to do things that he is already entitled to do. However, this is not an occasion for nit-picking.

Our chief worry is about the main thrust of the amendment, which would let taxis in general into a transport facility, rather than allow the owner of that facility to make an exclusive contract with a taxi or private car hire firm. There is general recognition that that is the case at Gatwick airport because the airport authority has a specific contract with a particular company.

The purpose of the contract is clear. If no such contract exists, there is a risk that the local licensing authority could regulate fares only in its own area. Therefore, there should be a proper contract between a company and the airport authority, under which the authority says to the contractor, "You will take passengers on a fixed scale to any destination that they want." As I have no doubt hon. Members will have seen at the airport, those prices are available for inspection.

If there is no such arrangement, there is a danger that some taxi drivers will exploit passengers who wish to travel outside the immediate licensing area, and charge much more than they are entitled to charge. The authorities at Gatwick recognised that in the airport's early days. Of course, the situation at that airport is very different from the one in London, which was specifically brought within the provisions of the Metropolitan police service area for London taxis.

The idea of a contract is good, and offers a genuine measure of protection to all taxi users, irrespective of whether they are disabled. On that basis, it would be unhelpful for the generality of taxi users if an authority was not able to enter into the arrangement that I have described. The amendment moved in the other place was similar to the Opposition amendment, and is certainly right in its spirit, because it seeks to ensure that the taxi service that is available at King's Cross station or any other major station is available to disabled people at airports and other such transport facilities.

The form of words that we have used essentially allows for that. It gives the Secretary of State a regulation-making power to ensure that, when accessibility requirements are in force for taxis generally, equivalent requirements can be imposed on vehicles used under a contract to provide hire car services, so that the Secretary of State is able to solve any of the problems as they arise.

This is not a massive principle, a huge reversal or U-turn. It is, however, a genuine acknowledgment that the point that has been made here, and the spirit behind the amendments, were sensible, and that our amendments will meet that point. I hope that, in that spirit, the hon. Member for Monklands, West will accept that the deficiency in the original amendment wording is sufficient to allow him to withdraw that and to move to support the Government amendment.

Mr. Vivian Bendall (Ilford, North): First, may I declare an interest? I represent the London Taxi Drivers Association. That interest is registered in the Members' book upstairs.

It is to be welcomed that the Government have brought forward the amendment, which will ensure that wheelchair-accessible licensed taxis are guaranteed free access to transport termini—the very areas where those with disabilities are in most need of such vehicles. I wish to thank my hon. Friends who have shared my concerns that, without the amendment, owners of transport facilities could enter into exclusive contracts with minicab companies, thus excluding wheelchair-accessible licensed taxis from transport facilities. It is important that those people with those disabilities have proper access to the provision of transport in airports, railway stations and other such areas.

Many people do not realise that minicabs do not and cannot give that facility—that is of great importance. Such a position would have driven a coach and horses through the principle of the Bill, and undermined the commitment shown by the licensed taxi industry, to which the Minister

[Mr. Vivian Bendall]

has referred, to ensure that, in due course and at considerable cost to itself, all licensed taxis will become wheelchair-accessible.

I would, however, prevail on the Minister to answer a number of points, in view of the fact that this was a late Government amendment, and it has been difficult to ask him to clarify one or two points. First, the new clause will apply only to transport facilities that are designated by the Secretary of State. Which transport facilities are likely to be designated, and on what basis will the choice be made?

Secondly, the new clause provides the Secretary of State with the power to impose the "taxi provisions" in the Bill concerning wheelchair access on the vehicles and drivers used to provide services under a franchise agreement. How will that work in practice, and what provisions are likely to be imposed? Thirdly, the term "hire car" has not been defined in the new clause, but is simply stated to have

"such meaning as may be prescribed".

Why has the term not been defined, and what definition is likely to be prescribed?

Mr. Norris: In order not to detain the House, I think that it is better if I write to my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) on those queries.

Mr. Tom Clarke: I found the Minister's reply unconvincing, but in the interests of progress, I look forward to a further discussion at the back of a taxi to Peckham, and I therefore will not press our amendments. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Lords amendment No. 50 and Government amendment (i) thereto agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 51 to 88 agreed to.

New clause

Lords amendment: No. 89, after clause 35, to insert the following new clause—*Application to Parliament*—

".—(1) This Act applies to an act done by or for purposes of the House of Lords or the House of Commons as it applies to an act done by a private person.

(2) For the purposes of the application of Part II in relation to the House of Commons, the Corporate Officer of that House shall be treated as the employer of a person who is (or would be) a relevant member of the House of Commons staff for the purposes of section 188 of the Employment Rights Act 1995.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (4), for the purposes of the application of sections 12 to 15, the provider of services is—

(a) as respects the House of Lords, the Corporate Officer of that House; and

(b) as respects the House of Commons, the Corporate Officer of that House.

(4) Where the service in question is access to and use of any place in the Palace of Westminster which members of the public are permitted to enter, the Corporate Officers of both Houses jointly are the provider of that service.

(5) Nothing in any rule of law or the law or practice of Parliament prevents proceedings being instituted before an industrial tribunal under Part II or before any court under Part III."

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Burt.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this, we may consider Government amendment to the Lords amendment, (a), in line 8, leave out

'188 of the Employment Rights Act 1995'

and insert

'139 of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978'.

Mr. Tom Clarke: At the recent lobbies to the House, many disabled people and organisations of disabled people were concerned—and it was a matter raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner)—that they did not have adequate access facilities, and even when they attempted to have a discussion in Westminster Hall, they were not allowed facilities for loudspeaker equipment.

I know that the Minister for Social Security and Disabled People is concerned to correct that position, but it might be helpful if he confirmed to the House that discussions to improve all this is continuing.

Mr. Burt: I am happy to respond. I share the concern that was raised at the time of the lobby. Discussions are going on to deal with that with the House authorities and with the Serjeant at Arms' office. I am sure that hon. Members will appreciate the written answer that appeared in *Hansard* on Tuesday 24 October, which was in response to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris), and which gave details of the latest substantial alterations that have been completed to the palace of Westminster in favour of disabled people.

On the problem of microphones in Westminster Hall, I have not yet had an answer on that issue, but it is a live one. I know that discussions continue, and we are all anticipating future lobbies to see how that problem can be dealt with.

Mr. Clarke: With the leave of the House, I thank the Minister for that helpful statement. I know that he will have the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell), who spoke on this issue a few weeks ago, and who shares the Minister's and the House's concern.

Lords amendment No. 89 and Government amendment (a) agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 90 to 111 agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 112 to 127 agreed to.

New clause

Lords amendment: No. 128, after schedule 2, to insert the following new schedule—*("Schedule 2A—*

PREMISES OCCUPIED UNDER LEASES

PART I

OCCUPATION BY EMPLOYER OR TRADE ORGANISATION

Failure to obtain consent to alteration

1. If any question arises as to whether the occupier has failed to comply with the section 6 or section (*Duty of trade organisation to make adjustments*) duty, by failing to make a particular alteration to the premises, any constraint attributable to the fact that he occupies the premises under a lease is to be ignored unless he has applied to the lessor in writing for consent to the making of the alteration.

Joining lessors in proceedings under section 8

2.—(1) In any proceedings under section 8, in a case to which section (*Alterations to premises occupied under leases*) applies, the complainant or the occupier may ask the tribunal hearing the complaint to direct that the lessor be joined or sisted as a party to the proceedings.

(2) The request shall be granted if it is made before the hearing of the complaint begins.

(3) The tribunal may refuse the request if it is made after the hearing of the complaint begins.

(4) The request may not be granted if it is made after the tribunal has determined the complaint.

(5) Where a lessor has been so joined or sisted as a party to the proceedings and the tribunal finds that—

- (a) the lessor has—
    - (i) refused consent to the alteration, or
    - (ii) has consented subject to one or more conditions, and
- (b) the refusal or any of the conditions was unreasonable,

it may make such declaration as it considers appropriate or order the lessor to pay compensation to the complainant.

(6) A declaration or order under sub-paragraph (5) may be made in substitution for, or in addition to, any steps taken by the tribunal under section 8(2).

(7) If the tribunal orders the lessor to pay compensation it may not make an order under section 8(2) ordering the occupier to do so.

Regulations

3. Regulations may make provision as to circumstances in which—

- (a) a lessor is to be taken, for the purposes of section (*Alterations to premises occupied under leases*) and this Part of this Schedule to have—
    - (i) withheld his consent;
    - (ii) withheld his consent unreasonably;
    - (iii) acted reasonably in withholding his consent;
- (b) a condition subject to which a lessor has given his consent is to be taken to be reasonable;
- (c) a condition subject to which a lessor has given his consent is to be taken to be unreasonable.

Sub-leases etc.

4. The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision supplementing, or modifying, the provision made by section (*Alterations to premises occupied under leases*) or any provision made by or under this Part of this Schedule in relation to cases where the occupier occupies premises under a sub-lease or sub-tenancy.

PART II

OCCUPATION BY PROVIDERS OF SERVICES

Failure to obtain consent to alteration

5. If any question arises as to whether the occupier has failed to comply with the section 15 duty, by failing to make a particular alteration to premises, any constraint attributable to the fact that he occupies the premises under a lease is to be ignored unless he has applied to the lessor in writing for consent to the making of the alteration.

Reference to court

6.—(1) If the occupier has applied in writing to the lessor for consent to the alteration and—

- (a) that consent has been refused, or
- (b) the lessor has made his consent subject to one or more conditions,

the occupier or a disabled person who has an interest in the proposed alteration to the premises being made, may refer the matter to a county court or, in Scotland, to the sheriff.

(2) In the following provisions of this Schedule "court" includes "sheriff".

(3) On such a reference the court shall determine whether the lessor's refusal was unreasonable or (as the case may be) whether the condition is, or any of the conditions are, unreasonable.

(4) If the court determines that the lessor's refusal was unreasonable it may make a declaration to the effect that if the lessor were to give his consent subject to such condition or conditions as may be specified in the declaration he would be acting reasonably.

Joining lessors in proceedings under section 20

7.—(1) In any proceedings on a claim under section 20, in a case to which this Part of this Schedule applies, the plaintiff, the pursuer or the occupier concerned may ask the court to direct that the lessor be joined or sisted as a party to the proceedings.

(2) The request shall be granted if it is made before the hearing of the claim begins.

(3) The court may refuse the request if it is made after the hearing of the claim begins.

(4) The request may not be granted if it is made after the court has determined the claim.

(5) Where a lessor has been so joined or sisted as a party to the proceedings and the court finds that—

- (a) the lessor has—
    - (i) refused consent to the alteration, or
    - (ii) has consented subject to one or more conditions, and
- (b) the refusal or any of the conditions was unreasonable,

it may make such declaration as it considers appropriate or order the lessor to pay compensation to the complainant.

(6) If the court orders the lessor to pay compensation it may not order the occupier to do so.

Regulations

8. Regulations may make provision as to circumstances in which—

- (a) a lessor is to be taken, for the purposes of section (*Alterations to premises occupied under leases*) and this Part of this Schedule to have—
    - (i) withheld his consent;
    - (ii) withheld his consent unreasonably;
    - (iii) acted reasonably in withholding his consent;
- (b) a condition subject to which a lessor has given his consent is to be taken to be reasonable;
- (c) a condition subject to which a lessor has given his consent is to be taken to be unreasonable.

Sub-leases etc.

9. The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision supplementing, or modifying, the provision made by section (*Alterations to premises occupied under leases*) or any provision made by or under this Part of this Schedule in relation to cases where the occupier occupies premises under a sub-lease or sub-tenancy.")

Amendments made to the proposed Lords amendment:
(a), in paragraph 2, leave out sub-paragraphs (5) and (6) and insert—

'(5) Where a lessor has been so joined or sisted as a party to the proceedings, the tribunal may determine—

- (a) whether the lessor has—
    - (i) refused consent to the alteration, or
    - (ii) consented subject to one or more conditions, and
- (b) if so, whether the refusal or any of the conditions was unreasonable.

(5A) If, under sub-paragraph (5), the tribunal determines that the refusal or any of the conditions was unreasonable it may take one or more of the following steps—

- (a) make such declaration as it considers appropriate;
- (b) make an order authorising the occupier to make the alteration specified in the order;
- (c) order the lessor to pay compensation to the complainant.

(5B) An order under sub-paragraph (5A)(b) may require the occupier to comply with conditions specified in the order.

[Mr. Clarke]

(6) Any step taken by the tribunal under sub-paragraph (5A) may be in substitution for, or in addition to, any step taken by the tribunal under section 8(2).'.

(b), in paragraph 6, leave out sub-paragraph (4) and insert—

'(4) If the court determines—

(a) that the lessor's refusal was unreasonable; or

(b) that the condition is, or any of the conditions are, unreasonable,

it may make such declaration as it considers appropriate or an order authorising the occupier to make the alteration specified in the order.

(4A) An order under sub-paragraph (4) may require the occupier to comply with conditions specified in the order.'.

(c), in pararaph 7, leave out sub-paragraph (5) and insert—

'(5) Where a lessor has been so joined or sisted as a party to the proceedings, the court may determine—

(a) whether the lessor has—

(i) refused consent to the alteration, or

(ii) consented subject to one or more conditions, and

(b) if so, whether the refusal or any of the conditions was unreasonable.

(5A) If, under sub-paragraph (5), the court determines that the refusal or any of the conditions was unreasonable it may take one or more of the following steps—

(a) make such declaration as it considers appropriate;

(b) make an order authorising the occupier to make the alteration specified in the order;

(c) order the lessor to pay compensation to the complainant.

(5B) An order under sub-paragraph (5A)(b) may require the occupier to comply with conditions specified in the order.'.—*[Mr. Burt.]*

Lords amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 129 to 139 agreed to.

Schedule 6

MODIFICATIONS OF THIS ACT IN ITS APPLICATION TO NORTHERN IRELAND

Lords amendment: No. 140, in page 36, line 45, at end insert—

(". In section 13(6A)(b) for "Part VII of the Mental Health Act 1983" substitute "Part VIII of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986".")

Amendment made to the proposed Lords amendment: (a), leave out from '(6A)' to end, and insert

'for paragraphs (b) and (c) substitute "; or

(b) functions conferred by or under Part VIII of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 are exercisable in relation to a disabled person's property or affairs.".'.—*[Mr. Burt.]*

Lords amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 141, in page 37, line 9, at end insert—

("12A. Omit sections (*Education of disabled persons*), (*Further and higher education of disabled persons*) and (*Further and higher education of disabled persons: Scotland*).

12B.—(1) In section (*Taxi accessibility regulations*)(1) for "Secretary of State" substitute "Department of the Environment".

(2) In section (*Taxi accessibility regulations*)(5) for the definition of "taxi" substitute—

""taxi" means a vehicle which—

(a) is licensed under Article 61 of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 to stand or ply for hire; and

(b) seats not more than 8 passengers in addition to the driver."

12C. For section (*New licences conditional on compliance with taxi accessibility regulations*) substitute—

"*New licences conditional on compliance with accessibility regulations.*

.—(1) The Department of the Environment shall not grant a public service vehicle licence under Article 61 of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 for a taxi unless the vehicle conforms with those provisions of the taxi accessibility regulations with which it will be required to conform if licensed.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply if such a licence was in force with respect to the vehicle at any time during the period of 28 days immediately before the day on which the licence is granted.

(3) The Department of the Environment may by order provide for subsection (2) to cease to have effect on such date as may be specified in the order.".

12D. Omit section (*Exemption from taxi accessibility regulations*).

12E. In section (*Carrying of passengers in wheelchairs*)(7) for "licensing authority" substitute "Department of the Environment".

12F.—(1) In section (*Carrying of guide dogs and hearing dogs*)(5) and (6) for "licensing authority" substitute "Department of the Environment".

(2) In section (*Carrying of guide dogs and hearing dogs*)(9) for "Secretary of State" substitute "Department of the Environment".

12G. Omit section (*Requirements as to disabled passengers in Scotland*).

12H.—(1) In section (*Appeal against refusal of exemption certificate*)(1) for "a licensing authority" substitute "the Department of the Environment".

(2) In section (*Appeal against refusal of exemption certificate*)(2) for "licensing authority concerned" substitute "Department of the Environment".

(3) In section (*Appeal against refusal of exemption certificate*)(3) for the words from "the magistrates' court" to the end substitute "a court of summary jurisdiction acting for the petty sessions district in which the aggrieved person resides."

12I.—(1) In section (*PSV accessibility regulations*) for "Secretary of State" wherever it occurs substitute "Department of the Environment".

(2) In section (*PSV accessibility regulations*)(5) for the definition of "public service vehicle" substitute—

""public service vehicle" means a vehicle which—

(a) seats more than 8 passengers in addition to the driver; and

(b) is a public service vehicle for the purposes of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981;".

(3) In section (*PSV accessibility regulations*)(7) for the words from "the Disabled" to the end substitute "such representative organisations as it thinks fit".

12J.—(1) In section (*Accessibility certificates*)(2) for "Secretary of State" substitute "Department of the Environment".

(2) In section (*Accessibility certificates*) for subsections (3) and (4) substitute—

"(3) Any person who uses a regulated public service vehicle in contravention of this section is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale.".

12K.—(1) In section (*Approval certificates*) for "Secretary of State" wherever it occurs substitute "Department of the Environment".

(2) In section (*Approval certificates*)(1) for "he" substitute "it".

(3) In section (*Approval certificates*)(6) for "his" substitute "its".

12L. In section (*Special authorisations*) for "Secretary of State" wherever it occurs substitute "Department of the Environment".

12M.—(1) In section (*Reviews and appeals*) for "Secretary of State" wherever it occurs substitute "Department of the Environment".

(2) In section (*Reviews and appeals*)(2) for "him" substitute "it".

(3) In section (*Reviews and appeals*)(6) for "he" substitute "it" and for "his" substitute "its".

12N.—(1) In section (*Fees*) for "Secretary of State" wherever it occurs substitute "Department of the Environment".

(2) In section (*Fees*)(2) for "him" substitute "it" and at the end add "of Northern Ireland".

(3) In section (*Fees*)(4) for "he" substitute "it".

12P.—(1) In section (*Rail vehicle accessibility regulations*) for "Secretary of State" wherever it occurs substitute "Department of the Environment".

(2) In section (*Rail vehicle accessibility regulations*)(6) in the definition of "rail vehicle" for the words "on any railway, tramway or prescribed system" substitute "by rail".

(3) Omit section (*Rail vehicle accessibility regulations*)(7).

(4) In section (*Rail vehicle accessibility regulations*)(11) for the words from "the Disabled" to the end substitute "such representative organisations as it thinks fit".

12Q.—(1) In section (*Exemption from rail vehicle accessibility regulations*) for "Secretary of State" wherever it occurs substitute "Department of the Environment".

(2) In section (*Exemption from rail vehicle accessibility regulations*)(3) for the words "the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee and such other persons as he" substitute "such persons as it" and for "he" substitute "it".

12R. Omit section (*Offences by bodies corporate etc.*)(3).")

Amendment made to the Lords amendment: (a), after subsection (2) insert—

'(2A) In section (*Designated transport facilities*) for "Secretary of State", wherever it occurs, substitute "Department of the Environment".'—*[Mr. Burt.]*

Lords amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 142 to 170 agreed to.

Clause 12

DISCRIMINATION IN RELATION TO GOODS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Lords amendment: No. 30, in page 9, leave out lines 26 to 28 and insert—

("( ) For the purposes of this Part, references to a service provider who discriminates against a disabled person shall include references to a service provider who—

(a) treats a person who has a physical or mental impairment that does not have a substantial and long term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities, as having a substantial and long term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities;

(b) treats a person who does not have a physical or mental impairment as having a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities.")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Burt.]*

7.30 pm

Mr. Tom Clarke: Of all our discussions today, this is easily the most serious. Many thousands of people outwith this place will attach their concern about parliamentary democracy to the manner in which we respond to the clear decision in another place. The amendment was carried in another place in the face of opposition from the Government Front Bench, and it is a matter for regret, but not for surprise, that Ministers are not prepared to accept the verdict of the other place.

The Lords amendment is yet another challenge to the inadequate scope and coverage of the Bill. Ministers were forced to concede that the Bill should protect those with a history of disability and those likely to be disabled in future, and they suffered defeat in the Lords because of their refusal to extend protection to those with an ill-founded reputation for disability.

The effect of the Lords amendment is to outlaw discrimination against those wrongly perceived by providers of goods and services to be disabled. If we accepted the Government's original proposals, to which they now wish to return, a service provider alleged to have discriminated would win a court case if it could be shown that the victim of the discrimination was not actually disabled, or had a disability that did not meet the narrow definition in the Bill.

The perverse effect of that would be that well-founded discrimination based on prejudice would be unlawful, but ill-founded discrimination based on ignorance and prejudice would remain lawful. For example, if a restaurant owner refused to serve a customer whom he believed to be epileptic and the customer really was epileptic, the customer would have a case against him. But if the customer were not epileptic but suffered from a lesser form of ailment not covered by the Bill, the discrimination would be perfectly acceptable and within the law, and the customer would have no right to redress whatever. That is wholly unacceptable.

The Lords amendment lays down that that the problem is the discrimination itself, not the precise degree of disability. To discriminate on the grounds of disability is wrong whether the perception of disability is well founded or not, just as would be the case with any other sort of discrimination. To ban a customer because he was Scottish would be unlawful, even if he was not a Scot at all. The same logic should apply to discrimination on grounds of disability.

The Lords amendment would achieve that, with the support not only of their Lordships' House but of every organisation I know of and for disabled people, and that of every disabled person whom I have ever met, including some people who have been discriminated against because they merely have a reputation, or whose history is perceived by others as being covered by the word "disability".

Ministers may argue that the amendment would lead to inconsistency, because perceived disability is not covered in the part of the Bill dealing with employment. However, that would be the least of the inconsistencies in the Bill. Its overall structure draws a false and unnecessary dividing line between employment and other spheres.

The Opposition have been the most persistent critics of that divide, and our criticism remains. Government amendments to the employment parts of the Bill no longer allow an employer's subjective opinion as a ground for less favourable treatment. We welcome that change, but Ministers saw fit to leave the subjective opinion of a service provider as grounds for less favourable treatment.

It is a result of the Government's approach, not of ours, that objective criteria must be satisfied for an employer to treat a disabled person unfavourably, but that no such principle applies to service providers. Clearly that is

[Mr. Tom Clarke]

repugnant. If subjective opinion can be a ground for less favourable treatment in the provision of goods and services, but not in employment, it would make as much sense for the Bill to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of subjective opinion in employment but not in the provision of goods and services.

It is unsatisfactory that the two areas of employment and the provision of goods and services should be so needlessly kept apart in the Bill, despite all the evidence, all the representations and all the arguments. However, the blame for that lies firmly with Ministers, and not with other parties or with the Lords amendment.

Ministers have argued that there cannot be protection for people perceived to be disabled without the Bill's becoming open-ended. The Government argued that only those who meet the criteria of disability should be protected by the Bill, but they can no longer advance that argument as they have conceded that those with a history of disability should be protected, even if they do not necessarily meet the narrow definition of actual or current disability.

The Bill should address the problem of discrimination on the grounds of disability. We should shift the onus of proof from the alleged victim of discrimination to the alleged perpetrator. It should not be up to the victim to prove that he or she is disabled, and therefore protected by law. The onus should be on the service provider not to discriminate on the grounds of disability, which is why we believe that the amendment should be passed.

The Minister said that the Opposition's attitude was "gung-ho". I took the opportunity during a Division to look up in a dictionary that the House would find acceptable the definition of "gung-ho". I found that the United States marines used that expression during the second world war to indicate that they were "enthusiastic, eager, zealous". When the House refuses to emulate that approach to put right that which is wrong, we will no longer be serving the democratic rights of our people, or the rights and needs of 6.5 million of our fellow citizens.

Ms Lynne: I shall be brief, as I know that many hon. Members want to speak.

Lords amendment No. 30 proposes to outlaw discrimination based on ignorance and prejudice: I believe that most discrimination is based on ignorance and prejudice. It aims to prevent a provider of goods or services from acting in a discriminatory manner just because someone is perceived to have a disability.

We debated this issue in Committee, and I am glad that the Government have moved slightly on the history of disability. I am saddened, however, that they have not moved on the reputation of disability. I hope that they will agree with the Lords amendment. In many instances, people who have no disability, but who have a reputation of disability, are perceived to have such a disability—for example, those who are perceived to have mental health problems or HIV.

Are we saying that it is justifiable to discriminate on a perception that somebody has a mental illness? Is it justifiable to be prejudiced against someone who is believed to be HIV positive? If the House does not pass the Lords amendment, that is exactly what it will say. Discrimination is based on ignorance and prejudice, and we must take that on board when we consider the amendment.

At long last, disabled people are to be protected in law to a certain extent. I say "to a certain extent", because, without a commission to enforce the rights of disabled people, the Bill will not give disabled people what they need. People who are perceived to have a disability—even if they do not have that disability—will not be protected, and that is not fair and does not make sense. The amendment is vital, and the Government must not oppose it. It will give a clear message that any discrimination relating to disability is wrong, whether it is related to an actual disability or a perceived disability.

Mr. Wigley: I am glad to have the opportunity to make a brief intervention in the debate.

In rejecting the Lords amendment, the Government will leave a massive loophole in the Bill, and I wish to address my remarks to that matter. Under the Bill, a person providing a service may discriminate against a disabled person on the basis not of that disability but of a belief that the disabled person has more severe disabilities.

If we do not agree the Lords amendment, we will give any provider of goods or services a defence against an accusation of discrimination against a disabled person on the basis of an acknowledged disability. The provider alleged to have discriminated will be able to say that he or she did so on the basis of not an acknowledged disability but a perception of a far-reaching disability. That will be a watertight defence in any action, and the provision intended by this part of the Bill will be flawed. The Government have not thought this matter through, and the Lords amendment should be agreed.

7.45 pm

Mr. Barnes: There are two main distinctions between the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill and the Disability Discrimination Bill. One is the lack of an enforcement agency, which is not proposed in the amendment, and the other is the scope of its application. Who does the Disability Discrimination Bill apply to?

We have always made it clear that the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill applied to anyone who was disabled or who was perceived to have a disability—at least 10 per cent. of the population. We do not know how many people are covered by the Disability Discrimination Bill. The Bill's details of definition are hedged with all sorts of medical provisions and a host of exemptions; considerable powers over those exemptions are placed in the hands of the Secretary of State. The amendment gives us a chance to extend the areas of definition within that limited scope, and therefore to extend the Bill's areas of application. The Lords amendment would ensure that the discriminator could not use the argument that the person discriminated against had a perceived disability.

The Lords amendment still does not make the Bill fully acceptable to the civil rights movement, but it is important. If it is passed, we will be in a better position to amend the legislation or to introduce a measure based on the principles of the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill. All hon. Members who have supported the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill in this House should be in the Lobby to defend this Lords amendment.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Anybody who doubts the existence and extent of prejudice within our society against minorities, including disabled people, need consider only the performance of the tabloids in recent weeks in their commentary on the distribution of funds from the National Lottery Charities Board. There were outpourings of venom against minorities, based—as much as anything—on ignorance. Again and again we find that ignorance is at the root of prejudice, and we must act to deal with the unacceptable consequences of such ignorance and confusion.

The Bill aims to remedy one of a range of injustices: discrimination against someone who has an actual impairment of long-term and substantial impact. But if the Government win the vote and Lords amendment No. 30 is not passed, we will fail to address another range of injustices that occurs when someone with a minor disability—or no disability at all—experiences discrimination as though he or she did have a substantial disability. When that occurs it is just as damaging and objectionable.

If the Government vote against the Lords amendment, the less disabled one is, the more one can be discriminated against. That is the most astonishing policy for the Government to adopt. It puzzles me that they should intend it to be within the law to discriminate on the basis of imaginary disability.

The Minister promised that guidance will be issued, and that will, no doubt, be helpful to a degree, but the principle needs to be solidly established in the legislation.

At the heart of the problem is the Government's conception of the nature of disability. They insist on the medical model, hence their insistence on the definition of disability in the Bill as being its fulcrum. That insistence is misguided even on the Government's terms because the definitions have failed to be definitive and are woolly. The phrases, "long-term and substantial impact" and "normal day-to-day activities" are susceptible to infinite debate and argument. What does it mean to talk of a

> "clinically well-recognised medical condition"?

The truth of the matter is that the definitions that the Government have offered will be a challenge to litigation and a paradise for lawyers. They should have sought universally to establish the principle that it is unacceptable to discriminate on grounds of disability and allowed sensible exemptions on the basis of reasonableness.

The Government should take as their conception the social model. After all, one cannot legislate against impairment, which arises as a fact of life out of natural or accidental causes, but one can and must legislate to constrain anti-social behaviour and to improve social behaviour in all the areas relevant to disability.

The measure is called the Disability Discrimination Bill and it is designed to prevent discrimination. It is discrimination itself that disables and further impairs those who are unfortunate enough to be impaired already and to be the victims of discrimination. It impairs not only those individuals but all of us, because, to the extent to which discrimination on grounds of disability may still be licensed within our society, so we shall tend the more to have a society characterised by aggression, harshness, guilt, distrust, fear and injustice. It follows from that analysis that the evil against which we are legislating is discrimination itself, whether based on an objectively ascertained reality or a mistaken perception.

It seems particularly strange that the Government are unwilling to accept the Lords amendment, given their acceptance earlier that it should not be lawful to discriminate against someone who has a history of disability but is no longer disabled. In accepting that principle they have gone a significant way towards acknowledging that they must act to deal with mistaken perception. I cannot understand how they can leave that task uncompleted and be willing to accept that discrimination on grounds of disability should still be permissible under certain circumstances and how, if they are to allow people to be stigmatised and disadvantaged in such a way, they can claim to be the Government of a party committed to one nation.

The Government should, indeed, have tabled an amendment to the Lords amendment to ensure that it covered employment as well as the provision of goods and services.

The Government put forward considerations of expediency. They are concerned about costs, but there is no need to fear the costs given the principle of reasonableness that permeates the legislation. Nor need the Government fear that service providers are going to spend disproportionate amounts of time poring over the small print in part III of the Bill. That simply is not the way in which life works. Civil servants study the small print of legislation, as do lawyers and a few Members of Parliament, but employers and providers of goods and services do not, so the Government need not fear that either.

Nor need the Government fear that, if they accept the amendment, it would lead to great quantities of litigation. They must recognise that it will always be hard for the victim of such discrimination to prove their point about the motives of people who discriminated. What matters is that the declaration of principle should be enshrined in the Bill. The principle should be paramount.

Sadly, I must ask one last question of the Minister. At the meeting that he was kind enough to hold with the all-party disablement group last week, I asked whether he would be willing to accept as a fallback position that the Government should take powers to introduce the substance of this amendment in secondary legislation. I would greatly prefer that it should be clearly established in the primary legislation, which would be the right principle, but surely it would at least be a prudent precaution to take a reserve power to implement the substance of the Lords amendment in secondary legislation if experience should prove it to be necessary. Perhaps the Minister will say whether the possibility of the Government taking such a power is provided for and, if not, why will they not take it?

Mr. Berry: In opposing the Lords amendment, the Government are placing themselves in a ridiculous position. After many years, they have been convinced that discrimination is wrong if a service provider discriminates against someone whose impairment falls within their definition, but they seem to think it acceptable if a provider discriminates against someone in the belief that he or she has an impairment that falls within the definition and has made a secret of the fact.

One cannot discriminate against someone who has epilepsy, but one can discriminate if one believes that they have it. One cannot discriminate against someone with mental illness, but one can do so against someone who is believed to have it. One cannot discriminate against someone who has a serious hearing impairment, but I guess that the Bill will allow one to discriminate against someone who uses a hearing aid. Plainly, that is a nonsense.

[Mr. Berry]

If the Government are concerned because they feel that there will be litigation, may I point out that someone who wishes to complain under this part of the Bill will do so only if their complaint can stand up in court? If someone can prove that they have suffered discrimination because of their perceived disability, surely they should have the right to justice.

The Government should listen to what the Law Society and members of the Bow Group have to say and should support the Lords amendment and say that they really believe that discrimination is worth abolishing.

Mr. Burt: Let us try to settle this matter in context and to explain why things are not quite as they have been portrayed. The amendment extends the coverage of part III of the Bill to people who are treated by service providers as though they have a disability.

Last week, I had an opportunity to discuss the amendment with a delegation from the all-party disablement group, led by my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Sir J. Hannam), who, as always, has done sterling work throughout the passage of the Bill on behalf of disabled people. He was accompanied by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham), who is also present, and the hon. Members for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth) and for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley), both of whom have spoken

I am grateful to them for explaining the ostensible purpose of the amendment. I do not doubt their sincerity. Indeed, I have much sympathy with their concern that people who are not disabled but have minor impairments might be treated unfairly. Extending the definition as they propose, however, would create a number of problems, which would seriously undermine the operation of the Bill. Not only would it lead to confusion, but its provisions would be unworkable.

The hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon mentioned principle, but to establish a point of principle that cannot then be enforced is, to my mind, to take a dangerous step. The whole point of the Bill—and why it is important—is that the principles that it enshrines can be delivered. I am not prepared to allow the base of the Bill to be undermined by taking a step that might sound right but which will not deliver the goods and will provide only an opportunity for the unwary to fall into traps. I therefore ask the House to reject the amendment.

The amendment is a development of others discussed at earlier stages of the Bill. The exact terminology has changed; it is now framed in terms of treating someone as disabled instead of as perceiving someone as disabled, but its intention remains the same.

During its passage, the Government have emphasised that the Disability Discrimination Bill is concerned solely with discrimination against people who are, or have been, disabled. It cannot provide the solution for all those who may possibly face discrimination. It is not a general anti-discrimination Bill. The definition that the Bill uses is clear. The people covered are those who have, or have had, a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. We are talking about people who are disabled in common-sense terms.

Any attempt to introduce provisions to widen the Bill's scope to include people who are merely thought to be, or are treated as, disabled would damage the Bill and dramatically reduce its effectiveness. I fear that a change of that nature would lead to a good deal of spurious and vexatious litigation. It would—this is the crucial point—be extremely difficult to establish legally what was in the mind of a service provider accused of having perceived someone as having disability or to prove that someone had been treated as if they were disabled.

8 pm

Perception is necessarily the response of an individual person. In my view, it is simply not possible to base important legal issues on such uncertainty. What evidence can be produced to answer the statement, "I have no such perception"? We cannot look inside a person's mind in that way, still less provide for legal disputes on the point. The concept of perception is irredeemably flawed in that context. The attempt to move away from perception to treatment does little to remove the potential for confusion. We spent much time and trouble getting the definition right. It would be bizarre if we were now to allow those who did not meet that definition to benefit from the protection afforded by part III through the loophole that the amendment would create.

We have heard no argument advanced by the Opposition about the burden on the service providers, upon whom the successful implementation of the Bill depends. The great advance of the Bill is in the requirement on service providers to change policies and practices, provide auxiliary aids and remove physical barriers, where reasonable. Failure to make such changes could amount to unlawful discrimination. The concept of reasonable adjustment that that implies—taking practical steps to make jobs and services accessible—is crucial to the Bill. It is right to require those adjustments but the case for that duty is based on two key arguments: first, that it is right to ask society to make changes to help those with a substantial disability; secondly, that the extent and nature of the changes required can be predicted because only those with a substantial disability are covered.

If the Bill covered non-disabled people and those with minor conditions, it would result in an unacceptable degree of uncertainty on the part of the service provider, who would never know for certain whether the person in front of him or her was someone for whom some form of adjustment was necessary. Of course, service providers would not have to make adjustments on a major scale for those who are not disabled or who have only minor disabilities. However, they would have to consider the full range of duties, including changing policies and practice that made access unreasonably difficult, to ensure that they were operating within the law. That would create a considerable burden for small business trying to come to terms with its duties under the Bill.

There has been a lot of misunderstanding about the degree of disability covered by the Bill's definitions. I am seeking to be reassuring. People think that substantial disability means severe disability. That is wrong. The word "substantial" is used in the definition to indicate an effect more than minor. As a result, many disabled people who may think that the Bill does not cover them will find that they enjoy its protection. That will become clearer once we have published guidance on the matter.

The amendment will be resisted because the Bill as now drafted fulfils not only the aims of the House but those of the wider public. For the first time, it will be unlawful to discriminate against a disabled person in access to employment, goods, services and facilities. A National Disability Council will advise the Government and assist us in drawing up the regulations needed to put the Bill into practice, and because a workable and coherent definition of disability is in the Bill, we can proceed with confidence, recognising the interests of those who supply employment, goods and facilities, as well as the aspirations of disabled people. Without such a constructive relationship, the further change that we seek in society's attitudes towards disabled people is made more difficult.

The Bill is therefore a fundamental advance for disabled people put forward by a Conservative Government, like so much other excellent legislation for supporting disabled people. It is easily as significant as the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, which was passed, as the House well knows, after a substantial climbdown by the then Labour Government, which had originally decided not to take the measure forward. I therefore ask the House to support the Bill and reject the amendment.

Mr. Tom Clarke: I have no doubt that those who listened to our debate, and especially to the speeches of my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth) and of other hon. Members from all the Opposition parties, will remain completely unconvinced by the argument that the Minister has advanced. If the Government are supported in the Lobby tonight, let it be remembered that those who do so will make an absolute mockery of the speech made at the Conservative party conference in Blackpool by the Secretary of State for Social Security.

The Bill is a betrayal of disabled people, and those who are perceived or considered to be disabled. The Government have had the opportunity, by embracing the wisdom and decision of another place, to put the matter right. They are culpable because of that. They have considered the matter. Let no one therefore doubt that nothing that the Government propose is in the interests of those whose disability, or perceived disability, will be held against them as a result of the law introduced by the Government. On that basis, I invite the House to join us in the No Lobby, and to do so with pride and so oppose a position that will, in time, be reversed by the House.

Question put, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

The House divided: Ayes 285, Noes 250.

Division No. 226] **[8.07 pm**

AYES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Aitken, Rt Hon Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael *(Selby)*
Allason, Rupert *(Torbay)*
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Rt Hon Robert
Atkinson, Peter *(Hexham)*
Baker, Nicholas *(North Dorset)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Matthew *(Southport)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bates, Michael
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Beresford, Sir Paul
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Booth, Hartley
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bottomley, Rt Hon Virginia
Bowden, Sir Andrew
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Sir Rhodes
Brandreth, Gyles
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Sir Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Browning, Mrs Angela
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton North)*
Carlisle, Sir Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Ru'clif)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Coe, Sebastian
Colvin, Michael
Congdon, David
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Cormack, Sir Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina *(S D'by'ire)*
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Deva, Nirj Joseph
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Rt Hon Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Duncan, Alan
Duncan-Smith, Iain
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Sir Anthony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Fabricant, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Rt Hon Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Fox, Sir Marcus *(Shipley)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Sir Peter
Gale, Roger
Gallie, Phil
Gardiner, Sir George
Garel-Jones, Rt Hon Tristan
Garnier, Edward
Gill, Christopher
Gillan, Cheryl
Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, Sir John
Grant, Sir A *(SW Cambs)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth, N)*
Grylls, Sir Michael
Hague, Rt Hon William
Hamilton, Sir Archibald
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Hargreaves, Andrew
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Sir Alan
Hawkins, Nick
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, Jerry
Heald, Oliver
Heath, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hendry, Charles
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Sir Terence
Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Hogg, Rt Hon Douglas *(G'tham)*
Horam, John
Hordern, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Sir Ralph *(N Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Rt Hon David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Jack, Michael
Jenkin, Bernard
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Bir'm E'st'n)*
Knox, Sir David
Kynoch, George *(Kincardine)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Rt Hon Ian
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Leigh, Edward
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lidington, David
Lightbown, Sir David
Lilley, Rt Hon Peter
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luff, Peter
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew
Maclean, Rt Hon David
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, Sir David
Maitland, Lady Olga
Major, Rt Hon John
Malone, Gerald
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Merchant, Piers
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Moate, Sir Roger

Monro, Rt Hon Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Needham, Rt Hon Richard
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Sir Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Sir Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pickles, Eric
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Rt Hon Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, Rt Hon John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Richards, Rod
Riddick, Graham
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Robathan, Andrew
Roberts, Rt Hon Sir Wyn
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Robinson, Mark *(Somerton)*
Roe, Mrs Marion *(Broxbourne)*
Rowe, Andrew *(Mid Kent)*
Rumbold, Rt Hon Dame Angela
Sackville, Tom
Sainsbury, Rt Hon Sir Timothy
Scott, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Nicholas
Speed, Sir Keith
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spicer, Sir James *(W Dorset)*
Spring, Richard
Sproat, Iain
Squire, Robin *(Hornchurch)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stephen, Michael
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan
Streeter, Gary
Sumberg, David
Sweeney, Walter
Sykes, John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Sir Teddy *(Southend, E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Sir Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D *(Bexl'yh'th)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trend, Michael
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whitney, Ray
Whittingdale, John
Wiggin, Sir Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Willetts, David
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann *(Congleton)*
Winterton, Nicholas *(Macc'fld)*
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Simon Burns and
Mr. Patrick McLoughlin.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Mrs Irene
Ainger, Nick
Ainsworth, Robert *(Cov'try NE)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald *(Swansea E)*
Anderson, Ms Janet *(Ros'dale)*
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Austin-Walker, John
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry
Barron, Kevin
Bayley, Hugh
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Beith, Rt Hon A J
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, Andrew F
Bermingham, Gerald
Berry, Roger
Betts, Clive
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(Dunfermline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle upon Tyne East)*
Burden, Richard
Byers, Stephen
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Mrs Anne *(C'bridge)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ronnie *(Blyth V)*
Campbell-Savours, D N
Canavan, Dennis
Cann, Jamie
Chisholm, Malcolm
Church, Judith
Clapham, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clarke, Eric *(Midlothian)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coffey, Ann
Cohen, Harry
Connarty, Michael
Corbett, Robin
Corston, Jean
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Jim *(Covy SE)*
Cunningham, Roseanna
Dafis, Cynog
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davidson, Ian
Davies, Bryan *(Oldham C'tral)*
Davies, Chris *(L'Boro & S'worth)*
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'dge H'l)*
Denham, John
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Donohoe, Brian H
Dowd, Jim
Eagle, Ms Angela
Eastham, Ken
Etherington, Bill
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Fatchett, Derek
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(S Antrim)*
Foster, Rt Hon Derek
Foster, Don *(Bath)*
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Gapes, Mike
Garrett, John
Gerrard, Neil
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A
Godsiff, Roger
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Gunnell, John
Hain, Peter
Hall, Mike
Hanson, David
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Henderson, Doug
Heppell, John
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Kate
Hogg, Norman *(Cumbernauld)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hoon, Geoffrey
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'rd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley North)*
Howells, Dr Kim *(Pontypridd)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Kevin *(Doncaster N)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hutton, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jackson, Glenda *(H'stead)*
Jackson, Helen *(Shef'ld, H)*
Jamieson, David
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn and D'side)*
Jones, Ieuan Wyn *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Jon Owen *(Cardiff C)*
Jones, Lynne *(B'ham S O)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd, SW)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Keen, Alan
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kennedy, Jane *(L'pool Br'dg'n)*
Khabra, Piara S
Kilfoyle, Peter
Kirkwood, Archy
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Liddell, Mrs Helen
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Llwyd, Elfyn
Lynne, Ms Liz
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McCrea, The Reverend William
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
Mackinlay, Andrew
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McMaster, Gordon
MacShane, Denis
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Maddock, Diana
Mahon, Alice
Mandelson, Peter
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester, S)*
Martin, Michael J *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Argyll & Bute)*
Milburn, Alan
Miller, Andrew
Mitchell, Austin *(Great Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon Alfred *(Wy'nshawe)*
Morris, Estelle *(B'ham Yardley)*
Morris, Rt Hon John *(Aberavon)*
Mudie, George
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Hara, Edward
Olner, Bill
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Pearson, Ian
Pickthall, Colin
Pike, Peter L
Pope, Greg
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prentice, Bridget *(Lew'm E)*
Prentice, Gordon *(Pendle)*
Primarolo, Dawn

Purchase, Ken
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Reid, Dr John
Rendel, David
Robertson, George *(Hamilton)*
Robinson, Geoffrey *(Co'try NW)*
Roche, Mrs Barbara
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Simpson, Alan
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Chris *(Isl'ton S & F'sbury)*
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spellar, John
Squire, Rachel *(Dunfermline W)*
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevenson, George
Stott, Roger
Strang, Dr. Gavin
Straw, Jack
Sutcliffe, Gerry
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Timms, Stephen
Touhig, Don
Turner, Dennis
Walker, Rt Hon Sir Harold
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N
Welsh, Andrew
Wicks, Malcolm
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan *(Sw'n W)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Wright, Dr Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Joe Benton and
Mr. John Cummings.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Committee appointed to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to amendment No. 30: Mr. Alistair Burt, Mr. Tom Clarke, Mr. Piers Merchant, Mr. Gordon McMaster and Mr. Richard Ottaway; Three to be the quorum of the Committee.—[*Dr. Liam Fox.*]

To withdraw immediately.

PROCEEDS OF CRIME (SCOTLAND) BILL [*LORDS*]

Read a Second Time.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Sessional Order [19 December], That the Bill be not committed.—[*Dr. Liam Fox.*]

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question, That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put forthwith and agreed to.*

Bill read the Third Time, and passed.

Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Bill *[Lords]*

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be now read a Second time.—[*Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.*]

8.25 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I have no wish to hold up the House, but I have an important question about clause 18, in part II, entitled

> "Sporting events: control of alcohol etc".

It has been suggested that the sanction contained in the clause should not apply to sporting events

> "at which all the participants take part without financial or material reward".

I must remind the Minister of a recent cricket match in Glasgow where there was something of a stramash. It was suggested by a number of witnesses to that unholy incident that those involved were decidedly under the influence of alcohol.

I do not want to force a Division—I suspect that I would not be very popular if I did so—but, because of the increasing habit of drinking alcohol at amateur as well as professional events, the Minister should think again about clause 18(2).

8.26 pm

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his remarks. We are making certain inquiries into the recent boxing match and the disgraceful scenes of violence and intimidation that took place there. The hon. Gentleman will have read in the press today that the police have been making inquiries and have followed up on them.

We are investigating the matter, but the Bill is purely a consolidation measure. It does not change the law, but we are not ruling out further changes in the future depending on the results of our inquiries.

8.26 pm

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): May I concur with the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman)? As the Minister said, however, the Bill is merely a consolidation measure. The Bill is welcomed by the Opposition because it will make the law more manageable and accessible. I am also sure that it will be welcomed by public and professional bodies because of that. Although we could dispute individual aspects of the Bill, I do not think that this is the right forum for such a discussion. We welcome the consolidation measure.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Sessional Order [19 December], That the Bill be not committed.—[*Dr. Liam Fox.*]

Question agreed to.

Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Bill [Lords]

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be now read a Second time.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

8.28 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): On the whole the Opposition welcome the Bill, which is a consolidation measure. However, I must draw the Minister's attention to the serious concern felt at the failure of the Crown to use measures that could be taken under the Prisoners and Criminal Proceedings (Scotland) Act 1993. I refer to section 33, which allows the employment of a commissioner in court cases involving the cross-examination of child witnesses. That means that a child can give evidence on commission. Many of us are concerned, however, that screens are being used instead of closed circuit television or the employment of a commissioner. Although I accept the Bill readily, the Government still have much to do to offer protection to child witnesses and other vulnerable witnesses in our courts.

8.29 pm

Mr. Phil Gallie (Ayr): I too acknowledge that the Bill is likely to have a fairly swift passage tonight, but I wish to record some dissent with respect to part III, which refers to bail.

I understood that several significant changes would be introduced in the way in which bail would be applied from our courts. I believe that the Bill makes some amendment, but it certainly does not go as far as I was led to understand during the passage of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill earlier this year.

I should therefore like an undertaking from my right hon. Friend the Minister, that, perhaps in the not too distant future, bail in Scotland will once again be considered and perhaps some more stringent criteria applied.

8.30 pm

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): First, in response to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman), I am well aware of his great concern and efforts on behalf of children and the need to safeguard them. He specifically mentioned evidence on commission, closed circuit television and the use of screens, and he obviously believes that children should be given more protection.

I will make inquiries about the up-to-date position. I will draw to the attention of the Lord Advocate the arguments that the hon. Gentleman made and ask for a full letter to be sent to him.

To my hon. Friend the Member for Ayr (Mr. Gallie) I can say that the Bill merely consolidates existing law. I am well aware of his desire to tighten up on bail. We have severely tightened up on bail already. The Act will be reviewed in due course in the light of experience. No doubt we can return to it in future if there is a further need, just as we returned to the issue of knives when my hon. Friend so successfully piloted a Bill on to the statute book.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills),

That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House.—*[Dr. Liam Fox.]*

Question agreed to.

Bill immediately considered in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 86 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 87

NON-AVAILABILITY OF JUDGE

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I beg to move amendment No. 1, in clause 87, page 63, line 43, leave out '(1)(c)' and insert '(1)(b)(ii) or (3)(b)'.

Clause 87 consolidates section 128 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 as amended by section 30 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1995. The consolidation failed to reproduce the amendment made at subsection (3) of section 30 of the 1995 Act, which is consequential on the change made earlier in section 30.

The amendment is purely consolidation, and I am able to advise the House that Lord Lloyd of Berwick, the Chairman of the Joint Committee on Consolidation Bills, is content that it is pure consolidation, and will not change the character of the Bill. Without the amendment, the consolidation would be inaccurate.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 87, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 88 to 309 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedules 1 to 10 agreed to.

Bill, as amended, reported; as amended, considered; read the Third time, and passed.

Criminal Procedure (Consequential Provisions) (Scotland) Bill *[Lords]*

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be read a Second time.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]*

8.34 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): On clauses 2 and 3, many of us are deeply worried about what appear to be the over-lenient penalties imposed on people convicted in our High Court of the most serious and violent crimes against the person. I am not alone. I do not think that I am allowed to mention the name of the specific judge, but one High Court judge has been remarkably lenient in the way in which he has treated certain people convicted of horrific crimes.

Perhaps the Minister cannot do it with this Bill, but I hope that he and the Lord Advocate will issue guidelines to sheriffs and High Court judges concerning the need to inflict condign punishment, especially on those convicted of violent crimes against the person.

8.35 pm

Mr. Phil Gallie (Ayr): I support what the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) said. The feelings that he expressed are felt throughout the land. There are great anxieties about inconsistencies and perhaps there are great anxieties about those who judge the judges. Who are they? Should we perhaps consider that in future? I suggest that, given the example quoted by the hon. Gentleman, that should be the case.

8.36 pm

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): I wish to make a few comments to back up what my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) and the hon. Member for Ayr (Mr. Gallie) said.

On clause 3, I wonder whether the Government have considered the issue of a sentencing commission. We have had inconsistencies in sentencing. In the summer months, one young person was sentenced to gaol for more than two years for stealing £5 from a football pools company and the next day a young person was given a community service order for badly beating up a 78-year-old pensioner. That type of inconsistency cannot be allowed.

The hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) wrote to me with regard to those cases, saying that he was writing to the Lord Advocate about the matter. The response that the hon. Member for Eastwood received from the Lord Advocate was insufficiently serious in view of the position. That gives the impression that, whether it be the judges or those in charge of the judges, as the hon. Member for Ayr said, a vacuum exists between them and the rest of the community.

We urge the Minister to consider that seriously. Perhaps eventually he will be really radical and decide that there should be a judicial committee to appoint judges, which would involve lay people as well, so that the committee can be seen to be acting in the interests of the entire community.

8.37 pm

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): First, with regard to guidelines, I will ask the Law Officer, the Lord Advocate, to write to my hon. Friend the Member for Ayr (Mr. Gallie) and to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman). We have made it clear that we want more honesty in sentencing, that we intend to consult in due course before legislation is considered and that we wish sentences to approximate more closely to what the court passes.

As hon. Members will appreciate, the judiciary is independent of the Government. Those matters will be borne in mind. As I mentioned, it is a consolidation measure.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Sessional Order [*19 December*], That the Bill be not committed.—[*Dr. Liam Fox.*]

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question, That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put forthwith and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

Statute Law (Repeals) Bill *[Lords]*

Order for Second Reading read.

8.39 pm

The Solicitor-General (Sir Derek Spencer): I beg to move, That the Bill be read a Second time.

The Bill promotes the reform of statute law by the repeal, in accordance with the recommendations of the Law Commission and the Scottish Law Commission, of enactments that are no longer of practical utility. The Bill, which proposes the repeal of 223 whole Acts or orders and the removal of redundant provisions from 259 others, represents the culmination of much careful and detailed research and consultation by the two Law Commissions.

I am sure that the House will wish to join me in expressing appreciation to the commissions and to the draftsmen for this Bill and for all the important work that they undertake in preparing consolidation Bills.

8.40 pm

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): The Opposition are only too happy to join the Solicitor-General in thanking the Law Commission for its activities. This is a good time to consider the Law Commission and the importance of its role.

It is the House's responsibility to ensure that the logjam that has developed recently in relation to the Law Commission is cleared as quickly as possible. I had thought that the House would have an opportunity tonight to give effect to the important work that the Law Commission has sent to both Houses this Session. That was the hope of the Opposition and, I suspect, of many Conservative Members. Although we shall consider this Bill—one of several that we are to consider tonight—there is one other provision that we shall not consider today, although we had expected to.

When he introduced the Bill in the other place, the Lord Chancellor said that the Law Commission's functions consisted of

> "the repeal of obsolete and unnecessary enactments, the reduction of the number of separate enactments and generally the simplification and modernisation of the law".—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 20 April 1995; Vol. 563, c. 581.]

Measures brought to us by the Law Commission have traditionally been given by this House the careful consideration which they merit, having undergone detailed and specific consideration and extensive consultation in the other place. We are then normally able to give them as detailed a consideration as they merit, but not as detailed a consideration as they would normally receive. That is the understood mechanism for dealing with Law Commission reports. I had thought that that was understood and appreciated on both sides of the House.

I have no doubt that those sitting on the Treasury Bench tonight and, indeed, those sitting immediately behind the Treasury Bench, appreciate only too well the importance of the Law Commission's work. Because of the value of the commission's work, its significance, and the care and detail that it applies to the consideration of measures before they reach the other place or this House, we are tonight happy to join Conservative Members in welcoming the Bill. I suspect that we shall also welcome other measures during the evening. It is to be hoped that we shall welcome at least one other piece of legislation before the House rises for the recess.

8.45 pm

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): I follow the Solicitor-General in saying that tonight is one of the rare opportunities that the House has to pay tribute to the work of the Law Commission. I follow my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) in saying that there is still a logjam of consolidation measures and of the work that the Law Commission seeks to put through this House for the benefit of ordinary citizens. We are not talking merely about arcane legal work—many of the Law Commission's recommendations have a direct impact on ordinary citizens. That factor is all too often overlooked.

I should like to pay a well deserved tribute to the Law Commission for the diligence and quality of the work that it produces on our behalf. As the Solicitor-General has already said, the Bill will repeal 223 whole Acts or orders and remove individual redundant provisions from 259 others. It adds to the 1,600 whole Acts that have already been repealed in response to Law Commission reports. There is clearly a vast undergrowth of law that puzzles the ordinary citizen, which gives gainful employment to many lawyers, and which should be cut for the benefit of all our citizens.

Like earlier reports, the Law Commission's 15th report on statute law revision provides a fascinating glimpse of the old days. I shall not trawl through all the repeals, but I was intrigued by an Act of 1694, in the sixth and seventh year of the reign of William and Mary. It is described as

> "An Act for rebuilding the town of Warwick and for determining differences touching houses burnt or demolished by reason of the late dreadful fire there."

Many other examples give little vignettes on the history of the time.

The Law Commission clearly deserves our sincere tributes in respect of the work that it has done. Paragraph 1.9 of its sixth programme of law reforms states:

> "the Commission exists to make the law simpler, fairer, more modern and cheaper to use."

Who could be against that laudable aim?

Between September 1989 and April 1995, Parliament received 30 consolidation Bills prepared by the draughtsmen at the commission. The commission has also been involved in the preparation of many other Bills, including two Statute Law (Revision) Bills. We are told that the next such Bill is unlikely to be ready before 1998. Given the quality of the Law Commission's work and its relevance and importance, will the Solicitor-General confirm whether financial constraints are preventing it from continuing its work? It is important to pay tribute to the quality of the Law Commission's work generally.

On 14 June this year, I was fortunate enough to attend the celebrations held at Inner Temple hall to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Law Commission for England and Wales and the Scottish Law Commission. Mr. Justice Brooke, the commission chairman, reminded the gathering that, 15 months ago, he wrote in his introduction to the Law Commission's annual report:

> "The position is now serious. It is not of course cataclysmic. But history shows that a nation which neglects the ordinary care of its laws is neglecting something which is very important in its national well-being."

He went on to give six examples from unimplemented reports published between 1983 and 1985, which are a serious cause for concern. I shall not bore the House by setting out in extenso the six reports that Mr. Justice Brooke mentioned.

Mr. Boateng: There is no danger of my hon. Friend ever boring the House. I urge him to give us some examples from the reports. He need not set them out in extenso, but it would be helpful to have some examples of the sorts of report to which he correctly draws the House's attention.

Mr. Anderson: In response to those blandishments and invitations from my hon. Friend, I shall select three examples that I hope will prove to the House how the law impacts directly on the citizen and how the failure to implement law has an adverse effect on the rights of the citizen.

In 1987, a foreign bank obtained a judgment in London against an American bank for $300 million. The case bristled with difficult points of law, but the defendants simply could not afford to risk an appeal. Interest was running on the judgment at the English rate of 15 per cent. per year, whereas the United States rate was about 6 per cent. If the case had taken 18 months to reach the Court of Appeal, the difference in interest alone would have cost another $400,000. The Law Commission recommended reform in 1983, but the Bill only recently reached this place for the first time. One wonders how much more injustice occurred in the interval between the Law Commission's recommendation and the Bill's reaching the House.

My second example is perhaps more relevant to the ordinary citizen than to companies. Ronald and Hazel Rhone bought a cottage in Somerset in 1981. The roof of the house next door, from which it was divided, overhung their bedroom, but they had the benefit of a covenant from their neighbours stating that they and their successors in title would maintain the roof in wind and weather-tight condition. In the event, it was neglected and the cottage suffered as a result. The house had changed hands and, last year, the other place ruled that the couple could not enforce the covenant because such positive covenants do not run with the land.

In 1965, a committee chaired by Lord Wilberforce said that reform was needed urgently. In 1971, the Law Commission commented that the law in that area was

"illogical, uncertain, incomplete and inflexible".

In 1984, the Law Commission formally recommended that positive covenants should be replaced by a system of land obligations, but nothing has been done. How many more citizens have suffered injustice since 1984 as a result of what my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South described as the logjam in terms of the House dealing with important Law Commission reports?

The House will be pleased to learn that I shall limit myself to only one more example to illustrate my point. Three years ago, the other place castigated landlords who exercised their archaic legal right to re-enter premises without a court order. They called it a

"dubious and dangerous method of determining a lease".

In 1985, the Law Commission reported that the law of forfeiture of tenancies was unnecessarily complicated and no longer coherent. The commission said that its complication added to the costs incurred by people who were caught up in the working of the law. Since 1985 and that recommendation, the costs have grown even larger—to the detriment of the ordinary citizens involved. The law remains unchanged.

One could go on indefinitely giving examples of reports that remain unimplemented at great cost to the individual, but at great advantage to the lawyers who benefit. Parliament has chosen to ignore at least 30 other such reports. It is worse now because of the restrictions on legal aid that have resulted from the Government's cost-cutting measures. The funding for many law centres has been cut off or slashed, and legal costs have soared. That serves only to underline the case for making law as simple and as fair as possible.

In debates in 1965, when the Law Commission was established, a former Secretary of State for Scotland said that the amount of money spent by the ordinary citizen on lawyers to discover the nature of the present law was disgraceful. Those comments were made 30 years ago and the problem remains unsolved.

A great failing of the Law Commission is, perhaps, that it has lacked the skills of persuasion in respect of Parliament. It has failed to persuade Government and Parliament that something must be done, particularly in criminal law reform. As those who practise in criminal law know, it is crying out for consolidation and simplification. Mr. Justice Brooke told the celebratory gathering in July this year that he knows of 17 cases since he arrived at the commission in January 1993 in which the Court of Appeal has had to set aside convictions because the judge made a mistake when directing the jury on the law of self-defence. There have been 17 miscarriages of justice in this small area of criminal law alone, yet there is still no progress on it. I could go on giving examples, but I am sure that my point has been well understood.

There is a chink of light, however. At the same assembly in Inner Temple hall, Mr. Justice Brooke said that, had the event taken place two years before, it would have been not a celebration but a wake. That was because at last, in his judgment, Parliament appeared to have pushed the work of the Law Commission a little further up its agenda. Some of the frustrations at the logjam described by my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South have gone. Mr. Justice Brooke rejoiced—and we with him—that his appeal in the annual report of two years before had been heard, and that, between his appeal and the end of the Session, 14 Law Commission reports will have reached the statute book.

The Law Commission, as we know, is independent, based on an all-party consensus. By contrast, two strong Law Commissions, in Canada and the Australian state of Victoria, have been abolished by incoming Governments. There is no danger of that happening here.

When the Law Commissions Bill reached the other place in 1965, Lord Gardiner said that he regarded it as one of the most exciting things that a Government had ever done. Most of us would think that the Labour Government of 1964-70 probably did more exciting things than introducing that Bill. I am reminded of the definition of an actuary as someone who finds accountancy too exciting. Perhaps Lord Gardiner's definition of "exciting" was rather different from the person in the street's.

As the sixth programme of law reform clearly shows, the work of simplification, modernisation and codification continues. That work certainly impacts positively on the

[Mr. Anderson]

ordinary citizen, but the constant refrain of the report is that everything will be done "resources permitting". I hope that the Government will respond positively to the Law Commission's case for staff continuity and will provide the resources to enable it to continue its most valuable work.

9.1 pm

Mr. Andrew Mackinlay (Thurrock): I too congratulate the Law Commission and its staff on their skilful work to produce this report. It is one of considerable detail and, therefore, it is fallible. I believe that it contains some errors. I tried to point them out to the Joint Committee of which I am a member. Despite what has been said by some of the legal brethren in the House, I do not think the system is especially good. I was clearly not welcome at the Joint Committee—

Mr. Donald Anderson: Troublemaker!

Mr. Mackinlay: I did not mean to be—

Mr. Anderson: I would never describe my hon. Friend as a troublemaker. I was suggesting that some less enlightened souls might consider him one.

Mr. Mackinlay: Anyway, I went along to do my duty by this House, in the belief that there was an error in one aspect of the report; but I could not escape the feeling that it was considered a cheek that someone who was not a lawyer should question the judgment of the Law Commission and of some noble and learned peers. I queried the definition of the statutes or parts of statutes that should be the subject of repeal: where the legislation is spent, obsolete, unnecessary or otherwise not now of practical utility.

I checked with the Clerks of the House before I went to the Joint Committee to find out what my duties and rights were. I was told that I could move amendments to the Bill, so I did and put forward the fact that the Abdication Act 1936 should be repealed. Their Lordships immediately raised their eyebrows, but if one applies the test of whether an Act is spent, obsolete, unnecessary or otherwise not now a practical utility, the Abdication Act 1936 neatly falls into that category.

There are two reasons why their Lordships did not accept my suggestion: first, it was coming from an "oik" and, secondly, it had not gone through all their machinery. They could not accept that somebody other than them could make a sensible suggestion about deleting some clutter from the statute book. There is probably a third reason: that there are some things that the establishment—particularly here—just do not like tampering with. They think that sensitive issues such as the Abdication Act, although spent and obsolete, raise matters into which they do not want to trespass; my suggestion was therefore rejected.

I particularly drew their Lordships' attention—and I do so here this evening—to what is contained in part II of schedule 1 to the Bill, which will repeal some words from the Regency Act 1937. I detain the House on this matter because I think that there is an important point of principle here. It is my view that some Acts of Parliament are not the sole property of this Parliament. They are what I would call constitutional Acts—those that relate to the Head of State and the matter of succession. They are the property not only of this legislature but of some 15 or 16 legislatures in the world where Her Majesty the Queen is Head of State.

We must pause and think whether it is a matter of constitutional propriety that we should make that amendment, because the Regency Act was passed in accordance with the provisions of the Statute of Westminster 1931, so it can be repealed or amended only in accordance with the provisions of that statute.

What was the Statute of Westminster? It said that the dominions, which in 1931 were Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the Irish free state, are totally free and independent and that Westminster can pass legislation for them only at their request. It went on to say:

> "any alteration in the law touching the Succession to the Throne or the Royal Style and Titles shall hereafter require the assent as well of the Parliaments of all the Dominions as of the Parliament of the United Kingdom".

It seems to me that any amendment to the Regency Act, no matter how small, is subject to that part of the Statute of Westminster that says that it cannot be altered—there is an impediment to its alteration or repeal—unless it is done with the assent of the Parliaments of the dominions. *[Interruption.]*

I shall give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng), as he is muttering.

Mr. Boateng: I am not sure that "muttering" is fair. I was thinking to myself in a sedentary position and articulating the thoughts as they came into my head. I would not describe that as a mutter.

My hon. Friend was making an interesting point, and I wonder whether he would share with the House whether he has raised the matter with the Clerks? It is something on which they may well have a view.

Mr. Mackinlay: I meant no discourtesy to my hon. Friend, but I must also come back to him with a retort and say, "Of course I did." Of course I raised it with the Clerks. I raised it with them extensively. Indeed, I would not have been able to persuade the Chairman of Ways and Means to contemplate calling some of my amendments in Committee later tonight if there was no credibility in what I have to say. So I passed the hurdle—if it was one—of discussing it with the Clerks.

Anybody who looks at the matter dispassionately will find that, although the hon. Member for Thurrock has no legal qualifications, he has a point—and, if he has a point, people should tread with caution. Given the ramifications, if this place ignores what I consider to be matters of constitutional propriety in relation to the dominions—of which there are some 16—there could be profound consequences.

Let us consider two hypotheses. First, let us suppose that Her Majesty the Queen wished at some stage to abdicate, retire or relinquish her main duties, and to hand over to a regent. Secondly, let us suppose that the Prince of Wales divorced and wished to marry again. Legislation would be needed in the House of Commons, and in every other legislature where the Queen is Head of State. That is why we cannot trespass regardless into the Regency Act: the matter must be dealt with simultaneously in the other legislatures.

On 27 April, I asked the Under-Secretary whether, if we were contemplating repealing or amending the Regency Act, other dominions would be consulted in accordance with the Statute of Westminster. He replied that they would. Subsequently—I rather regret this—I asked a further question relating directly to the Statute Law (Repeals) Bill, drawing attention to the fact that the regency legislation was to be amended. The Under-Secretary then replied, "I am advised that it is not necessary."

Mr. Donald Anderson: Was that a distinction between something that was necessary as a result of a statutory obligation, and something that was courteous and proper as a result of a convention?

Mr. Mackinlay: My own view is that there is an obligation on us to consult the dominions. Under the Statute of Westminster, they have a right to say, "We would like Westminster to enact the legislation on our behalf"; but things have moved on since 1931. Canada, for example, has had its constitution repatriated. Canada would now encounter an impediment in asking Westminster to legislate for it, even if it wished to do so, but it should nevertheless be advised of the need to amend the Regency Act and make it part of its own constitutional legislation in Ottawa.

From what I can make out from parliamentary answers, Her Majesty's Government did not extend that courtesy, but they should have. I consider this a dangerous precedent. While the repeal amendment may be pretty obscure and, in an overall context, unimportant, it is not unimportant in terms of constitutional principles and proprieties. It illustrates the fact that we need a present-day equivalent of the imperial or dominion conferences of 1926 and 1930, which were precursors of the introduction of the Statute of Westminster, to clarify how we should deal with amendments to regency legislation and legislation relating to succession, and so forth.

I asked the then Foreign Office Minister, the hon. Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry), which of the dominions to which we had granted independence had in their constitutions provision for the application of section 4 of the Statute of Westminster. He replied:

> "This information cannot be obtained at a reasonable cost."—[*Official Report*, 28 October 1994; Vol. 248, c. *873*.]

I find that astonishing and dangerous; but it probably also explains why the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department changed his mind in the time between two parliamentary questions. One parliamentary answer said, "Yes, of course we will consult about the changes to the Regency Act legislation." A few days later, when I pointed out that an amendment was being proposed in the form of the Bill that we are discussing, he changed his mind and said, "I am advised that it is not necessary."

Mr. Boateng: My hon. Friend should not be surprised when the Minister changes his mind on a matter because of amendments. The Minister seems increasingly prone to do that and I doubt whether my hon. Friend was surprised by the Minister's response to his amendment, was he?

Mr. Mackinlay: That Minister is one of the nice people in the House and has always treated me very courteously. However, I was disappointed because I had hoped that he would see that there was a matter on which he should caution the Lord Chancellor and other Ministers—that this part of the Bill ought to be amended because it trespasses on the sensitive area of interfering with the law of the dominions, because the Regency Act 1937 is part of their law.

Mr. Donald Anderson: I am puzzled, but not surprised, by the response that it would require a disproportionate charge to public funds to find what is, after all, a relatively simple answer to a simple question. One knows how many dominions there are and any reasonable Commonwealth constitutional lawyer could speedily ascertain from the relevant textbooks the answer to my hon. Friend's question.

Mr. Mackinlay: I cannot help feeling that somebody advised the Under-Secretary not to take too much trouble on the matter because, "The hon. Member for Thurrock will not be taken seriously." If people do not take this matter seriously, sooner or later there will be acute embarrassment. That will arise either because of circumstances relating to Her Majesty the Queen or the Prince of Wales, or when there is a need for new regency legislation, and this place stumbles across the fact that there is no real mechanism for consulting the Governments of the dominions of which the Queen is Head of State and those Parliaments simultaneously enacting the necessary legislation.

I can live with the arrogance that has been demonstrated against me by the Government and by some very distinguished Law Lords, but sooner or later the crunch will come. When it does, I shall not hesitate to remind the House that I told it so. First, there is a need for this matter to be taken out of the Bill. Secondly, during the Commonwealth Prime Ministers conference this week, the Prime Minister should at least initiate some side discussions with the Prime Ministers of those countries of which the Queen is Head of State and talk about the need for a conference to find a mechanism to deal with Acts that transcend national boundaries and are not peculiar to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland but relate to other countries too.

Mr. Anderson *rose*—

Mr. Mackinlay: I shall give way for the last time, because I am trying to concentrate and it takes great skill to do that on these issues.

Mr. Anderson: As I recall it, the Bill came before the House in July and was suddenly removed without explanation by the Government. Was my hon. Friend told whether that was in response to the interesting point that he had raised to which it appears the Government had no answer at that time?

Mr. Mackinlay: That matter was on my original notes, but I deleted it. Earlier today, Madam Speaker spoke about the courtesies of the House. In July, I came prepared to make the speech that I am now delivering and tabled amendments. Without any explanation from the Minister or his parliamentary private secretary, the matter was "pulled"—I think that is the term. In any event, it did not proceed. I thought that that was rather bad form by gentlemen, but I have to live with that.

It should not have happened, particularly when I was asked today through certain channels whether I intended to press my amendments to a vote. That seems one-sided. People want me to extend some courtesies, but courtesy was not extended to me in July. That, however, is a matter

[Mr. Mackinlay]

of history. I just want to reiterate that, sooner or later, unless the Government take this matter up with some vigour with the other Governments, it will return to haunt the House.

The proposal in the Bill's schedule is that the words "the Government of India" should be deleted. The argument is that that is clearly inappropriate as India is a republic. I accept that, but the subject of the dominions must be considered. In essence, one could argue that the Regency Act is obsolete because it would be difficult to implement. If and when it needed to be implemented, because the monarch either had died or could no longer fulfil the duties of his or her office, there would be enormous problems in securing clearance of the dominions. The matter needs to be reconsidered. It is not therefore merely a question of words relating to India, which is now a republic; we must recognise that the Act is obsolete in relation to the dominions as well.

On that note, I hope that the Solicitor-General will reflect that the Government need to reconsider the matter and support the withdrawal of this part of the Bill.

9.20 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): First, I seek your guidance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Am I allowed to speak on a subject other than the amendments?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael Morris): We are on Second Reading, so the answer is yes, but hon. Members must speak on the Bill before us.

Dr. Godman: With you in the Chair, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would not do anything other than that.

I am concerned about certain parts of the Bill. My concerns are so serious that, unless I receive certain assurances from the Solicitor-General, I am prepared to divide the House. The introduction to the Bill claims that it is an

> "Act to promote the reform of the statute law by the repeal, in accordance with recommendations of the Law Commission and the Scottish Law Commission, of certain enactments which . . . are no longer of practical utility".

I am not here to talk about the English Law Commission; I wish to question certain recommendations of the Scottish Law Commission.

May I refer the hon. and learned Gentleman to schedule 1, page 32? It mentions the repeal of the Herring Fisheries (Scotland) Acts 1821 to 1890. I am concerned about their repeal. Hon. Members may think that they are ancient and have no relevance today, but that is not the case. My argument—I am seeking guidance from the Government's Law Officers—is that those Acts strengthen the provisions of the Fisheries Act 1705, popularly known to Scottish fishermen as the Queen Anne Act.

The Queen Anne Act, which was passed in Edinburgh in May 1705, is still in being. I think that I am right in saying that, in relation to the interests of our inshore fishermen, it was strengthened by the Herring Fisheries (Scotland) Acts. That is my concern. Do not some of those Acts strengthen the Queen Anne Act in certain regards?

The Queen Anne Act allows our fishermen to use our harbours for the landing of fish, the mooring of fishing vessels, the laying out of nets and other gear on the quayside and the mending of gear and pots. It might be thought that that is a trivial matter, but I speak as an honorary president of the Clyde Fishermen's Association, and I can assure the House that every one of our members knows about the Queen Anne Act. I used it recently against the Scottish Development Agency and Renfrewshire Enterprise, which sought to drive some of our fishermen members out of the East India harbour in Greenock.

I am not sure whether the Solicitor-General knows that the 1705 Act was incorporated in the Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act 1984. I remind the hon. and learned Gentleman that it was felt at the time that the Herring Fisheries (Scotland) Acts passed so long ago in the 19th century could stand on their own in relation to the Queen Anne Act.

With my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson), I played a small part in that initiative, and the Scottish Fisheries Minister who so graciously accepted our amendment so that the Queen Anne Act continued in being was the then Mr. John Mackay, who these days is a Minister in another place. He recognised the importance not only of the Queen Anne Act but of the Herring Fisheries (Scotland) Acts of 1821 to 1890.

I ask the Solicitor-General whether I am right in my assumption that the Herring Fisheries (Scotland) Acts strengthen the protection that was given to fishermen 120 years earlier, just before the Union took place in 1707. Are those Acts being repealed because he and his colleagues believe that they are in contravention of European Union fisheries laws? Do Ministers believe that the Acts—despite what the Scottish Law Commission may have recommended, they give our fishermen some protection—conflict with regulations brought into being by the EU common fisheries policy? Are the Government heading off a possible dispute with the European Court of Justice?

Can the hon. and learned Gentleman give me his word that the repeal of the herring fisheries Acts will not harm in any way the interests of our inshore fishermen? I remind him about the six-mile limit to our territorial waters. Indeed, the Government Whip, the hon. Member for West Derbyshire (Mr. McLoughlin), is quite an expert on such matters, and if he had not taken a vow of silence, he could probably come to the Dispatch Box and give me the assurance I seek—that, by and large, within that six miles we are still in control of our fisheries and fishing grounds, and that it is in general those inshore waters to which the herring fisheries Acts applied and, I believe, still apply as we approach the end of the 20th century.

I make no apology for detaining the House, because such matters are of concern to our fishermen in Scotland. As I said earlier, somewhat immodestly, the Queen Anne Act was used against the Scottish Development Agency, and then Renfrewshire Enterprise, when an attempt was made to drive our fishermen out of the East India harbour.

When I told the Scottish Development Agency's lawyers that it could not throw fishermen out of our harbours, they confessed that they knew nothing of the Queen Anne Act. I seek an assurance from the Minister that in throwing out the Acts we shall not harm our fishermen in any way. That is particularly the case in respect of the development of our harbours in the interests of those who would promote the tourist industry over and above the interests of our fishermen and their families.

I am looking for an assurance that the Scottish Law Commission consulted widely, and by that I mean with the fishing communities. I also want to know whether the Solicitor-General—as there is no Scottish Office Minister here—is of the considered opinion that our fishermen will not be harmed in any way by the repeal of the Acts. If he cannot give me that assurance or promise he that he will investigate my concerns, I am prepared to divide this House.

9.30 pm

The Solicitor-General: I shall deal first with the point exercising the mind of the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman). I think that I can reassure him about the workings of the Bill in relation to the Herring Fisheries (Scotland) Acts 1821 to 1890: only the collective short title of the Acts is repealed by the Bill. The contents of the Acts were repealed between 1934 and 1984. The one exception is the White Herring Fisheries Act 1771, which the Bill does not touch.

Accordingly, the Joint Committee in another place reported that the enactments proposed to be repealed under the Bill were no longer of practical utility, and approved their repeal. I hope that, with those words, I have set the hon. Gentleman's mind fair with regard to the White Herring Fisheries Act.

Dr. Godman: Will the Solicitor-General assure me that the Government have no intention of repealing the Fisheries Act 1705?

The Solicitor-General: The hon. Gentleman is no doubt aware that we are in the Hallowe'en season, and that we are fast approaching Christmas, but I have not just fallen off a Christmas tree. I have no intention of giving any such undertaking, which will not surprise him.

I wish to answer the point made by the hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng), who asserted that there was a "logjam" in law reform and in the enactment of statute law repeal Bills. I am pleased that we will be able to rely in future on the full-hearted support of the Opposition both in this House and in another place in regard to law reform and the related matter of statute law repeal. But we must distinguish between them, as they are not the same. Every Act proposed for repeal—this Bill proposes to repeal many—needs detailed research, and those undertaking that work constitute only a few of the Law Commission's staff.

There is no financial constraint. It is quite simply that research takes time, even with modern methods, computers and extensive databases. The commission must give equal priority to law reform measures, and these take up the greater part of manpower resources. Mr. Justice Brooke is to be congratulated on the energy with which he performs his duties as chairman of the Law Commission.

I have carefully considered what the hon. Member for Thurrock (Mr. Mackinlay) said and have carefully read the exchanges in the Joint Committee between him and the parliamentary draftsman about this and related issues. Having given the matter my best consideration, it is my concluded view that he has, albeit inadvertently, fallen into error in his interpretation of the Statute of Westminster 1931.

If the hon. Member for Thurrock would care to elaborate the arguments contained in his amendments, I will attempt to do them full justice. In summary, for the present I limit myself to saying that the Statute of Westminster requires the assent of the Parliaments of the dominions to any alteration in the law touching the succession to the throne—I emphasise, the succession to the throne.

The Regency Act 1937 does not have that effect. It merely erects a mechanism in case the sovereign is incapacitated. That is why, in substance, the Statute of Westminster requirements do not bite on the provisions of the 1937 Act.

Mr. Mackinlay: The Regency Act 1937 was enacted in accordance with the provisions of the Statute of Westminster. From what I can ascertain, the dominions were consulted on that occasion, which buttresses my argument that its amendment or repeal would have to be conducted in accordance with the same procedure or procedures that have come into being subsequently—for example, Canada now has a repatriated constitution.

In any event, there is also the question of common courtesy. The Government should have shown courtesy to the other 15 or 16 dominions by saying that we were contemplating making this marginal amendment and asking whether they had any objections or whether there was any impediment. That was not done, which was discourteous, but I think that it was also necessary because the 1937 Act was enacted in accordance with the Statute of Westminster.

The Solicitor-General: I fear that the hon. Gentleman is incorrect. When the then Home Secretary, Sir John Simon, moved the Regency Bill in this House, he made its function clear. He was explicit in explaining how it affected only the sovereign in the circumstances that I outlined. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that there is no constitutional impediment and no discourtesy in regard to the proposed repeal. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Home Office have been consulted. No one else ought to have been consulted, either in law or in courtesy. I must repeat that, in suggesting otherwise, the hon. Gentleman is in error.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills), That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House.—[*Mr. McLoughlin.*]

Question agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Schedule 1

REPEALS

9.36 pm

Mr. Mackinlay: I beg to move amendment No. 2, in schedule 1, page 27, leave out lines 26 to 28.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss amendment No. 3, in schedule 1, page 27, line 27, column 3, at beginning insert

'and communicated to the Governments of Her Majesty's Dominions'.

Mr. Mackinlay: I will not detain the Committee unduly, because I have referred to much of what I wanted

[Mr. Mackinlay]

to say on Second Reading. Nevertheless, I think that we are in danger of committing a serious error by including this repeal in the schedule. It would be appropriate, in accordance with amendment No. 2, to leave the Regency Act 1937 as it is. The Solicitor-General should raise with the Prime Minister the need for some review of legislation such as the Regency Act with other countries' Prime Ministers.

If we trespass in making this repeal tonight, we will offend the constitutional position of several countries. It will certainly have political ramifications, because we will be rather arrogantly altering a law that forms part of their constitutions. The danger is that, at some stage, we will find that we are in great difficulty having crossed this line. I hope, therefore, that the House will be persuaded to change the Bill in accordance with my amendment. Constitutionalists in Canberra, for instance, may discover that it was wrong for us to have so acted.

In any event, I hope that if our proceedings are reflected upon elsewhere, others might say that we need to reconsider the regency legislation. I disagree with the Solicitor-General: the Regency Act does relate to the succession. He has put a narrow and wrong construction on it—in my view it is squarely part of the obligation provided for under the Statute of Westminster—which clearly states that such action must be taken with the dominions acting together.

The Regency Act needs to be reconsidered, because, if ever we did need such a provision, there would be political consequences in other Parliaments, especially in Canberra. Some would take a leaf out of the book of the Prime Minister of the Irish Free State, who used the succession crisis in 1936 to abolish the post of governor general and create the presidency of the Irish Free State. The point that I made on Second Reading is valid: if the matter is treated with disdain and not addressed, it could have consequences in future.

The Solicitor-General: I invite the House to reject the amendment, if the hon. Member for Thurrock (Mr. Mackinlay) persists with it.

He is quite wrong to suggest that the Bill has any effect on the constitution of any other country. It says quite explicitly that it affects only the law of the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man. I repeat that it will not have any effect on the law of any other country.

Out of deference to and respect for the arguments advanced by the hon. Member for Thurrock, who has obviously spent a good deal of time researching the matter, let me go into a little more detail, starting with the Regency Act 1937.

Section 2 of that Act made provision for a regency in the event of the total incapacity of the sovereign. Subsection(2) states that a declaration of the sovereign's incapacity under section 2(1)

> "shall be made to the Privy Council and communicated to the Governments of His Majesty's Dominions and to the Government of India".

The Law Commission has recommended the repeal of the reference to the Government of India. That is not surprising given that such a reference has been obsolete since the enactment of the Indian Independence Act 1947. That is obvious, as India and Pakistan became republics in 1950 and 1956 respectively. Many such obsolete references in pre-independence legislation were repealed by the Statute Law (Repeals) Act 1976. It is only because of an oversight that those words remain on the statute book to this day. Had they been spotted, they would have been removed in 1976 and the hon. Gentleman would have been spared the endeavours in which he has obviously been engaged over the past few months.

9.45 pm

The hon. Gentleman's objection to this repeal seems to be based on his assertion that the provision relating to the Government of India cannot be repealed without consulting other Commonwealth countries in accordance with the Statute of Westminster 1931. As I have tried to explain, that is not the case. The Statute of Westminster requires the assent of the Parliaments of the dominions to any alteration in the law that touches the succession to the throne. I stress the words, "succession to the throne".

However, during the passage of the Regency Bill, it was made clear in Parliament by the then Home Secretary, Sir John Simon, that the Bill did not have that effect. It was merely a mechanism to enable the Crown to continue to operate when there was some impairment of the sovereign's health. So it did not require such assent prior to enactment, and it follows that no such assent is now required to repeal the Act or any part of it.

This Bill will have effect only on the law of the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man. It will have no effect on the law of any other country. For those reasons, I consider it appropriate that the obsolete reference to the Government of India in section 2(2) of the Regency Act should be repealed, as recommended by the Law Commission.

The Government also oppose amendment No. 3, which would have the effect of introducing additional repeals. As its long title makes perfectly clear, the Bill is based solely on the recommendations of the Law Commission and the Scottish Law Commission. The commissions have made no recommendations for the repeal of any part of the Regency Act, other than the reference to the Government of India in section 2(2). No evidence has been brought to the attention of the commissions or the Government that other aspects of the legislation are of no practical utility. In those circumstances, it will be wholly wrong for additional repeals to be inserted without further careful research and without the support of the Joint Committee.

I invite the hon. Gentleman to consider this matter further and, if he is now satisfied, to withdraw the amendment.

Mr. Mackinlay: I have reflected carefully on the Solicitor-General's comments, and I am grateful for his detailed explanation. Clearly, I have had an opportunity to give this matter an airing on Second Reading and in Committee, so I do not wish to press it to a vote. I hope that the Government will consider the wider implications of the matters I have broached in Committee and on Second Reading. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule 1 agreed to.

Schedule 2 agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Law Reform (Succession) Bill *[Lords]*

Not amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Order for Third Reading read.—[Queen's and Prince of Wales's consent signified].

9.51 pm

The Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department (Mr. John M. Taylor): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

The Bill represents a useful and uncontroversial measure of law reform. I should like to thank the Law Commission for the careful work which it has put into the preparation of reports on which the Bill is based. I commend the Bill to the House.

9.51 pm

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): This is a welcome, long overdue, modest reform. The Law Commission is to be congratulated.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

Private International Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill *[Lords]*

Not amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Order for Third Reading read.

9.52 pm

The Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department (Mr. John M. Taylor): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

I am sure that, once again, the House would wish to join me in thanking the law commissions—I must be careful to put that in the plural—for their careful and thorough work.

9.52 pm

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): This is a measure that has received careful and detailed consideration in another place and, albeit of necessity, less detailed but nevertheless careful consideration in Committee in this House.

We have had a number of concerns, not least in relation to the impact of the legislation on the freedom of expression. We have also quite properly made known our concern to ensure that the Bill does not in any way enable the impact of foreign jurisdictions and foreign law to inhibit such freedoms in this country. We are satisfied that the Bill in its current form has met those objections. We thank the Law Commission for the work it has done, and we are grateful for the detailed consideration given to the Bill in another place. We give the Bill a fair wind tonight.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

Civil Evidence Bill *[Lords]*

Not amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Order for Third Reading read.

9.53 pm

The Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department (Mr. John M. Taylor): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

For the third time tonight I should like to express our gratitude to the Law Commission for its contribution to law reform and to all those who have helped the smooth passage of the Bill.

The Bill abolishes the rule against the admissibility of hearsay evidence in civil proceedings in England and Wales. It will make the law easier to understand and to apply. I commend it to the House.

9.54 pm

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): We join the Minister in thanking the Law Commission. However, the best way to demonstrate our thanks to that august body would be to complete in its entirety the programme of work that it proposed, which we have considered during the present Session. I very much hope that we shall do that before the end of the Session.

If we do so, the Minister's words may have a slightly less hollow ring than they currently have—not as a result, I must add, of anything that he has said or done. If only the actions of some other hon. Members who are sitting behind him were not such as to give his words the rather hollow echo that they have tonight.

I do not refer to the hon. Member for Hexham (Mr. Atkinson), who is sitting behind the Minister, but, as is often the case, to those faceless, nameless ones whose visage and name feature only too clearly in the minds, not least the silent ones who sit on the Treasury Bench. We know who they are, and we will have no hesitation in naming them in the fulness of time. Now is not the time to do that; now is the time to wish the measure well. It is long overdue.

We welcome the review of the hearsay rules as they affect civil evidence. A similar review is necessary in relation to the way in which they affect criminal evidence, and we look forward to the time when that task has been completed and we are able to take through the House measures aimed in that direction. The court should be concerned primarily with being a forum in which the truth is able to speak for itself. The abolition of the hearsay rule in relation to civil evidence makes that more likely to be the case than it was hitherto.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

DEREGULATION

Ordered,

That Mr. Anthony Coombs be discharged from the Deregulation Committee and Mr. David Martin be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. McLoughlin.]*

PROCEDURE

Ordered,

That Andrew MacKay be discharged from the Select Committee on Procedure and Mr. Piers Merchant be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. McLoughlin.]*

UNESCO

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. McLoughlin.]*

9.56 pm

Mr. Mike Gapes (Ilford, South): Last week, the Prime Minister was in New York, participating in the 50th anniversary celebration of the founding of the United Nations. The United Kingdom was a founder member of the UN, and the Labour Government, building on the work of the wartime coalition, played a key role in its establishment on 24 October 1945. The Prime Minister was able to speak to the United Nations General Assembly on 23 October 1995.

In two weeks' time, on 16 November, there will take place in Paris the 50th anniversary celebrations of another important international organisation—the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation—yet, as things stand, no British Minister will attend or speak, as our Government will be absent as a member of that 184-state forum, only sending officials along to observe.

That is especially saddening, because the United Kingdom played the leading role in founding UNESCO, which was established as a result of a British initiative taken in 1942, during the war. UNESCO was established and its constitution deposited in London, where its headquarters was initially based, and its first director-general and its assistant director-general for science were British.

The principle aim of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture, in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law, and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms that are affirmed in the charter of the United Nations.

For many years, UNESCO did very good work, with Britain having a dominating influence in every aspect—professional or otherwise. However, there were growing criticisms, which led, in 1984, at the height of the cold war, to the withdrawal of the United States, followed, one year later, by a similar decision by our Government.

The following reasons were given at the time: the Government thought that the so-called new world information and communication order was a potential threat to the freedom of the media; the concept of people's rights was controversial and was thought to challenge the universal declaration of human rights; there was thought to be some threat to freedom of transnational corporations to operate; there was thought to be duplication of the work of some other UN agencies.

It being Ten o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Knapman.]*

Mr. Gapes: There was thought to be some lack of control over budgets, and much inefficiency in the administrative structures within UNESCO at that time. The organisation was also criticised for having too many people based at its headquarters and too few out in the field.

The Select Committee on Foreign Affairs considered the withdrawal from UNESCO in 1985. It came to the conclusion, shared by the Conservative majority on the Select Committee—since 1979, all Select Committees on Foreign Affairs have had a Conservative majority—that withdrawal from UNESCO would be prejudicial to Britain's interests in science, culture and education, was likely to damage Britain's relations with the Commonwealth and the third world, and could have unhappy consequences for Britain's relationship with the United Nations as a whole.

In 1990, following the experience of Britain being outside UNESCO for five years, the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs returned to the issue. It concluded that, because of its absence from UNESCO, Britain was failing to participate in important international initiatives in the fields of education, science and culture as fully as it might. Its report stated:

> "never has the need for such initiatives been greater, as political events in Europe, and all over the world, create a demand . . . which UNESCO is well designed to satisfy."

The Committee praised the work of the new director-general, Frederico Mayor, who had been elected in November 1987, and said that he was addressing those parts of the programmes to which the British Government had objected. It said that his proposals for structural reform held much promise. The Committee concluded in 1990 that, assuming those proposals were satisfactorily implemented,

> "we see no reason why the UK should not rejoin UNESCO in a year's time."

The Government rejected the Select Committee's recommendations, and said:

> "We will continue to monitor developments in UNESCO closely and look forward to the day when we can join a reformed organisation."

The Select Committee returned to the issue again in 1993 when it stated:

> "The British Government's objections to UNESCO's policies have been overcome. The only serious criticism of UNESCO still outstanding is the complaint that the organisation's expenditure and personnel are still concentrated at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris rather than being devolved to the field in those countries where UNESCO is working."

The then Minister of State, the right hon. and learned Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg), who has now moved on to agricultural matters, said in his evidence to the Select Committee, that "the objections" to rejoining UNESCO were "financial". The Committee report concluded:

> "The debate about UNESCO's policy, budgetary and management problems has been settled, broadly in the organisation's favour. Although further decentralisation is needed, we recommend that the United Kingdom should now seek to rejoin UNESCO".

Since the Government took us out of UNESCO in 1985, three Foreign Affairs Select Committees have considered the issue in detail and have recommended that we should rejoin. Despite their concerns, the Government have kept Britain out. Why? The main official reason is that "the objections are financial". The Foreign Affairs Committee was told that the cost of rejoining would have to be met from the existing Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Overseas Development Administration budget. But is that necessarily true?

The 1993 Select Committee report pointed out:

> "We do not commend the Government's approach to UNESCO as an inevitable competitor with the ODA for a share of a limited budget. UNESCO's remit is by no means simply that of a channel for development aid: UNESCO's constitution describes the organisation's role as promoting international collaboration through

[Mr. Gapes]

education, science and culture to encourage universal respect for justice, the rule of law and the fundamental human rights and freedoms as affirmed in the UN Charter. Its work, in both developed and developing countries, includes the promotion of the free flow of ideas through the means of mass communication, advancing educational opportunities, conserving the world's cultural inheritance and encouraging co-operation in all branches of intellectual activity".

The £10 million to £11 million subscription fee for rejoining UNESCO is a gross figure. It does not take account of income that could come to this country to partly, or perhaps wholly, offset that sum. It is a modest figure in relation to the total dues that we pay for membership of international organisations. The United Kingdom has always gained at least as much from UNESCO as we put into it. If we calculated our gains on purely selfish, material grounds, there is a strong case for rejoining UNESCO now. However, I submit that we should look at it in the wider context of what we lose by remaining outside UNESCO, and what we would gain by rejoining it.

If the cost of rejoining were £11 million, that would represent 0.31 per cent. of the total Foreign and Commonwealth Office-ODA budget. The Foreign Affairs Committee pointed out in 1993:

"only a third of the estimated cost would have to be found from new sources".

That was because we were funding some UNESCO activities, even though we were outside the organisation. In 1991, the Select Committee was told that United Kingdom and United Kingdom-related receipts from UNESCO totalled £9.5 million. In 1994, such receipts amounted to twice the sum paid by the United Kingdom as its assessed contribution.

The £11 million subscription is a gross figure, and payments to United Kingdom nationals employed by UNESCO, whether in Paris or in the field, were not taken into consideration. Rejoining UNESCO would allow an increased participation by United Kingdom nationals in the organisation's staff. Like other international organisations, UNESCO employs United Kingdom staff. However, since we left UNESCO, it has not recruited new British staff to fill vacant positions. Consequently, the United Kingdom component of UNESCO's staff, which used to be disproportionately large, has been declining year by year. The result is that British influence, Britain's contribution, and Britain's abilities and skills in this important international organisation are increasingly absent.

We are now far less able to influence the outcome of decisions taken by UNESCO, and our diplomatic influence has been correspondingly reduced. I must emphasise that UNESCO is not an aid programme, and the costs of membership should not come solely from the aid budget. Other departmental budgets, including those governing educational, cultural and scientific expenditure, should also be taken into consideration.

In 1993, the then Minister of State told the Foreign Affairs Select Committee:

"Of course we can join, we can go back in tomorrow, but in order to do that we have to find"

the money,

"because we are not going to get any new money".

More recently, however, the argument seems to have shifted away from cost. The Under-Secretary of State informed the House in an answer dated 22 May 1995 that the Government's objections had widened. There had been some progress, he said, with regard to bureaucracy, overspending, mismanagement, inefficiency and political bias, but not enough. It would seem, therefore, that, since the Select Committee's report of 1993, the Government have moved away from their previous financial objection, and seem now to be taking a more hard-line position.

Could this have something to do with the fact that, in 1993, it appeared that the United States, under President Clinton and with a Democrat-dominated Congress, was about to rejoin UNESCO; but that now, with a Republican Congress, the Americans have started to get cold feet? For the Government, the logic of and justification for rejoining does not seem to be quite as apparent as it was then.

The Government official line is that the matter is still under review, but the fact is that there has been no Government review of the workings of UNESCO in the past decade. The only organisation to have carried out such a review is the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, which has three times recommended that we rejoin.

As for the latest developments, I have already mentioned the Prime Minister's speech to the United Nations. In it he said that there were some bodies that we should scrap—without specifying which. Significantly, the *Financial Times* and *The Times* of 24 October, in almost identically worded reports, said that British officials

"have made it clear that agencies such as UNCTAD, the UN trade agency, UNIDO, the industrial development organisation, UNESCO, the scientific and cultural organisation, as well as the five regional economic commissions should be part of any review".

Does that mean that the Government's position has hardened even more? Instead of just saying that £11 million has to be found, suddenly the Government are assaulting the entire organisation in an attempt to destroy its very existence. I should be grateful if the Minister reassured us tonight that the Prime Minister's speech at the UN did not envisage an attack on UNESCO, and that the unnamed British officials either do not exist or were plain wrong. I would welcome a reassurance that the Government are still committed to rejoining UNESCO when they can find the £11 million.

To paraphrase the Prime Minister at the United Nations, we need frank and honest answers now. The world needs UNESCO.

I conclude by drawing the attention of the House to a speech made in the other place by the noble Lord Howe, on 22 March this year. He said:

"It was, of course, during my time as Foreign Secretary that Her Majesty's Government decided to withdraw support from that organisation . . . But it was never intended to be a permanent step. The objective was to secure specific and essential changes in the management of that organisation. There was a clear implication that if those changes were achieved, our membership would be renewed."

He goes on the say that he wrote to the Prime Minister on 12 October 1993, and pointed out:

"The merits of the case have already been substantially conceded . . . Certainly ,I think it would be difficult to resist re-entry to U.N.E.S.C.O. for longer than two years from now. The United Nations organisation celebrates in Golden Jubilee in 1995 and U.N.E.S.C.O. would surely be an unstoppable bidder by then?"

He concludes:

> "Therefore I ask with due diffidence: why have we not yet re-joined? I hesitate to conclude that Her Majesty's Government are still unable, 18 months later, to find the £11 million or so necessary. I hesitate to recall that when I was making my first budget I learnt to my astonishment that the estimated size of the PSBR was rounded to the nearest £¼ billion. I am still more reluctant to conclude that Her Majesty's Government are unwilling to take the necessary decision."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 22 March 1995; Vol. 562, c. 1231.]

It is an inescapable conclusion that, under the leadership of its director-general, Federico Mayor, UNESCO has satisfactorily addressed all the problems that led the UK to withdraw. It is doing valuable international work. It is praised by many international organisations and organisations in this country. For example, I have a letter from the Royal Society of Chemistry, pointing out the importance of the work of UNESCO, and its desire that the UK should rejoin, so that it can play a part in the valuable work that needs to be done.

Many other organisations in this country would join me in congratulating the Government if they could see fit to get our country back into UNESCO before the 50th anniversary celebrations, so that we could continue to make a valuable contribution to it in the future. UNESCO's constitution states:

> "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be reconstructed."

It is very regrettable that we have decided for the past decade to stay out of that construction process.

10.17 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Sir Nicholas Bonsor): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Gapes) for giving us the opportunity to review this very important subject this evening. As he rightly pointed out, the purpose of UNESCO is one which undoubtedly the Government, and, indeed, all right-minded people would endorse, and he himself read out article 1 of its constitution. It is worth reminding those who are not here this evening—of whom I fear that there are a great number—but who might wish to follow this from *Hansard*, precisely what article one says.

Its purpose is of contributing

> "to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations".

As the hon. Gentleman rightly said, the United Kingdom was a founder member of the organisation, its constitution being adopted in 1945 at the Institution of Civil Engineers in London.

In December 1984, the British Government gave one year's notice of their intention to withdraw from UNESCO, and the hon. Gentleman gave a review of some of the reasons that were given for that withdrawal. The most important reason at the time, I think, was the fact that we had serious reservations about the stewardship of the director-general, Mr. M'bow. We certainly did not share his vision of the way in which the organisation should go forward.

In particular, we were concerned about the proliferation of programmes without the elimination of those of marginal value; the slow progress being made on decentralisation, which the hon. Gentleman conceded; the inefficient and outdated administrative practices that effectively meant jobs for life for those involved—that was simply not acceptable as a way of running an international organisation; the inflated budgets, which included vastly excessive expenses for those involved in the running of the organisation; the duplication of activities with other United Nations bodies, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organisation; and special programme issues, particularly the New World Information and Communication Order, which the hon. Gentleman mentioned and which apparently tried to regulate the world's press in a way that could well be construed as an attempt at international censorship. I doubt that even the hon. Gentleman and other fervent admirers of UNESCO would argue that at that time we should have remained part of it; certainly, it was going badly wrong.

I agree with the hon. Gentleman that vast progress has been made since those days. There have been real changes in UNESCO, and the United Kingdom Government have been working behind the scenes to try to secure those changes, so that we can review our position in regard to membership. I am happy to acknowledge publicly that progress has been made.

Recent UNESCO budgets have all generally respected the principle of zero real growth, which is consistent with United Kingdom policy. The establishment of the expert group on finance and administration matters has made the budgetary process more transparent. Progress has been made in reducing the overlap with the activities of other UN bodies. UNESCO's communication activities now focus particularly on promoting freedom of the press.

The work of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs is very welcome. The Government always note the work of such Committees, as I am happy to report from my previous incarnation. I assure the hon. Gentleman that, given my past participation in the Select Committee, I view Select Committees' conclusions with great concern, and accord them considerable weight.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Is my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Gapes) right in saying that the Select Committee is the only body that has examined the question properly? After it had reported three times that a certain course should be adopted, should the Government have heeded its advice?

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The hon. Gentleman is, of course, right in saying that the Government should take note of what the Select Committee does, as indeed they do. It is not true, however, that the Select Committee is the only body that has examined the matter closely; the Government keep it under a constant and close review. Notwithstanding what I said about the value of the Select Committee's work, Select Committees, unlike the Government, do not have to find the funds with which to implement their recommendations. I shall say more about that shortly.

Let me return to the reforms that the Government do not consider to have been fully addressed. We do not believe—the hon. Gentleman conceded the point—that there has been adequate decentralisation. In 1991, a comprehensive study of the issue was undertaken by the

[Sir Nicholas Bonsor]

executive board; it concluded—rightly, in our view—that there was a need for clear objectives, and for field offices to be strengthened. Up until now, that has not happened. Last year, only 25 per cent. of staff were in field offices. We do not consider that adequate.

In 1985, we questioned the number and focus of UNESCO's programmes. There has been little significant improvement in that regard. We believe that more selectivity is needed; otherwise, UNESCO runs the risk of trying to do too much, and as a result programmes lose their impact.

In the same vein, we are concerned about the large proportion of staff costs in the overall budget, and about increasing administrative costs. We understand that, at the current general conference, the Canadians—with support from some other major donors—are urging that the general conferences, executive boards and meetings of the governing bodies of UNESCO's related organisations be made more cost-effective. Proposals include a reduction in the length of the conference and board meetings, streamlining of the agenda and less time allocated to formal debate. We are actively encouraging those proposals.

Of course, the failings that I have outlined are not unique to UNESCO, and our continuing review of UNESCO should be seen in the context of our wider review of United Nations bodies as a whole. As the hon. Gentleman has said, it is important to consider the wider elements, to ensure that UNESCO is not taken out of context and looked at without due regard for the rest of the United Nations' activities. The review was given a fresh impetus by the agreement at the G7 Halifax summit on a package of proposals for UN reform.

It will have been clear from the Halifax summit communiqué, and more recently from the Prime Minister's speech at the UN50 summit on 23 October, that we firmly believe that the time has come for a thoroughgoing review of UN bodies in the economic and social spheres. In that we are not alone. There is a close identity of views on the issue among the G7 countries and in Russia, and the European Union has been in the vanguard of those who are calling for a fresh look at those structures as we approach the millennium.

The hon. Member for Ilford, South spoke about recent press reports which suggested that the Government intend to seek the abolition of UNESCO, the International Labour Organisation, the FAO and other organisations. Those reports are wholly misleading. What the Prime Minister said at last week's UN50 summit in New York should be quoted in full and accurately. He said:

> "as we form new bodies for new problems do we close down those no longer needed? Not enough. There are bodies we should scrap".

That represents one of several key questions that the UN and its members must address if there is to be genuine reform of the United Nations. Do some bodies need a total overhaul and do some need to be dispensed with altogether? Those questions cannot be shirked when reviewing the work of the United Nations.

Together with our G8 partners, we are working to convince the UN membership at large that the questions raised by the Prime Minister in New York on waste, duplication, pre-emption of conflict, the planning, management and financing of peacekeeping and above all on UN finances themselves have to be addressed seriously and soon. Inertia, not change, is the biggest threat to the future of the United Nations.

The fact that the Prime Minister's speech at the United Nations had such an impact underlines the growing realisation that the reform nettle must be grasped. Over the coming months, we shall look to work with all UN member states in an effort to build a broad-based coalition to reshape the economic and social bodies in such a way as to make them more efficient.

The hon. Member conceded the financial implications of any decision to rejoin UNESCO. I appreciate that £11 million is not a vast sum in the overall financial picture. However, it is a major consideration in the light of the budget from which it comes, and we cannot look at it without looking at the consequences of transferring that sum from other useful areas.

To put the matter in perspective, I shall give some examples of how we currently spend £11 million. That amount is more than our total bilateral aid to all the countries in the Pacific. It exceeds our contribution to all the Commonwealth multilateral programmes, and in the diplomatic wing it represents more than 10 per cent. of our overseas commercial effort. It is approximately three times the running costs of all 10 embassies in the former Soviet Union. Therefore, it must be right that we have thought long and hard about United Kingdom membership. We shall continue to do that.

The hon. Member mentioned the possibility of spreading the budget through other routes. It is a long time since the hon. Gentleman's party was in government, and the reality is that we would not be able to fund UNESCO membership from other budgets. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office would have to find the money, and neither the Treasury nor my colleagues in other Departments would be remotely prepared to find £11 million from another source. It would impact heavily on our work.

I conclude by speaking about the United Kingdom's current involvement with UNESCO. Contrary to some misconceptions, we have not severed our links with that organisation. We have maintained a presence through our observer section in our Paris embassy, which monitors developments within the organisation, covering key meetings, such as the twice-yearly executive board sessions and the biennial general conference.

As in the past 10 years, officials from London will attend the current general conference which has just started. Therefore, we are keeping in close touch with UNESCO through that and other means, and we shall continue to do that, notwithstanding the fact that I must disappoint the hon. Gentleman—

Mr. Dalyell: Will the Minister give way?

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: No. I should like to finish.

I have to disappoint the hon. Member for Ilford, South by saying that at the moment I cannot accede to his request.

Mr. Dalyell: Before the Minister sits down—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael Morris): Order. The Minister has sat down.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-nine minutes past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 1 November 1995

The House met at Ten o'clock

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Private Security Industry

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Conway.]*

10.4 am

Sir Ivan Lawrence (Burton): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise on behalf of the Home Affairs Select Committee a matter of considerable concern in the country at present—the private security industry. I am pleased that some of my colleagues on the Committee have been able to raise themselves at this unusually early hour to take part in the debate.

The Home Affairs Committee inquiry into the matter began a year ago, and we reported on 7 June of this year. The industry has grown so large that it is by common account larger than the entire police force in this country, and, by some accounts, twice as large. Yet there is great concern at the number of cowboys, rip-off merchants and villains involved, to say nothing of the industry's low wages and the danger to the public which is associated with some sections of the industry. There is also concern about whether the industry ought to be acting in the way it is by appearing to take powers away from the police.

There have been calls for state regulation, which, until recently, have been resisted by the Government. The Government's position has been that problems in the private security industry can be dealt with by self-regulation within the industry, and that a licensing system would be expensive, bureaucratic and a burden on the taxpayer. The Government believed that matters concerning the quality of training and wages could be dealt with better from within the industry by the industry and its customers, and that that might be done by strengthening the existing regulations and mechanisms within the industry.

The Committee took evidence from anyone who was interested in the matter, and we were told a number of things. First, we learned that many allegations about the quality of the industry were justified. There was a great deal of evidence about criminal behaviour, poor quality of work, poor working conditions and inadequate training, and we heard about private neighbourhood patrols which seemed to be little short of protection rackets.

Secondly, we were told that there were a large number of self-regulating bodies which the Government had supported within the industry, many of high repute. Those included the International Professional Security Association and the British Security Industry Association, and a large number of established firms were members. Alas, not every firm had joined, and it was estimated that 80 per cent. of private security firms were not members of one of the self-regulatory bodies. Not every employer required the private security firms which they employed to be members of such bodies.

Thirdly, we heard that there were problems with ascertaining whether those who were involved in the private security industry had previous convictions. Fourthly, we were told that, whatever our feelings on the issue of non-intervention in business by the state, the state did have a duty to protect citizens from racketeers and villainy. We heard about one firm where 11 out of its 26 workers had between them 74 convictions, with one of the workers having 48 convictions.

As a recorder, I tried a case not long ago in which a security guard opened premises at night to the other members of his gang. When that security guard was eventually caught, it was found that he had been appointed notwithstanding the fact that he had a substantial number of previous convictions for burglary and other forms of dishonesty. We were told that the state had a part to play in establishing minimum standards of employment, and that it certainly has a part to play where police work is involved. In particular, since there was nothing to stop villains and exploiters from setting up in business, the public had a right to expect the state to play some part in controlling the industry.

Fifthly, we heard that the problems were in the manned guarding sector of the private security industry, where the service is bought on a cost basis rather than necessarily according to quality, and where competition is fierce. These factors have meant that wages in that sector are low, sometimes as low as £1 an hour.

We heard that a third of those in the industry were earning between £2.30 and £2.60 an hour, and that therefore the quality of the recruits was low. That has also meant that there is a high turnover, low training levels and excessive overtime; and that, from time to time, the difference in pay is made up by unemployment benefit. Such are the conditions in the manned guarding sector.

Sixthly, we heard few complaints about the technology and alarm side of the industry.

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South) *rose*—

Sir Ivan Lawrence: I give way to my colleague on the Home Affairs Select Committee.

Mr. Mullin: In the light of what the hon. and learned Gentleman said about appalling wage rates, does he agree that the introduction of a national minimum wage might be of benefit? Does he recall that one or two witnesses from the industry whom we interviewed said that a national minimum wage would not cause them any problems, and that it would prevent them from being undercut by the sort of cowboy outfits that the hon. and learned Gentleman has just described?

Sir Ivan Lawrence: The hon. Gentleman knows my views about a national minimum wage. I believe that its introduction would harm employment prospects and would cost jobs in our communities. It is one thing to say that there are problems because of the exploitation of the work force in the private security industry, but quite another to take a large leap and argue that the Government must introduce a minimum wage. There is a space in between, in which some improvements to the running of the private security industry will secure much more acceptable wages for its employees. The Government

[Sir Ivan Lawrence]

share my belief that it is not for the state to force the level of wages to the point at which large-scale unemployment occurs.

Mr. Mullin *rose—*

Sir Ivan Lawrence: I would like to make some progress. No doubt the hon. Gentleman will catch your eye, Madam Speaker, and be able to develop his argument.

Mr. Mullin: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman give way just in case I do not get called?

Sir Ivan Lawrence: I am sure that, if the hon. Gentleman is diligent and stays in the Chamber long enough to take part in the debate, he will almost certainly be successful.

Seventhly, the Select Committee was told that, although the level of offending in the private security industry was no higher than it was among the general public, public confidence required the industry to be whiter than white. Eighthly, we heard that the industry was in favour of compulsory state regulation. Furthermore, to our astonishment, we heard that the industry was prepared to pay for it itself so that it should not be a burden upon the taxpayer. That was a significant comment, and I know that the cockles of the Minister of State's were warmed when he read that evidence.

Ninthly, the Committee heard that there was a difference of view about how the vetting of employees should be done to discover their character and whether they had any previous convictions. By whom and to what extent should such vetting be conducted? What should be done about the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974? At the end of the day, companies do not have to check employees if they do not want to do so. They cannot ensure that no lies are told, and they cannot check identities if false identities are offered. Nothing much can be done to stop bent firms, especially if the employers are bent.

Finally, the Committee heard that, if a regulatory system was decided upon, the necessary legislation could be introduced neither quickly nor simply. Provision must be made for laying down standards; the creation of criminal offences and the introduction of an appeals mechanism. There would have to be a method to distinguish between the size of companies to which certain rules would apply.

Any legislation would have to include details governing conditions of work, including hours of work and pay; gender and equality and the introduction of permits by agencies. The powers of the police would also have to be specified, as would the powers of the Home Secretary. Such legislation would have to be so far-reaching that a truly terrifying list of necessary activities would have to be performed before it could reach the statute book.

In short, the remedies suggested for the ills of the industry were of two kinds. First, tighter controls should be imposed on individuals working within it. That could be achieved by allowing access to criminal records or by licensing approved guards, or both. Secondly, only licensed companies should operate within the industry.

It was clear that, if any of the traditional police roles were being transferred to private security companies, adequate safeguards would have to be provided for the protection of the public. It was also clear that there needed to be firm action to tackle the growing problem of totally unregulated private local patrols, which prey on the fears of the vulnerable.

The vetting procedures should also be tightened so that the wrong people do not become guards. At present, the private security industry is not in the list of categories in which anyone can have access to criminal records.

What did the Committee recommend? First, we recommended that greater access should be given to national criminal records as part of the vetting procedures of private security industry companies; that vetting should not be done through the companies directly, but through a self-financing agency, which should be empowered to insist on proof of identity of the person to be vetted; that vetting should be limited to recordable convictions and cautions held on the Phoenix database that recently came on stream.

Secondly, we recommended that the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 should not apply to the provision of private security services. Thirdly, we recommended that there should not be a blanket ban on anyone with a criminal conviction, irrespective of how long ago the act was committed or how irrelevant that conviction was. We concluded that a substantial reduction in the incidence of unsuitable people operating in the industry could only really be achieved by a licensing system.

We recommended that, first, everyone working in manned guarding system only should have to be licensed to do so. That is where the worst examples of danger to the public occur. Secondly, we noted that the same problems did not tend to arise where companies employed in-house guarding as opposed to contract guarding. Thirdly, we recommended that the vetting agency should also issue the licences.

Fourthly, we recommended that it should be a criminal offence for guards to operate without a licence and for companies to employ an unlicensed guard. We also said that, although a case had not been made for statutory regulation of the systems installations and alarm sector, if the industry did not improve its rules and regulations, or were standards to deteriorate in that sector, such regulations should be considered. The rationale for withdrawing from regulating that sector was the old-fashioned one: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

We agreed with the overwhelming majority of the evidence that we received, that the advantages of regulation of the manned guarding sector to ensure quality of service and protection of the public, industries, customers and the work force outweighed the loss of commercial freedom. We recommended that a statutory regulatory system should be set up under that sector. That would entail legislation making it a criminal offence for an unregulated company to offer contract guarding services.

It would entail the creation of a new agency, which would have to be accountable to Parliament through the Home Secretary. It is obvious that it should have strong links with the police, industry and commerce. However, it must be independent of the security industry itself. There would need to be time to work out the details, which we did not attempt to go into, and a transitional period to phase in the changes.

Finally, we recommended that the licensing system should be sufficiently adaptable to allow its extension to cover other parts of the industry, such as door supervisors, who we had always thought were called bouncers. Meanwhile, that sector should be the subject of close attention from local government and, in particular, the use of best practice in existing local registration schemes, some of which we examined briefly and seemed to be good and successful, should be encouraged.

That was what we reported in June, and normally, we could have expected the Government to reply in about two months. Four months later, they have not yet replied, and I am not over-optimistic that we will have a response today.

In fact, we have received a holding reply from my right hon. Friend the Minister. In a letter dated 25 July to the Clerk to the Committee, Mr. Crispin Poyser, we were told that my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary regretted that

> "he is not yet able to offer a full response . . . He is considering with colleagues the wide-ranging implications of the Committee's recommendations and will reply in detail as soon as possible."

However, my right hon. and learned Friend made a number of provisional observations. He agreed that the growth of the industry had given rise to concerns; that there was no question of transferring core police tasks to the private security industry; and that the Government shared the Committee's concern about reports of poor standards in the manned guarding sector. It was also clear that the vetting arrangements required further consideration.

The letter added that the Government agreed with the Committee that self-regulation had worked well in the systems installations sector, and they would continue to observe the situation. The Government gave the issue of guidance on door supervisors a high priority and would look at the impact of the advice that we recommended. The central recommendations for access to criminal records for all parts of the industry, with an exemption from the provisions of Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and statutory regulation of companies and licensing of individuals in the manned guarding sector, were now being addressed urgently, and a formal response would be sent as soon as possible.

We know that the Government's attitude to the matter has changed, because my right hon. Friend the Minister of State told the British security industry's annual luncheon recently, as he told the Committee, that a week was a long time in politics. We are greatly heartened by that.

Mr. Walter Sweeney (Vale of Glamorgan): Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that, if the Government find the issue too complex to respond to in full at this stage, it would be a useful halfway house at least to grant that details of criminal records should be available to those seeking to employ people in the security industry, and that, in respect of such records, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 should not apply?

Sir Ivan Lawrence: Naturally, the workings of the Committee are so close and integrated that my hon. Friend has read my mind and anticipated the next and final part of my speech.

We all appreciate that the length of the Government's consideration is due to the complications involved and the fact that we did not produce—nor could we be expected to produce—a detailed framework for legislation, which, of course, would have to be thoroughly worked out and tested. There would also have to be full and thorough consultation with the industry. Therefore, we accept that it is unlikely there will any comprehensive legislation on the subject for some time yet.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Vale of Glamorgan (Mr. Sweeney) pointed out, that does not mean that it is impossible to take action on parts of the programme. The most serious aspect of the matter is where crooks masquerade as bona fide security guards. That could be stopped by legislating to allow previous convictions to be looked into by the police, and by extending the operation of exemptions from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 to cover the employment of security guards.

I therefore invite my right hon. Friend the Minister to make those changes as soon as possible, or at any rate to encourage hon. Members to choose such legislation if they should be successful in the ballot for private Members' Bills in the new session of Parliament, and to commit the Government to the support of such legislation.

If the Government act on a problem that is both worrying and growing, and which is causing considerable distress to sections of the community, they will not only earn the thanks of a nation that has a right to feel trust in those who are guarding and protecting it and its property, but will gain the thanks and admiration of the private security industry itself, which I know my right hon. Friend the Minister once, in an earlier incarnation, graced.

10.25 am

Mr. Jim Cunningham (Coventry, South-East): We all know that security and the fear of crime are at the top of the public's agenda, if not that of the Government. Home Office statistics alleging the reduction of the rate of criminal activity mean nothing to millions of people who are afraid to walk out of their own doors. In that atmosphere of fear and alarm, the potential for growth in the private security industry is huge, and the issue of regulation and licensing must be addressed constructively before it spins out of our effective control. As it is, the industry employs over 160,000 people—more than the police service.

There are three main points that I want to make. First, regulation must be implemented to safeguard the public. Secondly, those working in the industry must have certain standards of employment so that they are not exploited. Finally, the issue of accountability needs to be addressed.

The Select Committee on Home Affairs found overwhelming evidence that the industry contains a large amount of criminality. It is obscene that convicted burglars are allowed to protect homes from others who are pursuing their former occupation. Regulation is needed to ensure that those purporting to protect are themselves trustworthy and fit to give that protection. Nothing less than the safety of individuals, many of them extremely vulnerable, is at stake.

However, it is not to enough to call for mere regulation. Self-regulation has palpably not worked. Protection rackets have sprung up, where cowboy outfits charge £1 a week or more—that has happened in my constituency—to protect a home. Responsible firms have taken steps to ensure decent standards. Many have developed membership of trade associations, training programmes and vetting procedures, but many have not, and will not unless they are required to by law.

People who can afford high-quality security will get it, while the poor suffer at the hands of the unregulated and unscrupulous. The Home Secretary has been predictably

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dismissive of the need for tighter control. He is relentless in his pursuit of a free market dogma that will place people at risk. Home Office Ministers have even sought to apply the principle "let the buyer beware" to the industry. That beggars belief.

I stress the need for regulation, because without it we cannot be certain that those in the private security industry are responsible enough to wield the considerable power they hold. I am not calling for restrictive measures that would cause mountains of paperwork and bedevil effective operation. However, the freedom to operate should not be mistaken for a licence to prey on the fears of the public.

The unregulated marketplace, which self-regulation unfortunately too often resembles, is an arena for the unscrupulous to drive out the responsible. As so often in commercial life, the good are tarred with the same brush as the bad. A licensing system must be introduced in conjunction with proper training. Companies and individuals must be subject to that procedure.

I agree that the worst cases in the industry involve the manned guarding sector. Therefore, I accept that, for the time being, that sector alone should comply with any new laws; but there should be room in the legislation for those laws to be expanded to other sections should it become necessary.

In addressing the issue of regulation, we must not be concerned solely with those whom the industry serves. Regulation will also protect employees, as standards of safety and pay are appalling in many companies. Many guards must work a disgraceful number of hours simply in order to take home a living wage. While at work, they are often vulnerable to attack and receive no support from their employers.

Many guards are given no training in how to deal with the difficult situations they may face. I have heard reports of security guards who were attacked on site, taken to hospital and then sacked the next day because they could not turn up for work. That is what occurs under the free market of labour: lives are not valued, because irresponsible companies know that their employees can do little to protect themselves.

Regulation would be the first step in halting exploitation of the guards. It would provide training and put in place standards of safety and good practice that would insure guards against putting their lives at risk while their employers go unchecked.

10.30 am

Mr. John Hutton (Barrow and Furness): I congratulate the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Sir I. Lawrence) on his good fortune in securing a debate on the private security industry. In doing so, he has performed a service both to the House and to the Home Affairs Select Committee.

I do not intend to repeat the arguments that have been presented to the House already in favour of regulation of the private security industry. Anyone who heard the evidence submitted to the Select Committee and who read the Select Committee's report could only reach the same conclusion as the Committee. The arguments in favour of regulation are compelling. Without rehearsing those arguments, I shall summarise them under four headings.

First, voluntary self-regulation has clearly failed to establish sufficiently high standards in the industry. That is because more than two thirds—almost three quarters—of the companies involved in the industry are not party to any self-regulatory mechanisms. The practices pursued by the best companies in the industry are constantly undermined by the cowboys.

Secondly, we have seen clear and disturbing evidence of criminality in the industry. The hon. and learned Gentleman referred to the case of a company that employed 26 people, 11 of whom had previous convictions. An even more astonishing example of criminality was revealed in the evidence submitted to the Select Committee by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

It drew the Select Committee's attention to the case of one employee in the private security industry who had applied for a shotgun certificate. His employer endorsed his application for a shotgun certificate, stating:

> "I have known X for one year . . . he has worked for X (Private Security Company) this length of time. X has a sociable nature and a good, even temperament.
>
> I recommend him as honest and a very reliable person, who can be trusted".

When the police inquired into that employee's application for a shotgun certificate, they found that he had 15 previous convictions for dishonesty and violence. One of those convictions was for a burglary that had involved the use of explosives. Even more disturbing was the fact that the employee had a conviction for the manslaughter of his wife, who had died when he attempted to perform an illegal abortion.

It is not sufficient for the Government to say—as they have in their evidence to the Select Committee—that the evidence of criminality among members of the private security industry is the same as among the general public as a whole. I do not believe that that is the correct argument. The point is that the evidence of criminality among members of the private security industry is significantly higher than criminality among members of the police force. That is the comparison that the Home Office should have made.

Thirdly, the Select Committee found unacceptably low employment conditions, appallingly low pay, a weak training record on the part of most of the companies involved in the industry, and abysmal career prospects for employees. Many employees in the industry must work very long hours under unsocial conditions simply in order to make ends meet.

A job advertisement appeared today in the job centre in Barrow in my constituency. It offers £2.40 an hour, with no enhanced rates for overtime, for between 30 and 60 hours work a week. It is not possible to attract the kind of people that we want in the industry if they are employed under those terms and conditions. The Select Committee believes that a proper system of statutory regulation could make a significant contribution in that regard.

Finally, as my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Cunningham) said, we must reassure the public about who is performing those increasingly important services in our community.

We must proceed carefully to a system of statutory regulation. I am sure that there will be full consultation among the police, the industry and others involved. We must be mindful of the costs involved and the impact on the industry of any regulatory system. We must also be aware of the damage that will be done to the industry if we do nothing at all. Therefore, I believe that we should make the decision in principle to move quickly towards a system of statutory regulation as recommended by the Select Committee. That would end the current uncertainty, and allow progress to be made in agreeing the important details of the new regulatory framework.

Sadly, there seems to be little immediate prospect of any progress in the field. Many people will conclude that the delay in the Government's response—which the hon. and learned Gentleman, the Chairman of the Select Committee, identified—may have something to do with the confusion that lies at the heart of the Government's industrial policy. It can be described succinctly as a policy of deregulation. The Government's problem is: how can they pursue a policy of deregulation in industry as a whole and embrace statutory regulation for the private security industry without looking foolish?

I am not particularly concerned about whether the Government look foolish; they manage to do that without any help from this side of the House. The problem is entirely of the Government's own making. We need a little less ideology in this area and a bit more common sense in order to make the progress that we all want to see.

10.36 am

Mr. Piers Merchant (Beckenham): I congratulate my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Sir I. Lawrence) on the work that he and the Home Affairs Select Committee have done in this area. He does the House a favour by debating the subject this morning. There is clearly a good deal of concern in the community about the private security industry, and the Select Committee has provided evidence of the industry's shortcomings.

I am concerned to ensure that, in a society that is prone to hyperbole, we do not damn an entire industry because of the malfunctioning of part of it. We should be aware of the fact that the majority of the industry is honourable, honest and efficient. It is a large industry, that has grown considerably recently. It has high standards generally, and it would be a great shame if the whole industry were condemned because of the malpractice of a few. Nevertheless, we must address the existing problems, and I shall confine my remarks to three areas.

The first is access to criminal records. It is very important that the industry should have the right to access criminal records. The effectiveness of the industry is reliant upon its ability to employ honest people who can be trusted under pressure. Therefore, people with records of assault or dishonesty should clearly not be employed in the industry. If industry personnel are to be trusted, employers must have the right to check the backgrounds of job applicants. It will be possible for employers to carry out checks via the Phoenix system when it is operating properly.

It is important that such checks should be confined to convictions, rather than any other information that may be held by the police. Convictions are on the public record, in any case. It has always mystified me why so much fuss is made about criminal records. After all, the courts operate entirely in the public domain, and public records and press reports of convictions are retained. It is not too difficult for an enterprising individual to search through press records—particularly with the advent of computerisation—and unearth any previous convictions.

I therefore believe that there is unnecessary concern and caution in that respect, and I would welcome the opening up of those records to employers. The Select Committee recommends that. Even Liberty has said that it should be possible, so I strongly back that proposition.

After all, if I may draw a comparison, any statement made by an hon. Member of the House that is recorded in the *Official Report*, be it 30 or 40 years ago—certainly in the past 10 or 15 years—is readily accessible. That is something that has been said in the public domain. A similar rule should apply to any action that has taken place that is recorded in the public processes.

However, there should be a balancing right for an individual to be able to correct any error of recording, and to explain any detail that may be general or vague. A simple record of a specific conviction does not tell the whole story. A conviction for assault may result from a serious, unprovoked assault which may be part of some other criminal activity, such as a robbery; but the assault may be an example of youthful exhuberance.

Perhaps a student, who had taken part in a demonstration, had been carried away in the heat of the moment and had been involved in an assault on the police when resisting a police instruction. That person would never do such a thing later in life, but they might be subject to condemnation along the same lines as for a serious criminal assault in the pursuit of some other crime if they did not have the opportunity to correct or explain the record as it was kept. It is important to have that balance right.

Secondly, I support the Select Committee's conclusion that it should be right for the private security industry to be exempted from the requirements of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. I have always been dubious about that Act. It creates a legal fiction about which I feel uneasy. Although I would not want in any way to deter the right of a person to rehabilitate themselves after a crime after sufficient years have passed, when their conduct in society had re-established itself, nevertheless the idea that there should be a legal fiction that the crime never took place worries me in principle.

There are exemptions from that concept. They have multiplied over the years, for good public reasons. They should be extended to the private security industry. The Select Committee is entirely right.

Thirdly, I am uneasy with the idea of statutory regulation in any industry, unless it is proved to be absolutely necessary. Although there is a good deal of convincing evidence that it may be necessary in the private security industry, I remain cautious. I would prefer a proper system of industry self-regulation; there is evidence that that can work well in certain industries.

I appreciate that self-regulation has been tried in the private security industry, and that considerable difficulties have arisen, that it has not turned out to be effective so far as a concept, and that the main trade organisations in the industry have now said that statutory regulation is necessary. I regret that.

In the advertising industry, in which I worked for a while, there is a good and efficient system of self-regulation. I was involved in some of the early work

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that resulted in the setting up of self-regulation in the direct mail industry. There are established examples of self-regulation operating. However, I accept that that is a different industry, and that the rights of the public regarding advertising, although important, do not bear comparison with the much greater protection that is needed in the security industry.

I am three quarters of the way along the line to accepting statutory regulation, but I continue to have doubts. I hope that time will be given, before statutory regulation is introduced, for the industry to have one more chance—perhaps a short time—to try out the development of proper self-regulation, perhaps under the threat of statutory action otherwise.

Mr. Mullin: The industry is begging to be regulated.

Mr. Merchant: I am well aware of that—indeed, I said that a few moments ago—but that does not alter my principled objection to statutory regulation as a concept unless it can be proved to be absolutely necessary. I am not convinced that that is the case. However, as the hon. Gentleman heard me say, I am a long way along that route, and, if a final opportunity for self-regulation can be shown not to work, I would reluctantly accept the need for statutory action.

Last year, I supported in some detail the Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995, which introduced regulation in those centres. I hope that that shows the hon. Gentleman that I do not take a hard line that would oppose statutory regulation in every case; far from it. Nevertheless, it must be shown to be absolutely necessary in each example.

The problem with statutory regulation is that, once introduced, it starts a creeping process. I read an article in *The Guardian* dated 8 June on that subject, which specifically said, referring to my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary:

> "Let him start on the narrow front, leaving the regulations open so that wider areas could be included later."

That is always the process with statutory regulation. One starts on a narrow field, and there is constant pressure to widen it, until one is regulating everywhere.

I do not want a society that has unnecessary regulation or regulations extended into every aspect of life. If we must have statutory regulation, I would put in a plea for limited regulation—perhaps only the licensing of individuals, rather than the licensing of individuals and the regulation of companies.

I leave the House with the following thought. If there is to be licensing or regulation in the manned guarding sector of the industry, applying to contract guarding, I fail to see the logic of confining it to that sector and not extending it to non-contract guarding. If it does not apply in both sectors, I envisage a strange anomaly developing.

All those strict regulatory requirements will affect companies offering the service, but an individual company that wishes to recruit its own individual guard—not a contract company, but a person—will be able to do so without being subject to licensing requirements. That would be a route for contradiction and abuse.

I hope that, if we must go down that route, it will be done more comprehensively, so that regulation covers the whole logical area of one sector of the industry.

10.47 am

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): The Liberal Democrats believe that regulation of the private security industry is essential and has been shown to be, and that that opinion is shared by all the most responsible people in the industry.

That issue has been before us for some time. In 1990, the Defence Select Committee took evidence on the way in which private security companies were being used for defence installations, and expressed great unease about the way in which the pressure to keep the contract price down was leading to unsatisfactory regulation, in some cases by inappropriate organisations.

The hon. Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George) has introduced private Member's legislation with support from all parties, including the Liberal Democrats, to try to do something in that industry. In September 1994, the Liberal Democrat conference passed a resolution calling for regulation of the private security industry.

We have before us the report of the Home Affairs Select Committee of May 1995—the Committee of which the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Sir I. Lawrence), who introduced the debate, is Chairman. It is an excellent report, which details the matter extremely well, brings together a great deal of evidence and makes an extremely cogent case.

The report draws attention to the growth in the size of the private security industry, and especially the expansion in the role of the private security industry into areas that were previously the domain of the police, which, it said,

> "give rise to reasonable and increasing concerns about the industry's relationship with the public and about standards within the industry."

Part of the background to that is concern that the private security industry should not be taking over police duties and responsibilities.

We feel strongly that the job of policing and maintaining law and order is a job for accountable, disciplined and trained police officers. There have been too many instances lately in which communities and organisations have felt compelled to use private security, not for its proper role, which is extensive, but to provide services that they believe the police cannot supply because of a shortage of resources. The police service itself is anxious about that.

The private security industry is expanding into prisons: first, it undertook prison escort duties, and it is now involved in the running of private prisons. We are unhappy about that, because we believe that the deprivation of the liberty of an individual, where required by the state in pursuit of the law, is a job for the state, not one that should be handed to private agencies.

Despite all that, there is still a massive role for the private security industry. There are many responsible firms and people in that industry, and their leaders want a regulatory system. It is too easy for criminals to be employed in the industry, and it is too easy for criminals to set up their own businesses.

There is absolutely nothing to stop someone walking out of Wormwood Scrubs, hiring a van—or, as someone said when I mentioned this before, stealing a van—acquiring a dog and setting up as a private security firm. That is not good enough,, and it is of course a constant threat to the reputation and credibility of the responsible firms in the industry. They feel that especially strongly.

The door is wide open to criminal infiltration of the industry. Evidence given to the Home Affairs Select Committee contained many instances, some quoted in the body of the report, of how damaging that can be. The Association of Chief Police Officers produced a report for which the chief constable of Northumbria was responsible. It cited many instances of such criminal infiltration.

In addition, the industry has worryingly low rates of pay. Associated with that must be the risk that people who fail to meet the necessary requirements will be hired. A constant complaint, echoed in the report, is that there is far too little training. Too many people working in the industry have no training at all. The public are being deluded into thinking that someone in a smart uniform is trained, disciplined and accountable in the way that a police officer is.

The similarity of uniform perhaps leads the public to believe that, even if such a person is not the same as a police officer, he is similar. That may be so when the person involved is a highly trained security officer from a reputable firm, working on a specialist task. However, it is not the case with many people working in the industry. A uniform is not necessarily a sign of good quality training or careful recruitment and screening.

The industry has tried to operate a system of self-regulation, but it has been proved repeatedly that self-regulation does not extend far enough and give reputable firms the protection that they require.

During the last Home Office Question Time, I suggested to the Minister of State that it was not acceptable for the Home Office and its agencies to employ private security firms that did not belong to one of the industry's organisations. I was surprised by his reply. He said:

> "It would be contrary to European regulations to exclude companies . . . on the basis that they do not belong to a trade organisation."—[*Official Report*, 19 October 1995; Vol. 264, c. 472.]

Of course, it so happens that, in this industry, the self-regulating bodies are part of trade organisations. The Government say that, because of European regulations, they and, presumably, other public agencies, cannot insist that the security firms that they employ are part of a self-regulatory system.

If that is so—I hope that the Minister has reconsidered the matter since then—how much stronger is the case for statutory regulation. If insistence on self-regulation is precluded in the public sector, statutory regulation is all the more important.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Maclean): Did the right hon. Gentleman pick up the point that I attempted to make briefly at Question Time, that there is nothing to stop the Government or any other organisation setting their own quality threshold and standards for the employees whom they would take on from a private security company? One cannot use membership of a trade organisation as the sifting mechanism.

Mr. Beith: The Minister said that, as with any contract, Departments can set their own quality standards. He has amplified it a little by saying that they could specify the employees. I take it that he means that the Government could insist that employees did not have any previous relevant criminal convictions, but the fact remains that it undermines the concept of a self-regulatory system to say that one cannot take any notice of whether a company is or is not a member of a self-regulatory body simply because that body is a trade organisation.

That being the case, has the Home Office ever advised the industry to set up a self-regulatory mechanism separate from its trade organisation? I am not aware that it has ever encouraged the industry to find a way around that difficulty to ensure that that can be one of the usual standards and qualifications. We seem to be undermining the whole notion of self-regulation. If the Government cannot make use of it, what use is it? Clearly, we need a better system. It is also clear from the Home Affairs Select Committee report that too few companies chose to take part in a self-regulatory system for it to be effective.

Closed circuit television is another problem. Much of the monitoring of closed circuit television is carried out by private security companies, some of which scarcely qualify to be called that. Closed circuit television is a valuable tool in fighting crime. Although the Home Secretary has occasionally sought to suggest that the Liberal Democrats are not in favour of it, he regularly opens such schemes in Liberal Democrat-controlled authorities which have set them up with the help of the Home Office.

I hope that the Home Office will eventually cough up the money to install a closed circuit system in my constituency. We have been pressing for it for some time. We thought that the latest list was supposed to help the smaller communities, but it seems that too many of the larger places are at the front of the queue.

There is no control over what happens to the video tapes produced by closed circuit television. There is evidence that such material is being obtained for the production of violent commercial videos. It is also possible to obtain it for blackmail and other purposes not related to its proper use. An unregulated activity is being carried out by unregulated companies.

I would expect any system of regulation of security companies to cover their conduct in this sphere. The problem has to be dealt with one way or another. Otherwise, sooner or later, someone will start switching off closed circuit television systems because they are being abused, and the public's co-operation will be undermined.

The product of closed circuit television is used to fight crime, but if it is going to finish up as a violent product on video shop shelves and seen by children, the whole exercise will be fatally damaged. We cannot allow that to happen.

Another problem is that of bouncers. I believe that they are sometimes called door attendants, but they are bouncers in the Bigg Market in Newcastle. I do not know whether the hon. and learned Member for Burton visited the many night clubs in Newcastle to examine not only the bouncers but what went on inside—

Sir Ivan Lawrence: I did not.

Mr. Beith: The hon. and learned Gentleman tells me that he did not, but he established that there is a registration scheme, which is an example of good practice and should be encouraged.

Mr. Mullin: What about the Serjeant at Arms?

Mr. Beith: I do not think that the Serjeant at Arms will be required to register. The presence in the world of

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bouncers of many people with criminal convictions and associations with violent crime was a serious problem on Tyneside. The registration scheme has been a help.

I believe that relevant legislation should be included in the Queen's Speech. The Government should not have delayed as long as they have. It is wholly unsatisfactory that we should have to wait longer even for a Government response to the Home Affairs Select Committee report. We ought to be getting on with it. I know that there are issues still to be resolved, but there needs to be an agency to carry out any regulation. There also needs to be access to criminal records, exemption under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and action to monitor closed circuit television.

The Government must stop dragging their feet. The private security industry needs legislation in order to be able to carry out its important job properly, and the public need the assurance that when they see a uniformed security guard, they are seeing someone who has been subjected to a proper system of registration and control.

10.58 am

Mr. Walter Sweeney (Vale of Glamorgan): The hon. Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Hutton) rightly stressed that Conservatives tend to be in favour of deregulation. We should certainly look carefully at how we can avoid regulating unnecessarily, and at how we can keep regulations to a minimum. But the evidence we received from some parts of the security industry was overwhelmingly in favour of some form of regulation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Mr. Merchant) said that he was 75 per cent. convinced by the arguments for some sort of regulation. I would say that it is no good giving the security industry one more chance for self-regulation when we know that we are not worried about the 20 per cent. of the industry which is responsible and which does regulate its own activities; we are concerned about the other 80 per cent., which does not regulate itself.

The Select Committee bore in mind the need to restrict regulation to the areas where there are seen to be obvious problems. Although, for instance, there are problems in respect of the installation of alarms in people's homes and businesses, there is no clear evidence that the situation requires regulation. Current consumer legislation and breach-of-contract law would appear to be the appropriate remedies for people who are dissatisfied with their installations.

The problem of corrupt or bent installers using the opportunity of visiting people's homes or businesses to case the joint and then tip off underworld colleagues can be met by regulating those who can be employed, and introducing a form of licensing based on access to criminal records.

The Select Committee was also concerned about the possible growth of protection rackets. That is a worry in many countries, but here, too, I believe that the answer lies in licensing, both for organisations and individuals.

We also briefly considered the question of bouncers. There is a need, I believe, for the licensing of people and organisations in this area. It is possible for self-regulation to be highly effective.

In September this year, I visited the Sin Bin, a nightclub in Medicine Hat, Canada. It is a place frequented by British troops stationed at BATUS, the British Army training unit in Alberta. Instead of employing large, thuggish bouncers of the type one often sees in this country, the club employs small, weedy bouncers with a very professional attitude. They are equipped with hidden radios, so that, if one of them is trying to get rid of someone, he is soon surrounded by a group of other bouncers. Numbers, not weight and size, soon persuade troublemakers to leave promptly.

In the end, this debate comes down to the balance between preserving the freedoms of the individual and the costs and inconvenience of regulation. The Government need to negotiate with the industry over the right amount of regulation. Clearly, there are relatively inexpensive ways in which regulations can be introduced. Although no definite figures were produced, the Committee came to the conclusion that a criminal record check might cost £20. That seems little enough to spend on such an important aspect of security in our daily lives.

The members of the industry who gave evidence made it clear that they would be happy to bear the costs of this regulation, so they will not be an additional burden on the taxpayer. The industry would welcome and pay for the sort of regulation that the Select Committee has advocated.

As I say, I believe that the Government should negotiate with the security industry, if they have not already done so, with a view to drafting legislation. If it proves impracticable to deal with the whole problem in the coming Session, I would urge the halfway house recommended by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Sir I. Lawrence), who so ably introduced this morning's debate.

11.4 am

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): I congratulate the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Sir I. Lawrence) on initiating this debate. The Chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee and his colleagues are understandably angry that we are debating the private security industry in private Members' time, instead of debating a Government response to his Committee's report in Government time. The need for action has been clearly spelt out by my hon. Friends the Members for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Cunningham) and for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Hutton) and by the hon. Member for Vale of Glamorgan (Mr. Sweeney).

The need for regulation became clear long before the Select Committee published its report, but there has been no sign yet that Ministers intend to take firm, positive action. The fudge of giving only employers access to the criminal records of employees—an idea that has been suggested—does not go far enough. It simply would not sort out the rogue employers—and rogue employers as well as rogue employees are certainly a problem, as illustrated in the Committee's report.

Proper protection of the public requires the Government to introduce statutory regulation of the private security industry, and it is time for Ministers to stop dithering and prevaricating. The Labour party's view is shared by the police, the public, the industry itself—and even, I am glad to note, by the Select Committee. The Home Secretary has not yet leaked the slightest whiff of an intention to grasp the nettle, which suggests that he intends to allow things to fester for another full Parliament. That is just not acceptable.

I challenge the Minister this morning to give us straight answers to 10 straight questions. First, will he promise to introduce a statutory system of regulation for the private security industry—yes or no? Secondly, will legislation be announced in the Queen's Speech and introduced in the coming Session of Parliament? Thirdly, will the Minister specifically include manned guarding, patrol duties and door supervision in the legislation? Fourthly, will he agree that the regulation of those who undertake such tasks must include proper vetting procedures, through a publicly accountable system, together with high standards of training and supervision in the industry?

Fifthly, does the Minister accept, in the interests of the companies in the sector which are well run and highly professional, that there should be strict regulation of all companies that undertake such activities? Sixthly, will he accept that these functions can be exercised, as the Chairman of the Select Committee said, by a self-financing agency, accountable to Parliament, through the Home Secretary, for both policy and operational decisions?

Seventhly, will the Minister accept that, while these areas of activity require urgent regulation, many companies offer a wide range of related services, and that the agency should be capable of dealing with all such issues—as suggested also by the Select Committee's report? That might involve training, certification and registration requirements for those undertaking installation work, via systems already in place in the industry. In short, will the agency have the powers and flexibility to cope with a changing market?

Eighthly, will the Minister make it a criminal offence for an unregulated company to offer services in the three fields of activity that I have mentioned? Ninthly, does he agree that there must be effective penalties for those who fail to follow proper procedures with regard to vetting and training? Tenthly, will he accept the necessity for the police to have the power to intervene in the interests of the public when they need to do so?

Those 10 questions, clearly answered by the Minister, would help a great deal to ensure progress on a matter that has exercised the public a great deal in recent times. By answering positively, the Minister would introduce a system that would be practical and not excessively onerous, bureaucratic or costly.

The fact is, I fear, that we are bedeviled by the Conservatives' obsession with ending regulation wherever it exists and avoiding it even where it is needed—except in the public services. I am the first to applaud the ending of red tape and the cutting of needless regulation, but an unregulated marketplace is a place where bad drives out good and worse drives out bad.

The hon. Members for Beckenham (Mr. Merchant) and for Vale of Glamorgan have clearly moved some way on the important issues that we are debating, but at the same time they illustrate the reluctance of Conservative Members generally to grasp the nettle. With the Conservative lurch to the right, the playing field is tilted steeply against responsible and professional companies. Lack of regulation is not freedom, but licence in the worst sense of the word. Voluntary regulation clearly does not work. The Home Office does not insist that firms and their employees are registered under the present system.

Last year, my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George) introduced a private Member's Bill that focused on the private security industry. He said that, if someone wanted to be a tattooist, he would have to be approved by the local authority, but that an individual could set up a security firm and install alarms, or become a private eye, without any qualifications or experience, even after having been released from gaol in the recent past. Those who set up such firms do not have to have local authority approval. Self-regulation is not effective—indeed, it can be avoided. My hon. Friend was right to draw attention to those shortcomings.

Companies are operating in sensitive areas of public life with a complete lack of accountability. Penetration by criminals is of serious concern, even if it involves only a minority. Wages can be low. The most recent trade union survey of security officers' wages that I have seen revealed average earnings of £2.23 an hour. Many employees are obliged to work 70 or more hours a week if they are to take home a living wage. These matters require the active involvement of government. Ministerial hand-wringing is not enough.

It is about a year since we last debated these matters. I said during that debate that, sadly, we had reached the position where it was difficult to find opponents of statutory regulation, apart from Home Office Ministers and criminals who might be deprived of their work within security organisations. It is clear that Back-Bench Conservative Members have moved on regulation, and it is time for Ministers to move, too.

Many people in different parts of the country have been approached by individuals who tell them that they operate a security system and look after homes in the area for a weekly payment. They may hint that homes might not be so secure if money is not paid. They may not always intend to break the law, but such hints are often interpreted by residents as a form of threat.

Such an approach is sometimes close to operating a protection system, which is unacceptable. There have been examples of those developing a security system on an estate telling the police of their plans, then telling local people that they had the approval of the police when that was not the position.

In a brief intervention, the Minister seemed to reflect ministerial comments last year that, first and foremost, for members of the public, it is a case of "buyer beware". That is not acceptable. Such an irresponsible approach misses the point. A Ministry or a large company that regularly buys in security services can make comparisons, test the market, insist that its objectives are met and have adequate legal and professional advice. At the same time, ordinary members of the public and those running small companies are seeking security services. They are rarely in the position of a Ministry or large company.

Concern about the wrong people being involved in private security patrols and their management has been confirmed in different areas. Some of the examples are both frightening and similar in nature. A circular by one group offering patrols by staff free of criminal convictions bore the name of a director who had several convictions for both dishonesty and violence. A senior police officer told me:

> "I personally find it monstrous that people with convictions for burglary in dwelling houses are being allowed to run businesses and work for such companies whilst having strings of convictions for the offence for which they are purporting to protect the public."

[Mr. Alun Michael]

Another senior police officer wrote to me about a new security firm as follows:

> "You may share my concern and dismay when I tell you that Mr. F (the person who formed the company) is a man with many previous convictions and is currently on bail as well as being a disqualified driver. Working with him in his security business is Mr. G, who has 23 pages of convictions on the Police National Computer . . . most of these convictions involve burglary and theft in domestic properties. He has only recently been released from prison and he too is a disqualified driver."

Claims made by some companies have been exposed as entirely untrue. An organisation which claims to protect homes by charging £1 per week per household issued a leaflet stating that staff were experienced, had a forces background and were in constant communication with the police. It claimed also that all properties were logged on a computer and that the company was registered with the police. The local superintendent who told me about this wrote:

> "My view on having sight of this leaflet was that at best the company was misleading the public and at worst their promotional material was a criminal deception. Mr. A admitted that his staff were not trained, not in radio communication with the police, and not registered under the Data Protection Act."

As for being registered with the police, there is no system of registration. When considering last year what were then the Police and Magistrates' Courts Bill and the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill, we suggested that interim measures should be adopted. Our recommendations were not accepted, and a year has passed with no action being taken by the Government. A cry from the Minister of "caveat emptor" and self-regulation provides no answers. How do the public tell the difference between a genuine service and a virtual protection racket? The answer is that they cannot until it is too late.

There are no controls on who can set up a security business. There are no checks on their criminal record. Invariably, staff are inadequately trained. No checks are made on employers. If the industry is to be involved in such work as patrolling the streets, staff must be trained and must follow a code of practice agreed with the police. That should be basic. The Government recognise that, where private security companies run prisons, the Government have the right to lay down standards of training. Yet for patrolling the streets, no standards are laid down.

Last year, the British Security Industry Association's journal, *Security Spokesman*, highlighted the Home Secretary's claim during his speech to the BSIA that

> "there are no grounds for the Government to licence the private security industry because of the insufficient evidence of criminality."

The editorial commented:

> "this argument misses the point in one crucial area, that of public accountability".

Referring to the industry's greater public profile, the editorial stated:

> "equally inevitably, greater public accountability must follow as a consequence. It is this—not criminality as Michael Howard would have us believe—which is at the crux of the regulation issue."

That is a responsible approach to the issue, and I welcome the fact that it comes from within the industry, which has given so much evidence to the Select Committee.

Over a quarter of a century ago, Philip Sorenson, then chairman of Group 4 Total Security, said:

> "It is the responsibility of the security industry to work towards statutory backing for a system of control. That system should allay any fears about the role of private security companies in our society."

He was right 25 years ago, and his words are even more urgent and compelling now.

The least we should expect from the Minister is a series of straight answers to the 10 questions I have put to him, and a promise that there will be legislation to deal with the issues to which we have drawn his attention in the forthcoming Session.

11.17 am

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Maclean): I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Sir I. Lawrence) for giving me the opportunity to explain the position that we have reached on the important matters to which he referred.

In major parts of the security industry, there is little call for change. In the security system or alarms sector, self-regulation has proved highly effective. The in-house guarding sector has caused no problems. Difficulties in certain areas involving bouncers are being tackled by means of specially designed measures, of which the Select Committee on Home Affairs approved.

That is not to say that the security industry is without problems. As in any other industry or business, there are areas of concern. Like the Select Committee, I think that these problems lie mainly within the contract manned guarding sector of the industry.

According to a research report published by the Policy Studies Institute last year, that sector comprises about 24 per cent. of the industry's employees, not 80 per cent. as has been suggested. None of those employees has a police constable's powers. None of them carries out what we have identified as core police functions, and rightly so.

Nevertheless, many of them will be seen in areas where they have frequent and close contact with the public. It is vital that public confidence in them should not be misplaced. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the bad reputations of a few unsuitable individuals or poor companies do not tarnish the reputation of the industry as a whole.

There is little evidence of criminality across the board within the private security industry, but we have seen some alarming data from the police on various incidents throughout the country.

Of particular note is the part played by bouncers. I am hopeful that the registration schemes for door staff, which are being set up by the police and local authorities in areas where there are problems, will meet that need. Both the police and the Select Committee believe that it could, and we shall shortly issue guidance on the setting up and running of schemes for those who wish to introduce registration arrangements. At the same time, we shall ask the police to help us to monitor the number and operation of the schemes.

My hon. and learned Friend and his Committee offered us three options for improving quality in the manned guarding sector: licensing for individuals; regulation for companies; or to combine the two and set up an agency to run new arrangements for the licensing of individuals and to ensure that companies fulfil certain minimum criteria. The Committee proposed that the licensing of individuals should be based on mandatory criminal record checks, and that there should be greater access to criminal records for a widely defined industry.

I am well aware that one of the main concerns about the private security industry is the employment of individuals who have in the past committed criminal offences. Many see it as essential, therefore, that there should be a means of checking whether a prospective employee has a criminal record.

At the moment, there is no legitimate method of obtaining that information, other than by putting pressure on individuals to exercise their rights under the Data Protection Act 1988 for access to the information on convictions that is held on police computer systems. The problem is that that circumvents the safeguards available to individuals under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which aims to strike a balance between giving offenders a chance to reintegrate themselves into society and the need to protect society from those who might offend again. It allows convictions that have been become spent, through the passage of time and the individual's subsequent good behaviour, to remain unknown to prospective employers.

There are groups, of course, who are exceptions to the Act, but they do not include any part of the private security industry. I know that that is something that parts of the industry would like to see changed, and it is one of the issues that the Home Affairs Select Committee's report recommended that the Government should consider. It is, though, an issue that needs to be put in the context of the more general question about pre-employment vetting.

That whole subject has been of concern to the Government for some considerable time. At present, criminal record checks are carried out by the police only for certain groups of employees. Most checks take place to protect vulnerable people, such as children, while others are necessary for the purposes of national security or for probity in the administration of the law.

The Government have therefore been reviewing very carefully the current arrangements for vetting. Towards the end of 1993, we issued a Green Paper, "The Disclosure of Criminal Records for Employment Vetting Purposes". It posed 12 questions that had arisen from the Select Committee's deliberations on vetting.

In the light of the 180 responses that we received to that consultation exercise, the Government have been considering a new approach to vetting. We believe that a system of pre-employment checks of criminal records is needed that is more accessible and more open, and which will meet the needs of employers and other organisations who need to employ people in positions of trust.

A White Paper will shortly be published setting out our views. Although I cannot go into details about its contents, I can tell the House that it will discuss ways of enabling a much wider range of employers to obtain relevant information about criminal records quickly and cheaply.

Mr. Michael: The Minister has specifically addressed the issue of checks on employees. Will he now tell us whether the White Paper will also deal with checks on employers, and who will undertake those checks and be accountable to the public?

Mr. Maclean: The hon. Gentleman will have to be patient and wait for the White Paper.

As I said in evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee last December, the introduction of an easily obtainable criminal conviction certificate would be one way of achieving that. Developments of this kind will be possible largely due to improvements in technology, and particularly the development of a comprehensive criminal record database on the police national computer, which will provide access to a much wider range of information than was once the case.

Those proposals would go a considerable way towards meeting the concerns of the police, the industry and others, but it is also fair to point out that criminal record checks on their own will not be enough; not everyone with a criminal record is necessarily unsuited to all jobs, and not all those who are unsuitable for employment in the industry will necessarily have a criminal record.

If criminal record checks are to have a part to play in determining who may be employed as a security guard, the next question is whether unspent convictions should be revealed—that is, whether the industry should be excepted from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. I believe that the Act has worked fairly well since its introduction 20 years ago, and we must be sure when considering any case for making a new exception that the purpose of the Act would not be undermined. It may be the case that, under new vetting arrangements, for example, sufficient information could in any case be made available within the current provisions of the Act.

The Select Committee's report also outlined new criminal offences to lend teeth to the new statutory arrangements. We must be very careful to ensure that any new criminal offences, with all the implications that they carry for the criminal justice system as a whole, are created to deal only with a serious nuisance that cannot be dealt with otherwise. That may be the case here, and again it is something that we are still considering.

Mr. Sweeney: Does my right hon. Friend agree that one of the best predictors of future criminality is when one has committed offences in the past?

Mr. Maclean: It is certainly a clear predictor, but it is also the case that offences are committed by some in the manned guarding sector of the security industry and also by those who are responsible for children and have passed all sorts of security checks. It is an unfortunate fact of life that, despite some 600,000—perhaps coming on for 1 million—checks per annum, mainly involving people who may be working with children, many people who are involved in offences against children have never had a blot on their record before, so there is no perfect predictor of criminality.

The private security industry is a large and diverse organism, and the question whether, and if so how, to regulate all or part of it does raise complex questions. I know that my hon. and learned Friend understands that we are giving very careful consideration to his report. The Select Committee has identified a range of issues and given a steer on how they might be tackled, but, as my hon. and learned Friend pointed out, he has not given us a detailed blueprint on how it could be done. I must say to him and to the House that it is not a matter of Ministers making a grand pronouncement in principle without having tried to work out some of the detail that might follow such a pronouncement.

[Mr. Maclean]

My hon. and learned Friend's debate today is both timely and helpful, and, as I said in my evidence to the Select Committee, we go a long way together in agreeing on the areas of prime concern, but we must ensure that we get the solutions right. The recommendations in his report touch on the interests of many, both within Government and outside, and, like the recommendations of every Select Committee, they merit close attention.

Mr. Michael Stephen (Shoreham): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Maclean: I shall conclude now. My hon. Friend can reply if he gets the House's permission.

We will give my hon. and learned Friend and his Committee a full reply when we have managed to give the report the full and proper consideration that it deserves.

10.4 am

Sir Ivan Lawrence: With permission, perhaps I might reply. The debate has been of a very high standard, and it has been across party lines. There has been a minimum of rancour, and the debate has shown the House at its best. It has brought out the important point: that the industry is honourable and is working well, in the main, and it is a sign of the maturity of its leaders that they are prepared to have Government restriction and legislation to control it, to take account of the relatively small section of the industry that is working badly.

We have demonstrated that we recognise that the problem of immediate legislation is very difficult, but if the Government act soon on the question of criminality, that will provide a measure of satisfaction.

Hon. Members have mentioned the conflict between the Government's well motivated desire to deregulate, and the fact that here we are calling for regulation; but the fact has been strongly made that, where the industry is itself calling for state regulation and where there is an outstanding need to protect the public—and where the industry is prepared to pay—this is not a question of relying on the shibboleths of political dogma. There is a practical need to introduce the kind of legislation that has been requested by the Select Committee on Home Affairs.

We are, to some extent, encouraged by the Government's response. The public and the industry will also be encouraged. But we shall only be encouraged—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Janet Fookes): Order. We must now move to the next debate.

Manufacturing Industry

11.30 am

Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe (Bradford, South): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak about manufacturing, as I come from an industrial area. I am concerned about the human misery of unemployment—the sheer waste of people, many of whom are running out of hope.

A third of my constituents receive some form of income benefit. That should be set against Bradford's proud industrial heritage. The town must now create 700 new jobs a year just to retain its present employment level. In the early 1980s, we lost 22,000 jobs in four years, and we have never recovered. Companies such as GEC, International Harvesters and Baird Television, employing thousands, have completely gone; other major employers have drastically reduced their work forces. Hepworth and Grandage, a leading engineering company that employed 5,000 in its prime, now employs fewer than 250.

Bradford is not unique, however. Britain's industrial regions have been devastated by the growing cancer of long-term unemployment. We hear today that Britain has slipped to 18th in the league table of world prosperity; it is bottom of the league in terms of investment and job creation. I know that other hon. Members will want to share their experiences of the failure of Tory economic policy.

The history of Britain over the past 150 years could be portrayed as the inevitable effect of the decline of manufacturing industry. In the Great Exhibition of 1851, Britain was clearly seen as the strongest and most dynamic economy in the world, whose strength was based entirely on the success of manufacturing. Our competitors then were Germany, France and the United States—which long ago outstripped us, along with many other countries.

There are many reasons for our decline, but one of the most significant is the fact that in certain parts of the establishment there is still a feeling that to work in manufacturing is somehow inferior, confining employees to the tradesmen's entrance for life. There is a snobbish attitude to the industry. That attitude must be consigned to the dustbin. We are still a manufacturing nation—just—but we have a whole new series of challenges to face.

The Conservative Government have presided over the two deepest recessions since the second world war. Our economy has not the capacity for strong growth. In August, a survey conducted by the Business and Technology Education Council showed that more than half the firms employing more than 100 people thought that their profitability would be affected by skill shortages among young workers. We heard yesterday that the Deputy Prime Minister is to call for a job skills audit: he, too, recognises that Britain is way behind other countries in terms of competitiveness.

The rate of growth has been slowing seriously. Between 1979 and 1993, the economy grew at an average annual rate of only 1.7 per cent.; that is the slowest rate of growth in the United Kingdom since the 1930s. The Treasury forecast implies that the average growth rate between 1988 and 1998 will also be only 1.7 per cent., as against a pre-1979 post-war rate of 2.7 per cent. The United Kingdom's average growth between 1979 and 1993 has been the slowest in the 18 countries in the G7 and the European Union.

Manufacturing output rose by 0.5 per cent. in the first quarter, to a level less than 1 per cent. above that before the recession. Manufacturing output in 1993 was less than 1 per cent. higher than it was in 1973. In 1979, manufacturing output accounted for 30 per cent. of the economy, and more than 7 million people were employed in the industry; by 1993 the figure had fallen to around 20 per cent., and 4.3 million people were employed. Millions were unemployed in areas such as mine.

It could and should have been different. Let us consider the Pacific rim countries. There is no suggestion in Japan, South Korea or Malaysia that manufacturing is inferior: it is seen as essential to the development and prosperity of those countries, whose financial policies are directed towards efficiency. They have decided what they are good at, and they pursue policies that maximise their effectiveness with complete dedication.

The Asian tigers, as they are known, are increasingly involved in higher technology production, firmly based on a deliberate industrial policy. South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore have established domestic semiconductor industries. A recent study carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development concluded that that was encouraged by Government support for start-up costs and research as well as by protection. In South Korea, the Government identified semiconductors as a strategic industry in 1983. They provided a $400 million support package, and the industry has now become the largest outside the OECD area.

A planned economy can work. We must do the same: we must recognise that we can never compete with the emerging nations on a basis of low-added-value, low-pay processes. If we are to grow and develop as a nation, we must concentrate on what we are good at. We must realise that high-added-value, high-quality manufacturing is our future. If we try to compete by forcing wages and conditions down, we shall end up competing with Somalia and Bangladesh—and we shall lose.

That is why Labour's policy of introducing a national minimum wage will help parts of industry that are committed to planning for the future on a realistic basis. They know that to pay their workers the rate for the job is not a waste of money, but an investment. They also know that training their staff is the most important investment of all.

Mr. John Sykes (Scarborough): As the hon. Gentleman knows, I am a manufacturer in the north of England. The policy of a large manufacturer in my area—a food processing company—is to produce and sell goods in the area that it supplies: if it wants to supply food products in England, it will build a factory there. It wanted to do the same in France, but because of the excessive costs—the minimum wage and other social costs—imposed by the social chapter, it could not afford to build a factory there; instead, it doubled the production line in Scarborough. Does that not prove the hon. Gentleman wrong?

Mr. Sutcliffe: I do not think that it does. It is interesting that the hon. Gentleman should mention France: we should be competing with France, Germany and the other industrialised countries, rather than with third-world countries.

There is a good deal of hype about what a national minimum wage should be. I hope that there will be sensible, planned discussion between the social partners—employers and trade unions—to arrive at realistic figures that can be managed by industry. A good industrial strategy would ensure that the minimum wage set standards and promoted high self-esteem among the work force; it would not opt for a low-wage economy in which people competed for jobs priced at around £1 per hour. That would be totally unacceptable. I am convinced that a national minimum wage will boost Britain and its manufacturing base.

The unskilled and the poorly educated have suffered most from the rise in unemployment. The Tories have failed to invest not only in new technology and industry, but in the skills of the work force. In an internationally competitive global economy in which investment capital is mobile, the key factor in competition is a highly skilled work force.

Among the 21 countries in the OECD, the United Kingdom lags behind all but Turkey in terms of the proportion of 17 and 18-year-olds in education. Currently, 180,000 17 and 18-year-olds are not receiving education, work or training: that is a national disgrace. The Government have slashed the training for work budget by 29 per cent. since 1992. In 1994, the economic adviser to Lloyds bank warned that Britain was in danger of becoming a low-skill economy unless investment in training for manufacturing jobs was increased.

Low skills will discourage industry from adopting better technology, further increasing the need for better training. That downward spiral is probably the greatest threat to the opportunities now facing the United Kingdom's manufacturing industry. All good companies know that working with their employees is important. That is why 47 of the top 50 manufacturing companies in the United Kingdom are trade union organised: good industrial relations set the scene and the environment for success, and we should try to help work forces to develop them.

We must concentrate on innovation and design, yet the amount of money that we as a nation spend on research and development has consistently gone down. Today's research is tomorrow's product and, increasingly, major players throughout the world are committed to long-term development priorities as they realise that new products have longer and longer lead times and need more and more development.

Britain is doing just the opposite. In 1990, our industrial investment in research and design as a percentage of industrial production was almost the same as it was 20 years before. In the same period, comparable spending on R and D in Germany, Japan and France had doubled, and in the United States of America it had increased by one third.

Britain has no representative in the top 25 companies in the international table of research and development spending. That is partly because British companies pay out an increasing proportion of company profits in dividends, rather than use them for reinvestment. We need to ensure that the strength of our financial sector also becomes a source of strength for our industrial sector because, as a whole, investment has greatly decreased as well. From 1979 to 1993, the average investment level, as a share of the UK economy, was the lowest of the 18 countries in the G7 and European Community. As the Bank of England pointed out in its August 1995 inflation report, investment is 20 per cent. below its level in previous recoveries.

[Mr Sutcliffe]

In Britain, investment per worker in manufacturing is 30 per cent. below that in Germany and the United States, and only one quarter of that in Japan. In its recent summer forecast, the Treasury revised down its forecast for growth in business investment from 10.75 per cent. in 1995 to 4.75 per cent. On OECD figures, in 1994, the United Kingdom had the lowest level of investment as a share of the economy at 15 per cent., compared with Germany at 22 per cent. That leaves the UK with an investment gap of £46 billion relative to the investment share in Germany.

If we consider the past 150 years, every time it was possible for us to take the wrong decision, we did so. We have consistently placed barriers against manufacturing and, even worse, successive Governments have moved the goalposts at depressingly regular intervals. I think that we have had 12 Secretaries of State since 1979. We must create a level playing field by introducing policies that help with the consistent development of a sound manufacturing base and discourage the speculator, the dawn raider and the asset stripper.

All the key players, especially financiers and industrialists, have roles to play in reversing Britain's consistent under-investment. We should shift the onus of proof in a hostile takeover bid and require the company seeking control to demonstrate that its success will be in the public interest. We could launch a business development bank for small businesses which would specialise in providing direct long-term investment in the expansion of the productive economy. When we have those policies, we must leave them in place so that businesses can plan ahead. Planning is vital for all businesses.

The Government claim to understand and support business, yet everywhere I go in my constituency I meet businesses, small and large, that are depressed and outraged by the lack of understanding shown of their concerns at all levels of Government and of the civil service. An example of that was the business rate in Bradford, which went up by 40 per cent. The local authority would never have imposed such an increased burden on local business, but the Government, who have total control over the business rate level, showed no signs of understanding the potentially disastrous effect that such a rise would have.

One measure that virtually every business person I meet advocates is the introduction of fiscal measures to reduce tax on profit retained in businesses, so that investment can be stimulated. It is not just businesses that want that. Every trade union with members in manufacturing wants such growth, as do all academic economists. I am proud of Labour's investment budget for Britain because it contains manufacturing investment incentives. It shows an ambition for the country that the Government do not seem to share.

The only people who are against incentives are those at the Treasury, which perhaps comes as no surprise. The Treasury has never understood manufacturing and never will so long as recruitment and promotion is based on such a narrow and prescribed basin.

There are many things that any Government should do to ensure that manufacturers can do their job effectively. Efficient transport policies must be pursued. In my region, improvement of the A650 is desperately needed. Such work has been on and off for the past 25 years. Throughout that time, lorries have been sitting in traffic queues in residential areas while the firms they have been delivering to waited in angry frustration. According to the Automobile Association, one mile in every seven in our motorway network, and more than 4,000 miles of our primary roads, need urgent repair.

The electrification programme has cost hundreds of millions of pounds. When it is finished, the Government will have created such a disastrous shambles in the railway industry that no one will want to run mainline trains on it. The example of the channel tunnel rail link sums up how Britain lags behind. French trains travelling at 185 mph from Paris on some of the newest track are forced to travel at little more than 50 or 60 mph from Dover to London. As ex-President Mitterrand said, the channel tunnel opens up two worlds of travel: high-speed through France, followed by a leisurely look at the English countryside.

My constituency is even further disadvantaged by the increasingly poor links to London. Without a modern, integrated transport system, Britain's manufacturing industry is at a disadvantage as soon as the product leaves the factory gates.

There must be a national ambition for Britain and a visionary economic plan to promote key industries, because no country of Britain's size can hope to survive without a strong home manufacturing base. Every opportunity that has presented itself in the past 16 years has been wasted. North sea oil was viewed as a great opportunity, and it should have been, but consider what happened. Because of short-term attitudes and incompetent financial management, the oil forced exchange rates up, which inevitably meant that the price of manufacturing goods rose in comparison with our competitors. The Government stuck their head in the sand and hoped that the problem would go away. The only thing that went away was a large chunk of our manufacturing base.

The Government have always been driven by their relationship with the City, which has never genuinely supported manufacturing industry. That relationship has been the most damaging in modern British history. It has created a short-term approach that looks for the quick fix of privatisation, rather than the consistent support of manufacturing, which creates wealth and prosperity in the long term. The Tories have not understood manufacturing industry and in some sectors they have welcomed its decline.

As we enter the 21st century, Labour recognises that the working environment has changed. New technology and new information networks need to be harnessed to promote an industrial development policy that uses the population's skills to their maximum, rather than allowing hopelessness and disadvantage to damage the fabric of society. Britain has a great history of manufacturing and, if we are not to sink into oblivion, it must be our future as well.

In the past 16 years, we have had an industrial policy, or rather lack of one, characterised by incompetence, indecision and the short-term view. Two million unemployed people is unacceptable, in terms of the cost of unemployment both financially and socially. Regions such as Bradford, which I represent, do not deserve to be treated in the way that they have been. What are the Government doing about facing that challenge? They are looking to have tax reductions of 1p and 2p.

The countries that will succeed in this new global marketplace are not only those that have sound public finances, but those that invest in the skills and technologies of the future. Many partnerships have been established between the public and private sectors and at our party conference I was happy to see the relationship with British Telecom. The fact that we are going to have laptop computers on every desk in the education sector is superb.

Britain still has world-class companies, but few of them. We need manufacturing policies that are dynamic, thoughtful and consistent. Within 18 months, the Labour Government will deliver those. This debate is about not talking Britain down, but making certain that we develop and expand our economy so that manufacturing can regain its rightful place as part of Britain's future.

11.47 am

Mr. Matthew Banks (Southport): I am most grateful to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to catch your eye. It is a pleasure to be able to follow the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Sutcliffe). I agreed with one or two of his points. I have no doubt that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will deal with the rest of the hon. Gentleman's speech in his usual robust fashion.

Where I beg to differ in particular with the hon. Member for Bradford, South is in his remarks on a minimum wage. In an intervention, my hon. Friend the Member for Scarborough (Mr. Sykes), who brings so much experience to debates on these subjects, referred to the experiences of his company. I welcome his presence and hope that he will speak in the debate shortly.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South thought that a national minimum wage would be a boost for Britain. It would be a boost only for costs and unemployment.

As right hon. and hon. Members know, I represent Southport, which is a seaside resort. It is not known for its heavy industry. It is a tourist resort and a major part of the local economy is the residential and nursing home sector.

I recently had the pleasure of inviting my hon. Friend the Minister for Competition and Consumer Affairs to Southport. When he visited my constituency, he had the opportunity to meet, over lunch, more than 100 local business men and women. He heard of their experiences, their concerns and their wish to see red tape cut further. He heard about their successes and we were able to draw attention, even in a seaside resort, to what is often called in Southport back-street development—it is that sort of town and that is where industry has to thrive.

There are many businesses that employ only a few people; I can count them on several hands, not just on a few fingers. There are businesses in my constituency that employ just a few people, but which export to more than 30 countries. For too long, Conservatives have had to listen to Opposition Members claiming that British manufacturing industry is in decline.

Mr. Sykes: The so-called experts.

Mr. Banks: My hon. Friend knows, as I do—I mean no discourtesy to any Opposition Member—that Opposition Members do not have the experience that he has had. We shall, no doubt, hear from him later.

Mr. Sutcliffe: I said that 22,000 jobs had been lost in Bradford in four years. Is the hon. Gentleman saying that those jobs have not been lost and that we have not suffered from a large rise in unemployment in the area? Could the situation have been altered? Are the figures that show how far down the prosperity league table Britain is accurate? If not, why not?

Mr. Banks: If the hon. Gentleman had listened to what I said, he would know that I was not referring to Bradford or to job losses. If he is kind enough to pay attention over the next few minutes, he will hear me make a number of my own points. The House is a good judge of character. I recognise that the hon. Gentleman is battling for his constituency this morning and I know that he will not mind if I battle for mine too.

I return to the so-called decline of manufacturing industry. It is a myth; nothing could be further from the truth. The myth of manufacturing decline has been expounded by those who take no account of qualitative economic indicators and who are unable to escape from their old socialist methods of measuring everything in terms of quantity. The percentage of our gross domestic product and employment accounted for by manufacturing industry has certainly decreased over several decades. That feature is, however, mirrored in other major economies and it is mainly a result of productivity increases and efficiency gains.

It is true that, until the Conservative Government came to power in 1979, our manufacturing performance was poor. During the 20 years up to 1982, Britain's share of world manufacturing exports fell by half and our major industries were propped up by nationalisation and riven by strikes. For various reasons, on which I shall expand in a moment, the trend has been reversed. Not only did the number of manufacturing companies increase by 27,000 in the 1980s, but manufacturing exports increased by 66 per cent. in the decade, and the growth in import penetration was slower than in any of the other six major economies.

The United Kingdom has also received far more inward investment, a third of which has benefited our manufacturing sector alone, than any other country in the European Union. The United Kingdom has attracted more than 40 per cent. of Japanese and United States investment into the European Union as a whole. Some 434 new investment decisions have been made in 1994-95 alone—we are barely into the 1995-96 financial year—creating or safeguarding almost 90,000 jobs. Companies such as Lexmark, Ford, Toyota, Nissan and Jaguar did not have to invest in the United Kingdom. They did so in no small measure because of what a Conservative Government have achieved.

As a result of inward investment, we are already, for example, a net exporter of televisions. I confidently predict that we shall shortly become a net exporter of cars. The basis of this turnaround has been the promotion of genuine competition, which has been achieved by winding down import restriction arrangements and exposing our manufacturing to the rigours of the international market.

Mr. Denis MacShane (Rotherham): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Banks: In other words, companies that could not cope with competition did not survive. The result was the great shake-out of the 1980s in which overmanning and other inefficient practices were banished. On that point, I give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. MacShane: If the turnaround is due to the rigours of world competition, why did the Government feel it necessary to give a £80 million bribe or subsidy to Ford to keep Jaguar production in the west midlands? Without that massive Government subsidy, Ford would have moved Jaguar production to the United States. Is that an example of the competitive market?

Mr. Banks: I am delighted by, and support, the Government's action in that respect. I have no doubt that, if the hon. Gentleman catches your eye, Madam Deputy Speaker, and decries the Government's action, the employees of the company will listen to what he says and wonder whether he speaks for new Labour, old Labour or himself.

I return to the inefficient practices which, I hope, have been banished as a result of the hon. Gentleman's intervention. The promotion of competition is still being carried forward relentlessly in the form of the second competitiveness White Paper. In addition, successive Conservative Governments have implemented a combination of policies which have created the right economic framework in which our companies can compete abroad and in which foreign firms can locate here.

Privatisation, deregulation, the reform of over-powerful trade unions, investment in skills and training and tax reform have all contributed to the success story to which I am referring. The United Kingdom has low interest rates, low inflation and low taxation. We have a fairly sound transport infrastructure, we have skilled and hard-working labour and a work force unhindered, in comparison to the 1970s, by repressive trade union power. Let us not forget that we also have rapidly rising productivity. The only thing that we do not have is the social chapter, which would impose unnecessary costs and burdens on all British industry, not just manufacturing industry.

In 1979, it cost the taxpayer £50 million a week to prop up the nationalised industries. I shall take British Aerospace as an example. Since privatisation, productivity has risen by 150 per cent., and it has become our largest manufacturing exporter. British Steel has at least doubled its sales over the past decade to become one of our largest exporters. We could also consider what has happened at Rover, Short Brothers, Rolls-Royce, Amersham International, Vosper Thornycroft and many others. It was the courage of the Conservative Government that made privatisation possible and, because of their work forces, those companies have been able to take advantage of the economic conditions to which I have referred.

Mr. Sykes: My hon. Friend mentioned British Steel. Stones Bitter wanted to do a television advertisement in Sheffield which extolled the virtues of the steel and the beer. The company sent a team up to Sheffield to film what people might think of as a normal steelworks, but it found that there were no grimy men doing the work because the modern steelworks were automated and efficient. The film crew had to go to Czechoslovakia to film a steelworks where there were grimy men and things were done in the old-fashioned way. I make the point because British Steel is a completely revolutionised firm, although the policies that the Labour party is trying to introduce would destroy British Steel before one could say Jack Robinson.

Mr. Banks: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for making a powerful point. He underlines what I was saying about improved efficiency and productivity.

It is clear, though, that the recession has taken its toll in terms of lost capacity. To underline the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Scarborough, that loss does not reflect poorly on our manufacturers. Lack of demand was largely the cause of it, not incapacity to supply. Indeed, sharp falls in manufacturing output have been mirrored abroad, especially in Germany and Japan.

Recession can, of course, cause permanent damage, but the success of what the Government have done for manufacturing since 1979 in the United Kingdom can be measured by how well the industry has recovered after recession. Manufacturing output is back to record levels. The production of cars for export, for example, has almost trebled since 1988, and business surveys suggest that output and exports remain good.

In the light of that achievement, I listened with great interest to what the hon. Member for Bradford, South said and I shall listen to what other Opposition Members say later in the debate if they catch your eye, Madam Speaker.

Trying to decide what the Opposition stand for depends of course on to whom one is listening; whether it is the right hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) and his backroom boys or one or two of his hon. Friends on the Back Benches. It seems that all Opposition Members hanker after a sort of ludicrous Utopia, where manufacturing is everything and other sectors of the economy are overlooked. Their answer to improving manufacturing industry is to subsidise—they have no qualms about that word. They are antiquated—I am referring to subsidies, of course, not Opposition Members.

Although it is an honest pronouncement of their party's policy, subsidy has no place in the new Labour vocabulary—just like "socialist" or any phrase with the words "pips" or "squeak" in it. No, the Labour party now likes to refer to assistance, or aid, or investment. I fail to see how throwing money at manufacturing industry, or at anything else, without a hope of ever seeing a return can be labelled an investment.

Every policy which the Labour party recommends ought to be stamped with a sort of health warning. Imposing the social chapter on our firms, a minimum wage, opposing privatisation: such policies can seriously damage our manufacturing industry. Those policies may appease Opposition Members' sponsors in the trade unions, but they utterly fail to offer any help or hope to our manufacturing industry.

The competitive position of British manufacturing will be improved by competitive exchange rates and the fruits of major inward investment projects. Combined with the promising economic outlook, it is likely that Britain's manufacturing base will continue to show growth and not a diminishing trend. It is typical of Opposition Members to run down British manufacturing industry. The real question in 1995, or as we move towards the 21st century, is whether manufacturing industry can survive without a Conservative Government. I ask it, I doubt it, and I sincerely hope that the sector never has to find out.

12.3 pm

Mr. Ian Pearson (Dudley, West): The future of manufacturing industry is crucial to Dudley's future. Two out of every five people of working age in my constituency rely on the manufacturing sector for their jobs—almost double the national average. They cannot all work at Merry Hill, one of the biggest retail complexes in Europe. Nor can they all work at the Child Support Agency, also located in my constituency—although judging from the time that that agency takes to reply to letters from Members of Parliament, a few more employees might help.

We have a proud manufacturing tradition in Dudley and in the west midlands generally, and we mean and need to keep it. The country needs us to keep it and needs our manufacturing industries to grow and to succeed in world markets. There are some positive signs: the expansion at Rover, Fords's decision to build the new model Jaguar at Coventry, and plans for expansion at Toyota, to cite but a few.

More west midlands companies have become world class, and I fully acknowledge that. The Japanese "transplants" have had a significant effect in bringing that about, not only in the automotive components supply industry, but in the manufacturing sector generally, through the demonstration effect that their modern manufacturing techniques have had. Company de-layering, cell manufacturing, the continuous improvement philosophy and benchmarking, for instance, have all produced benefits for British companies that have gone down that route.

Nevertheless, we still do not have nearly enough world-class companies, and, according to the most recent quarterly survey by the Confederation of British Industry, manufacturers in the west midlands are gloomier than all others in the country about economic prospects. It is a salient fact that manufacturing investment in the second quarter of this year is still 15 per cent. lower than it was at the beginning of 1990. My local training and enterprise council is telling me that labour shortages are already affecting manufacturing industry in the black country.

Only yesterday, the National Federation of Building Trades Employers warned that there would be 100,000 job losses over the next two years, and the Engineering Employers Federation reported that 8,000 engineering jobs were likely to be axed across the country over the next year.

I acknowledge that Ministers are concerned about the manufacturing sector and are starting to say some of the right things, but they still have to do the right things. Since 1979, the manufacturing sector has seen its share of gross domestic product fall from 29 per cent. to 22 per cent. It has also lost 2.9 million jobs. That is a greater percentage of the work force than that lost in the United States, and the sector has lost jobs at a rate three times faster than in Germany. Research for the Government's second White Paper on competitiveness, published earlier this year, revealed that British companies are failing to match the productivity of United States firms in any of 12 key sectors of industry, and in only one are we exceeding German levels.

After 16 years of Conservative Governments, views from the boardrooms of British businesses reveal a damning indictment of Government policy. An Association of British Chambers of Commerce survey in 1994 found that more than one company in five reported that red tape had inhibited growth and prevented them from taking on people. This year, an Institute of Export survey shows that 47 per cent. of companies expressed the view that banks did not meet their needs.

Mr. Sykes: On the subject of deregulation, why did the hon. Gentleman's party vote against the Deregulation and Contracting Out Bill?

Mr. Pearson: The Labour party is fully committed to the principle of deregulation, but we do not believe in the way the Government have been going about it. If I may, I should like to make progress.

The CBI surveys have consistently reported that more than one in 10 firms employing fewer than 500 people consider late payment to be a problem. The chambers of commerce told the Select Committee on Trade and Industry that there was a

> "patchwork quilt of provision"

of business support and that firms

> "perceive themselves to be at a disadvantage compared to their international competitors where different structures of business support exist."

Small and medium-sized businesses in my constituency, of which I talk to many, confirm all of that evidence and more. They tell me that they want a stable macro-economic climate to give them the confidence to invest and to make sensible decisions. They want access to finance on appropriate terms, the ability to get their goods to market efficiently, to be free from unnecessary regulation and red tape, to have an effective business advice and support network if they need it, and otherwise to be left to get on with running their businesses and making profits.

That does not seem too much to ask, but most of those businesses feel badly let down; they feel that the Government have not delivered the goods. They blame the Government for the recession. They still have problems with the banks. For more than a decade people have been waiting for the Government to put their hand in their pocket for the Dudley southern by-pass and the extension of the A4036—and they are still waiting. None of the business people to whom I talk believe that there is less red tape now than three years ago, and most, although they think that the business links scheme is a step in the right direction, are sceptical about whether that initiative could ever be of any use to them.

Dudley's manufacturing companies, like those in the rest of Britain, deserve better than that from the Government, and I shall outline how a different approach could be taken. I shall then highlight three areas in which action is needed. Clearly there are more such areas, but other hon. Members wish to speak in the debate.

At its heart, a new approach needs to take on board the facts pointed out by the business academic Michael Porter, who said:

> "while national government has a role in upgrading industry the role of state and local governments is potentially as great or greater".

The Government need to recast regional policy completely. Competitiveness must run through it, with the Government recognising that in future the regions and cities across Europe will compete with each other as much as co-operate with each other to attract, develop and maintain high quality companies and industries.

That is already happening now, and it will rapidly intensify. In the west midlands we compete head to head with Baden-Württemberg in Germany and Emilia Romagna in Italy. In terms of gross domestic product per head, recently published OECD figures rank those areas eighth and 10th respectively in the EU, while the west midlands is 46th.

Regional selective assistance needs to be transformed into a strategic tool for assisting companies to upgrade their competitive positions. Regions should be required to

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produce clear statements of their aims and objectives, and of their strategies for development based on improving competitiveness. For most regions, those strategies should focus more on developing and supporting indigenous manufacturing business than on attracting inward investment. They should look to broadening and expanding industrial clusters, harnessing new technologies and helping more companies to understand what it takes to be world class.

The three areas that I intend to highlight are accessing finance, dealing with red tape, and late payment. I remain convinced that Britain needs a vehicle for channelling long-term loans to companies at reasonable rates of interest. Companies in Germany and Japan have been able to benefit from such arrangements for years, and we need something similar here.

Simplification of tax legislation would be a major step towards cutting red tape, as anyone who has served on the Finance Bill Committee will recognise. The Government need to grasp the nettle firmly, as they do with tax collection, by forming a unified agency and merging the Inland Revenue, the Contributions Agency and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise.

On late payment, I know that there are arguments both for and against the introduction of a statutory right to interest. On balance, I favour a statutory right on overdue commercial debt. I do not imagine that it would be used extensively, but if the Government and their agencies led the way by paying promptly, that could, over time, help to change the payment culture in business. Here one may cite the drink-driving legislation as an instance in which the law has played a part in changing attitudes. With the move to self-assessment of income tax, the Inland Revenue will have a legal right to interest on late payments: what is good enough for the business of government should surely be good enough for business itself.

12.13 pm

Mr. Stephen Timms (Newham, North-East): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Sutcliffe) on his success in obtaining the debate and on his excellent speech, which set out the tragic decline of British manufacturing, especially over the past 16 years, and eloquently described the steps that we need to take to reverse that decline. I am also pleased follow my hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, West (Mr. Pearson) and during my speech I shall reinforce some of what he said.

There is some scope for agreement across the Chamber in that we all agree that a strong manufacturing sector is vital to the British economy. We have not always been able to agree about that. In the early 1980s the Government seemed happy to see swathes of British manufacturing shut down as a necessary price for some greater economic benefit. In 1983 our national manufacturing trade balance went into deficit for the first time, but the Government did not appear unduly perturbed.

I welcome the recent change in tone in Government statements about manufacturing—for example, last year's announcement of the London manufacturing initiative—and I hope that it heralds a real change in substance that will become apparent in the months ahead. It would be wonderful to see the imaginative proposals about encouraging manufacturing investment made this morning by my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), the shadow Chancellor, taken up by the Government.

In London, manufacturing employment has halved in the past 15 years, while the overall level of production has remained steady. That startling conjunction illustrates success in improving productivity but highlights the dismal stagnation in the volume of London's manufacturing. Manufacturing has fared badly in comparison with services, and since the mid-1980s London has de-industrialised more than any comparable city in the OECD countries.

The effects of that decline have been devastating in the area of east London that I represent, especially through persistent sky-high levels of unemployment. None the less, manufacturing levels in east London are still twice the London average. East London, especially the Lea valley and the Thames gateway, remains London's manufacturing centre, and east London will be a key barometer for assessing the success of the London manufacturing initiative.

In making my proposals, I want to be constructive and, I hope, optimistic about the future, without hiding the scale of the challenges that we face. There are four key areas in which Government action can support renewal of the manufacturing sector in east London.

First, regeneration activity and support for manufacturing need bringing together. In the past—in the early days of docklands, for example—regeneration and property development initiatives combined to displace industry, by boosting land values and encouraging manufacturers to sell up and leave. Industrial land was developed for housing or offices, because those brought the fastest profits.

It is time for us all to be clear that successful regeneration needs manufacturing, and that property development which sweeps away manufacturing is inimical to regeneration. Three quarters of London's development land is in the north-east quadrant, concentrated in the Lea valley and the Thames gateway, and the Government have identified those areas for targeted support. I warmly welcome that.

The task now must be redevelopment for high-grade industrial purposes such as technology parks and modern manufacturing plants—modern locations for modern industries. English Partnerships should be instructed to invest strategically to support manufacturing regeneration. I welcome the new development being undertaken by the docklands development corporation in the royal docks, which will promote an international exhibition centre, a university college, a technology centre and high-technology manufacturing. Among the projects now being considered for single regeneration budget funding by the Government office for London is the royal docks technology centre, which would provide vital research and development support for east London manufacturing, in partnership with universities.

Partnership between public and private sectors, as exemplified in that bid, is the key to attracting and creating the "patient money" that alone can achieve the long-term economic success that London needs. The result could be high quality locations for companies in the new and growing sectors, such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, information technology biotechnology and environmental technology.

The Government's existing regeneration programmes can be used to achieve in east London the high-quality sites that those new sectors demand. It is astonishing that London has only 7 per cent. of the technology park floor space that Birmingham has. Elsewhere, technology parks have been developed by universities on their vacant land, but London's universities do not have that vacant land. It is not physically possible for them to follow the successful examples of Cambridge, Surrey and Heriot-Watt universities.

Land is, however, available in east London. City challenge, assisted area status, urban development corporations, English Partnerships and regional challenge should all point in the same direction to achieve locations for modern manufacturing. As yet, they do not. There is no need for extra money, but there is a need for a more strategic application of the existing money. There are single regeneration budget bids before Ministers at present which aim—like the royal docks—to strengthen east London's manufacturing. Those bids deserve support.

I also welcome the recognition of the importance of improving the links between industry and universities. That is obviously right. If the next industrial era is to be an information age, the extension and exploitation of the knowledge base is critical. Strong industry is best organised in clusters, whether in the potteries or in silicon valley. They allow firms to sharpen each other's competitiveness and pull in the skills and support services that firms need. In turn, that strengthens the cluster.

In an information age, higher education is vital in enabling industry and clusters to develop. This is not just about providing links to research, but about investing to produce entrepreneurial graduates and young people whose study turns into business ideas and who are then actively encouraged to found new companies.

Clusters are regional, as are the strongest industry-university links. My hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, West referred to the changes that are needed in regional policy, and he has drawn Members' attention to the increasingly impressive contribution of agencies such as Greater London Enterprise and others around the country. Colleges and universities must rediscover their regional roles inside society and the economy.

The technology foresight programme and the White Paper on competitiveness—to which reference has been made—are right to envisage better bridges between universities and industry. A partnership between universities and innovative small and medium-sized companies will be especially important, as few smaller companies on their own have the resources for long-term research. Their well-being—and a large slice of our future prosperity—will depend on their ability to establish and sustain long-term partnerships with universities.

Universities can stimulate the creation of the new companies of the information age as well. If we overlay the different trends in east London, we discover a high density of manufacturing employment and a high density of unemployment. We also discover that there are low levels of post-16 education take-up and low levels of jobs in the modern information-based economy. Those trends are accompanied by the highest birth rate in the United Kingdom, which portends a troubled future unless the relationship between education and training on the one hand, and manufacturing expansion on the other, is developed a long way beyond its current state.

Mr. Sebastian Coe (Falmouth and Camborne): The hon. Gentleman has referred to the importance of linking education to industry, and the dismantling of the binary divides certainly helped in that direction. If the hon. Gentleman is so committed to the right kind of technical education, why would his party—given half a chance—abolish city technology colleges?

Mr. Timms: I see precious little evidence that city technology colleges are tackling any of the issues that I have raised in the debate. They are irrelevant, and they are not addressing the key issues.

Local collaborations are emerging with enormous potential for good. The Government are still not focused and do not act to give incentives to such collaborations—no matter which Department or Minister is involved. That fundamental problem has not yet been tackled successfully, despite the establishment of the regional Government offices and the overarching persona of the Deputy Prime Minister.

We need to create the right infrastructure, particularly in transport and communications. I start with a compliment. Much has been achieved in east London. In transport infrastructure, the docklands road system, the light railway and the Jubilee line extension are major and positive achievements. I was intrigued by the phrase used by the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Banks)—a "fairly sound transport infrastructure"—to describe the position in the United Kingdom, but the key element in the transport infrastructure in east London remains uncertain.

Mr. Matthew Banks: If the hon. Gentleman is so concerned about the transport infrastructure in east London, can he explain why the Labour party scuppered the crossrail project?

Mr. Timms: I very much hope that crossrail will go ahead, and I believe that it will.

The key element in the transport infrastructure in east London is what is to happen to the channel tunnel rail link. When the Government announced in 1991 that the channel tunnel rail link was to be routed through east London, they said that the link would be welcomed in east London for the economic regeneration that it would bring. That was correct. I was leader of Newham council at the time, and we welcomed the announcement for that very reason.

Four years later, however, we still do not know for sure if there will be a station in east London. The Transport Select Committee rightly said that the station at Stratford was needed in the national interest, as well as in the interest of regenerating east London. We need the Government to confirm that they will allow the east London station to go ahead. East London faces Europe. It is the place where Europe reaches London, and the Government should join local authorities, training and enterprise councils and universities in exploiting it as an asset. We need both the east London international passenger station and a proper channel tunnel rail freight strategy.

Good telecommunications are also vital, and we need a rapid development by the private sector of the new national communications networks mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South. Britain can become Europe's knowledge capital, but manufacturing requires high-capacity communications for computer-aided design. The networks will provide new highways for partnerships between companies, and

[Mr. Timms]

between companies and universities. The Government need to provide the right framework and the leadership to ensure that the investment that is needed is quickly achieved.

Finally, the Government need to ensure the availability of high-quality research data. The absence today of a clear picture of the condition of London's industry in a European context is becoming a critical problem. The standard industrial classification fails to show how the industrial sectors are converging and new ones emerging. Small and medium-sized companies need market data to understand how to expand into Europe, where 60 per cent. of our trade is now carried out.

We have tremendous needs in east London. Newham, with just over 200,000 inhabitants, has lost 50,000 jobs in the past 25 years. The Government have acknowledged that the regeneration of east London is a national priority, and manufacturing industry will be central to the success of that regeneration. Without it, we shall never create the decent long-term jobs that we need.

Manufacturing regeneration will happen only with targeted support for new business locations which are fitting for modern manufacturing companies, with creative partnerships between universities and industry, with a world-class transport and communications infrastructure and with high quality market data. Those do not require immense Government spending, but they do require Government action. Inaction will mean decline, a rapid worsening of the already severe deprivation that we face in east London and the unforgivable loss of an opportunity to provide enormous benefits to the whole nation. I do not say that the Government have done nothing—I have made it clear that I welcome a number of their initiatives—but much more needs to be done, as we cannot afford to miss these opportunities.

12.27 pm

Mr. Denis MacShane (Rotherham): I shall try to keep my remarks brief, as I am looking forward to the winding-up speeches—particularly that of my old friend, the Under-Secretary. While preparing my thoughts on my short speech, I looked for some coherent policy—*[Interruption.]* [HON. MEMBERS: "She is walking out."] The right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) can read my speech in *Hansard* tomorrow. Now I can say what I really think!

We are seeing in effect the devaluation "boomlet" following our exit from the exchange rate mechanism petering out. The latest CBI industrial trends survey reveals that business investment is down, and previous speakers have identified a loss of confidence and job losses. There has also been a rise in unit labour costs, a far more important measure than productivity.

What worries me as a British Member of Parliament is that, when we talk about British manufacturing, we are talking more and more about foreign firms which happen to manufacture in this country. I have no objection in principle to that, but there is a problem that, for every pound of profit that Ford, Samsung or whoever makes in the United Kingdom, about 50p goes away to America, Korea or Japan.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Phillip Oppenheim): Does the hon. Gentleman know the proportion of British manufacturing that is foreign-owned?

Mr. MacShane: What is most worrying—[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] I am looking forward to the Minister's speech, because he should give a clear—[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] Can the Minister name—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Janet Fookes): Order. We cannot have a speech punctuated by various sedentary interventions.

Mr. MacShane: I invite the Minister to name a single car or computer manufacturer—they are still the key component industries for our future—that is in British hands. That is why we are 18th in the world ranking of relative gross domestic product. We are out of the premier division and the first division. We have a third-rate Government, consisting of Ministers who, for the most part, are queuing up to join the National Westminster bank or GEC. When Amber Valley turns red at the next election, I wish the Under-Secretary good luck on his future job promotion prospects.

Mr. Sykes: The hon. Gentleman is a well-known pan-European Member. Can he tell me why this country, of all European countries, has attracted 40 per cent. of Japan's inward investment in Europe? Is it because of our deregulated market or the socialist policies followed here?

Mr. MacShane: The answer is simple—other European countries invest far more in themselves than we do. Investment per capita in Austria stands at 79.6 per cent.; in Belgium, 35 per cent.; and in Germany, 59 per cent. The equivalent investment in the United Kingdom is zero per cent. Even more alarming than the OECD's GDP per capita report is the report published in the summer by the World Economic Forum, which ranked the United Kingdom 35th out of 48 countries in terms of education and training in the world's manufacturing economy.

Yesterday, we read that the Deputy Prime Minister has announced that he intends to set up a committee to consider why our industrial training is so poor. Frankly, he need only look in the mirror, because he and his Cabinet colleagues have presided over the destruction of apprenticeship schemes, the de-industrialisation to which my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Sutcliffe) referred and the de-skilling and de-waging of our society. He and his successor at the Department of Trade and Industry seem to think that McDonalds and Burger King can replace the sinews of British manufacturing.

Do we have an identifiable industrial policy? That is certainly not evident at the Ministry of Defence. Its equivalent in other countries is a lead ministry in supporting the manufacturing sector. We have a Secretary of State for Defence who is so puffed up with his hatred of Europe, and so full of contempt for the necessary politics of international partnership, that he will sell Britain's defence manufacturing sector down the river. He will turn the British armed forces into demonstration teams for American arms dealers. The letters SAS on his office wall actually stand for "sell-off and scrap" what remains of the United Kingdom's defence industry.

The hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Banks) referred to subsidies. The haphazard policy of subsidisation, which does not seem to follow any coherent—

Mr. Matthew Banks: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. MacShane: I do not wish to be discourteous, but I must make progress.

Mr. Banks: But the hon. Gentleman mentioned me.

Mr. MacShane: Very well, I shall give way for the last time.

Mr. Banks: When the hon. Gentleman referred to the haphazard nature of policies, I presume that he was referring to the policies of his own party rather than to my remarks.

Mr. MacShane: Thank you.

We all know that £80 million has been given to Ford to keep Jaguar production in the west midlands and that £10 million was given to Samsung to expand in the north-east. I have no objection in principle to such funding, but such massive subsidies—more than £150 million offered to firms under the regional selective assistance scheme in the first three months of this year alone—make a mockery of the Government's efforts to outlaw the subsidies that are paid to certain companies in other European countries.

In common with other Opposition Members with an interest in steel, I have always supported the efforts of British Steel and Ministers to bring pressure to bear on the European Community to stamp out such subsidies. When our own Government send multi-million pound cheques to Ford at Detroit and Samsung in Korea that makes us look foolish and hypocritical as we campaign against European subsidies.

Mr. Oppenheim: What about Bridgend?

Mr. MacShane: The Under-Secretary may like to know that Samsung is a Korean firm.

This country has been offered the possibility of using European structural funds for the regeneration of steel regions such as my own, Rotherham. The European Commission steel area regeneration programme, known as RESIDER, had a budget of £224 million for 1988 to 1992. Because of Government inefficiency, we got only £4.14 million of that, despite the fact that our steel industry suffered the biggest job losses in Europe. The second stage of that initiative, known as RESIDER II, has been allotted reduced funds for 1997–99.

That programme, together with initiatives on the textile and coal industries, and those concerning military conversions, have been allocated £394 million for 1994-97, and £315 million for 1997-99. We will get £50 million for those industries, but so far the Government have not said that that money from Brussels will be used to support the steel, textile and coal industries and the military conversion sector. Many in the steel industry fear that that money will be used to buy votes in marginal seats in the south rather than to support the conversion and re-industrialisation of the steel sector.

I want to hear the Under-Secretary pledge that European cash for steel under the RESIDER II programme will be allocated to help conversion programmes in Rotherham and other steel communities. It would be the most cynical corruption of that programme's money were it to be used for any other purpose.

I look for some balance and equilibrium. We need a service industry and a healthy financial services sector, but we also need a new industrial programme. That is why I welcome the proposals announced this morning by the shadow Chancellor. Under Labour again, we need a one-nation manufacturing policy in which industry and manufacturing will once again be given their rightful place.

12.36 pm

Dr. Kim Howells (Pontypridd): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Sutcliffe) on initiating this debate. I am sure that my congratulations reflect the admiration felt for him by everyone in the Chamber.

We have had a good debate. I was especially glad that my hon. Friend saw fit to begin his speech by highlighting the cultural problem from which we still seem to suffer concerning the status of the manufacturing sector. I know from his previous speeches that the Under-Secretary is also concerned about that. I hope that he will address that issue today and tell us whether he has any new ideas to reward those employed in that sector; they would then receive the recognition that they deserve for their central role in our economy and society.

I hope that the Under-Secretary will also address the critical questions raised by my hon. Friend about the extremely worrying slump in industrial investment. We have great firms—there is no question about that—and we should celebrate them a lot more than we do.

We must also address the serious problem of under-investment, which was the theme of much of today's debate. As my hon. Friend pointed out, the average level of investment in the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1993 as a share of the economy was the lowest of the G7 countries. The August inflation report from the Bank of England noted that investment is now 20 per cent. below the level that it was in previous recoveries. That is a significant indicator, and I hope that the Under-Secretary will pay careful attention to it.

The statistics quoted by my hon. Friend reinforced vividly the case made this morning by my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), who called for urgent Government action to arrest this country's relative decline in the league table of national income per head, which was published by the OECD. I have no doubt that the Under-Secretary will want to explain why the United Kingdom has slumped from 13th to 18th place in the league table.

Mrs. Jane Kennedy (Liverpool, Broadgreen): That is not likely.

Dr. Howells: I hope that the Under-Secretary will do so.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South mentioned that in 1851 Britain had the most dynamic economy in the world. Like me and hundreds of thousands other others in this country, he bitterly regrets our relative decline as a manufacturing country. We are proud of our industrial heritage. Those who try to pour scorn on what we argue should realise that that is where we come from.

[Dr. Howells]

When I read tables that chart our continuing relative decline, it offends me. I do not want Britain to be outstripped in the prosperity league table by countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Iceland, Austria, Hong Kong and Singapore—countries that have never enjoyed a fraction of the benefits that we have enjoyed of mighty natural resources of coal, gas and oil and our wonderful geographical location as one of the great trading nodes of the Atlantic and European economies.

The Under-Secretary must tell us why we have slumped under his Government's management and why, with some of the world's finest scientists and greatest educational traditions, we continue to invest less in our manufacturing industries than do our competitors. He might try to explain how we can begin to educate and train our people and to modernise our welfare state so that it provides new incentives for employment and skills and the opportunity for Britain to tap the enormous creative potential of the 2 million people, many of them young, who are trying to find a pathway from welfare into work.

Most important of all, perhaps the Under-Secretary will tell us when and how the Government intend to construct a modern competition policy capable of tackling the sort of monopolies and market rigging by vested interests that is holding the country back. He must know that competitiveness abroad depends on greater competition at home. It also depends, as my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Timms) said, on recognising the urgent need for the Government to be proactive and infinitely more energetic in transforming potential business locations such as Newham—and scores of other places the length and breadth of the country—where old industries have died and where there remains a crying need for properly targeted support for new business locations and, as my hon. Friend put it so well, for creative partnerships to be developed between universities and industries.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East said, the need to encourage high-quality research, and to collect and disseminate accurate data on that research, is of central importance if our universities, training and enterprise councils, business links, local authorities and all the other agencies operating in and around the sector are to succeed in playing a part in the transformation of our manufacturing industry.

The great success of co-ordinated ventures, where they have occurred, should be replicated across the country. My hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, West (Mr. Pearson) stressed the need for the regions of England to have a greater say in shaping the economies of the regions in the way that we in Wales and Scotland have done through our development agencies. That would help to encourage that sense of belonging, identity and pride that was such an important component of industrial success a century ago right across these islands.

As all my hon. Friends emphasised, there must be a sane and urgent assessment of our transportation and telecommunications infrastructure if we are to maintain our position as manufacturing producers and world traders. As my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South observed, congestion, whether in our airports or on our roads, railways or telecommunications highways can only waste our resources and energy as manufacturers. Let the Government be under no illusion: the Labour party has no higher priority than to address the problem of how to arrest the trend of relative decline in investment and prosperity.

As one who has been associated in various capacities with the coal mining industry in this country on and off over 20 years, I have few illusions about the performance and nature of publicly owned enterprises and what can happen as a result of overcentralised planning and management. I witnessed the meddling hands of Whitehall combined with the half-witted prejudices and dogmas of those on the Government Benches strangle what little spirit of initiative remained in the industry by the early 1980s. Nor do I doubt that, perhaps even by the late 1960s, the National Coal Board's management mechanisms for deciding production and investment policy were wholly incapable of responding to the demands of rapidly changing markets and energy technologies.

Those short histories apply more or less equally to a range of industries, including key ones such as car and motor cycle manufacture. For those who were born and raised in communities that depended on those enterprises, the experience of the past couple of decades has been painful in the extreme. As we heard in the debate, no one understands that experience better than my hon. Friends.

Labour has every wish to ensure that never again will our communities be forced to endure the rates of unemployment and social deprivation that resulted in no small part from the inability of those charged with managing our economy to understand the changing demands of the market, to help ease the pains of transition and to provide the infrastructure required by modern manufacturing.

I recognise the strengths and benefits of a market economy but also the need to guard against market failure where the market is not delivering a solution that benefits consumers and customers. Where that happens, we should be able to design a minimum amount of intervention as a corrective so that the market works for the benefit of the many and not the few, if Government economic and industrial policy is to be designed to produce a better, more equitable and more prosperous society.

We have had a helpful debate today. I am sorry that the hon. Member for Scarborough (Mr. Sykes) could not give us the benefit of his great experience by telling us how we should run the economy. I am sure that his interventions have been helpful.

More helpful, however, have been the contributions of my hon. Friends. I hope that the Under-Secretary will take them seriously and give us some answers.

12.46 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Phillip Oppenheim): I thank the hon. Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) for the spirit of his comments. He will be disappointed to learn that I agree with some of them and with some of the comments of the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Sutcliffe), whose choice of debate I welcome. It is an important issue.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South mentioned that too often in Britain manufacturing is regarded as a second-rate option. We have a cultural aversion to manufacturing. Britain must be the only country in the developed world where, if people say that they are engineers, it is thought that they have come to mend the washing machine. That is not the job of an engineer—not that there is anything wrong with people who mend washing machines.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South is also right to believe—this has pervaded the debate—that our manufacturing decline started not in 1979, as some people have liked to try and make out over the past 15 years, but in the 1850s or 1860s. We have had a long period of relative decline in manufacturing.

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): It is the Whigs' fault then?

Mr. Oppenheim: It is the Whigs' fault. The hon. Gentleman has put his finger unerringly on it.

Mr. MacShane: Where are they?

Mr. Oppenheim: That is probably why they have not turned up, not that there are many of them. There is a difference between Whigs and Liberals. The hon. Member for Rotherham (Mr. MacShane) should read his 19th-century history.

I disagree with the hon. Member for Bradford, South about the idea that the decline has somehow continued. In fact, as I hope to show, we have shown some improvement, not necessarily since 1979 but certainly since the early 1980s, and tribute should be paid to that. My hon. Friend the Member for Southport (Mr. Banks) mentioned some other points on which I disagreed with the hon. Member for Bradford, South.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South talked about the ascent of the Asian tigers as being largely the result of protection and industrial policy. That is a little simplistic. For one thing, Hong Kong and Singapore have been very open markets, relatively speaking, and have had little in the way of industrial strategy. Between 1982 and 1994, those countries increased their imports four times but Britain's exports to those countries increased by five times. That shows that the picture is not only of decline; there are areas where we have done very well indeed.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South also mentioned that we had to have a visionary industrial plan. Visionary industrial plans are rather easier to talk about than implement. I seem to recollect from my childhood and student days that we had a visionary industrial plan in Britain the 1960s and 1970s; I shall return to its results later.

The hon. Member for Rotherham seems to want a policy of guns, not butter, and to believe that Britain should somehow pour money into an industrial strategy to encourage the arms industry, which sets him at odds with many members of his party. He also seems to think that inward investment is not a totally good thing because we lose control, and he said that the investment in this country by Samsung and by Ford was a mixed blessing. Inward investment has gone on for many years. In fact, one of the few successes in inward investment under the last Labour Government was a huge Ford engine plant in Bridgend that was financed from the United States.

I thought that the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Timms) made many very valid points about the link between education and industrial performance. I shall return to that issue later. Many people are hung up on the idea of industrial strategy and Governments doing this, that or the other. We can assist industry by improving education and training. The hon. Gentleman should probably have given the Government some credit for the fact that the number of people in higher education has increased from 10 per cent. to 30 per cent. Although they need some fine tuning, the launch of national vocational qualifications is a huge step toward improving vocational education.

The hon. Member for Rotherham or the hon. Member for Bradford, South—I forget which—referred to the British Telecom agreement as a great example of the way forward in leading edge industrial strategy. BT has pulled a fast one over the Opposition, and it will be laughing all the way to the bank. It appears that, in return for cabling hospitals and schools—many of which are cabled anyway—it will have a virtual monopoly over the provision of cable services nationwide. I must inform the hon. Gentlemen that cabling is free. However, the subscriptions paid afterwards are not free, and BT has not agreed to waive those charges. That is a classic example of the naivety of the Labour party when it comes to negotiating with organisations such as BT. It is the consumer who will suffer from carve-ups of the market by vested interests.

I conclude my canter over the territory covered by Labour speeches by mentioning an advertisement that appeared this morning in *The Times* and possibly in some other lesser journals. It purported to show that Britain has slipped from 13th to 18th in terms of gross domestic product per head. There was one glaring mistake in the advertisement: it claimed that France had overtaken us, whereas in fact France overtook us during the period of the previous Labour Government.

The hon. Member for Rotherham might also be interested to learn that the figures in the advertisement have been achieved by inserting Hong Kong and Singapore, which were not included in previous tables. It is true that Hong Kong and Singapore produce more per head than we do. They are great paragons of the relatively open market and low taxation. According to the World bank, Hong Kong and Singapore also rank above Germany, Japan and France—so we are not in bad company in that respect.

Many Labour speeches have the pervading theme that markets are imperfect, and that therefore Governments should step in to perfect what Labour Members call "market failures". I am a free marketeer who agrees that markets are imperfect—very few things in this world are perfect. I am afraid that the idea that politicians and civil servants can step in and resolve market imperfections has been disproved by a long litany of failed interventions on the part of politicians and civil servants. Markets are imperfect, but unfortunately the decisions made by politicians and civil servants to try to correct market failures are even more imperfect.

Politicians are at a disadvantage in that regard. The market is an aggregate of thousands, sometimes millions, of decisions by the people most concerned with it: investors, consumers, shareholders and workers. Their aggregate decisions are likely to be better than those decisions made by politicians and civil servants who almost invariably do not have access to the same information.

[Mr. Oppenheim]

Even if they did have such access, as hon. Members who remember the 1970s will know all too well, the decisions of politicians and civil servants are distorted by vested interests. Politicians and civil servants are influenced by vested interests, and the most politically powerful vested interests will receive most of the money.

Labour Members seemed to think that British manufacturing has done particularly badly in the past 15 years. The 1960s and 1970s were probably the nadir of British manufacturing under Governments of all political persuasions, not just Labour Governments. The performance of British industry during that period was so poor that many foreign observers genuinely wondered whether Britain had a real future as an industrial nation. Poor labour relations and low productivity in huge swathes of our manufacturing industry led to Britain's falling further and further behind our main competitors and to a steady decline in our share of the world market for manufactured goods.

In the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, Britain was bottom of the G7 countries when it came to growth in manufacturing productivity and output. Growth in manufacturing output actually fell between 1974 and 1979. Let us not forget that those were the days of grandiose state-sponsored industrial strategies, when British Steel was the world's largest loss maker and British Leyland cars were, sadly, the butt of musical hall jokes—that is when the nightshift was not asleep or on strike.

Mr. MacShane: Or both.

Mr. Oppenheim: That is right.

The hon. Member for Pontypridd correctly pointed out that the decline in manufacturing in the early 1980s proved very painful for many communities. Conservative Members must recognise that fact. Mining areas in my constituency suffered not just in the early 1980s but in the 1960s and 1970s when Labour Governments closed many pits. We must realise that mining communities underwent a painful transformation.

However, Labour Members should also recognise that manufacturing output has expanded rapidly since the early 1980s to make up the lost ground. I think that Labour Members know in their heart of hearts that much of the industry that was lost in the early 1980s was inefficient and unsustainable capacity, which was kept alive on a drip-feed of Government subsidies and protection from foreign competition.

Since then, the growth in Britain's manufacturing output has not only made up all that lost ground, and more, but put us on the G7 manufacturing output average. We have moved from the bottom to the middle of the league. A much more important figure is the growth in productivity. During the 1960s and 1970s, we were bottom of the tables for productivity growth in manufacturing. During the 1980s and 1990s, we moved to the top of that league. British manufacturing productivity was higher than that of Japan, Germany, France and Italy during the 1980s and 1990s.

A recent independent report has shown that we have made up three quarters of the productivity gap between Britain and Germany. In every decade since the war until the early 1980s, the productivity gap between Britain and Germany widened. Since 1980, we have made up three quarters of that lost ground. Labour Members should recognise that there have been some successes as a result of factors such as increased competition and privatisation.

Companies such as British Steel, that were almost basket cases are now highly successful. British Steel is the fourth largest steel producer in the world. It is highly profitable, it exports half of its output and it supplies 80 per cent. of the domestic market. The Rolls-Royce aero-engines company, which was almost written off in the 1970s, doubled its share of the market for civil aero engines following privatisation. Privatisation and the hands-off approach has had an effect. I also believe that sounder monetary policy and lower taxes and inflation have created a more stable environment.

We must improve our standards of education if we are to close the remaining gap between Britain and the best economies, such as Germany and Japan. We have not overtaken those countries; we have caught up a lot of lost ground, but we still have some to make up. Hon. Members on both sides of the House accept that education has been our Achilles' heel since the middle of the 19th century. I hope that we are about to reach some sort of consensus on the issue. We must improve vocational education and ensure high standards in education.

In the past, Labour Members have opposed many of our education reforms. However, in their heart of hearts, I believe that they accept that many, if not all, of the reforms were necessary and worth while. Conservative Members accept that those reforms take some time to bed down. It takes time to change the culture of an education system that has been in place for 30 or 40 years. We must recognise that some disruption will occur.

However, there are no magic solutions that will improve manufacturing performance. We must improve education and training, and ensure a stable monetary policy that maintains low inflation, which will allow manufacturing industry to invest for the long term and get away from short-termism. We must have a low-tax regime that does not crowd out the manufacturing sector.

Although we continue to have differences, the opinions of Conservative Members and Labour Members about those issues are a great deal closer together than they were 15 years ago. I recognise that we have not done everything right, but I hope that Opposition Members will acknowledge that we have made significant progress in making our manufacturing industry more competitive and productive and increasing output since 1989.

Motorway Service Area (Iver)

12.59 pm

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): I am grateful for the opportunity to draw attention to the important matter of the proposed motorway service area at Iver on the M25 in my constituency.

I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Minister for Railways and Roads will reply to the debate, not only because he is the Minister responsible for that aspect of policy, but because, as the hon. Member for Slough, he knows that part of the country as well as anyone, and is especially well qualified to make a judgment about that important matter.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for the fact that he has agreed later to receive a petition that I hold in my hand, which was signed by nearly 2,000 local people and which gives some sign of the strength of feeling about this proposal. I am especially grateful to those people who have gone to great lengths and put in a great deal of hard work to collect all those signatures, especially Mrs. Eileen Sibley, who is secretary of the Iver Lane and district residents association, who personally collected about 800 signatures.

An inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment has recommended that a motorway service area should be built on the M25 at Woodlands Park, Iver, in my constituency. In my opinion, that is one of the most perverse and indefensible planning recommendations that I have ever come across. I am grateful for the opportunity to explain to the House why it should not be allowed to proceed.

There are three motorway service areas on the M25—one each in the north, south and east quadrants. It is generally agreed that there is a need for a fourth motorway service area in the western quadrant, as the distance between the one in the north and the one in the south is 63 miles. I do not disagree with that conclusion, although I draw my hon. Friend's attention to the fact that Woodlands Park is 24 miles from the one in the north but 39 miles from the one in the south, so it is by no means equidistant between the two.

The history of that matter is, as my hon. Friend confirmed to me in a written reply last week, that the Department of Transport commissioned a survey of possible sites in July 1984. That led to an announcement, in 1988, that the Department would promote a motorway service area at Iver. However, that was not the Woodlands Park site, but a site on the other side of the M25, between Iver Village and Richings Park. In the end, for various reasons, no planning application was submitted.

In 1989, the Department of Transport announced a fresh search for a motorway service area site on the western quadrant. Soon after, the provision of motorway service areas was deregulated, and the search for a suitable site was abandoned.

We now move to February 1994, when Cape Plc and Corporate Land Ltd. submitted three planning applications for a motorway service area at Woodlands Park. Those were determined by Buckinghamshire county council, because that site is the subject of an existing minerals and waste disposal planning permission.

When the applications were submitted, the Department was still proposing to build link roads along the M25 between the M4 and the M40. Since then, it hasabandoned that proposal, and instead proposes to build a fifth lane in each direction to accommodate the increased traffic. I believe that it was for that reason that the Department directed the county council to refuse planning permission.

The Department gave two reasons. The first was that the development of a motorway service area would be incompatible with the link road proposals; obviously, that objection is no longer relevant. The second was that the motorway service area would be incompatible with the use of the motorway in its present state, as regards both the safety and function of the motorway as part of the national system for through traffic. I believe that reason to be as relevant today as it was last year. Indeed, I believe it to be a conclusive reason not to implement that scheme.

Although the county council had no choice but to refuse the planning application, it considered all the other issues arising from it. It concluded that planning permission should be refused for those reasons, too.

First, the council said that it had not been demonstrated that that was the proven optimum site in the western quadrant of the M25. Secondly, it said that it had not been demonstrated that the development on a former waste disposal site could be carried out safely during and after construction. Thirdly, it said that the proposed hotel was not a necessary facility, and might become a destination in its own right.

Fourthly, the council said that the motorway service area, because of its excessive size and unsatisfactory siting, would be unduly obstructive and detrimental to the visual and residential amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties and to the character of the area. Fifthly, it said that the MSA would, according to the advice of the National Rivers Authority, be at direct risk of flooding, and would increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Cape Plc and Corporate Land Ltd. appealed against the refusal of planning permission. Between 22 November and 9 December 1994, the inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to consider the appeal held a public inquiry at the Evreham centre, Swallow street, Iver. Evidence was given by the appellants and by Buckinghamshire county council and individual witnesses, included County Councillor Mrs. Audrey Bainbridge, County Councillor Mrs. Ros Wingrove, District Councillor Mr. Richard Worrall, and Mrs. Sibley, whom I have mentioned.

Those individual witnesses said that, for many years, local residents had suffered the adverse effects of two previous exploitations of the site—mineral extraction and industrial waste filling—as well as those arising more recently from the addition of fourth lanes to the M25. Now, just as the site has been restored to a rural appearance, they are confronted with the prospect of further and permanent damage to their residential environment by the construction and subsequent operation of a massive motorway service area.

Those witnesses told the inquiry that noise and air pollution levels in the locality, not least from the M25, are already high, and would be further aggravated by the appeal proposals.

Those witnesses said that asbestosis and related diseases are well known at first hand in the locality, including numerous deaths, especially of former employees of Cape. I am pleased to see my hon. Friend

[Mr. Tim Smith]

the Member for Uxbridge (Sir M. Shersby) in his place, since many of his constituents will be affected by that proposal. Later, he will say a few words about an aspect that we both consider extremely important—what will happen when the site is dug up and asbestos, which is buried in the site, is exposed.

The local objectors also claim that the assessment of need for a motorway service area does not take into account the relative proportions of long-haul and short-hop traffic on the M25. Lastly, but by no means least, they said that the motorway service area, with its approach roads and its overbridges, would have a devastating visual impact on the present rural appearance of the site.

I deal now with the inspector's conclusions. The inspector complains that neither Buckinghamshire county council nor South Buckinghamshire district council nor any other local authority has even mentioned an alternative site. What does the inspector mean by that? Is he saying that the planning authority is required to consider a planning application not only on its absolute merits but on its merits relative to the merits of a range of hypothetical alternatives? If so, he is talking nonsense.

As the director of planning services of South Buckinghamshire council said in a letter to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Croydon, Central (Sir P. Beresford), dated 29 September, local authorities are not in a position to carry out a detailed analysis of propositions concerning alternative sites. Local authorities do not have the responsibility or the resources to do that. Councils have not been asked to do that by the Government; nor did the inspector state that that was required in this case.

If an applicant seeks to demonstrate that an exception should be made to green belt policy, the onus must surely be on that applicant to prove that there are no suitable alternative sites. That was not done satisfactorily in this case. For the inspector to imply criticism of local authorities and to expect an optimum site to be put forward by them is wholly unacceptable. Given that the inspector has not been able to say that Woodlands Park is the optimum site suggests that the decision is flawed.

The inspector's logic is as follows: we need an MSA in the western quadrant of the M25; the whole of the western quadrant is in a green belt area, so we must make an exception to green belt policy and put the MSA in the green belt; no one has come up with a satisfactory alternative to Woodlands Park, so Woodlands Park it must be. That is the logic of the madhouse, but it is, of course, partly due to deregulation.

The Department of Transport abandoned the strategic approach to MSA site evaluation in favour of a more free-market approach. Although that may be acceptable generally, I doubt whether it makes a great deal of sense when there is a presumption against development in the entire area of search.

As I said, the proposed site is 24 miles from the northern motorway service area on the M25, but 39 miles from the southern one. That suggests that the optimum site would be some seven or eight miles further south than Woodlands Park, somewhere to the south of the M4. However, it is not my job to propose alternative sites, nor is it the job of local councils. It is something to which, in these exceptionally difficult circumstances, the Department of transport should once again turn its attention.

The inspector also ignored the cumulative effect of development in the green belt. I am concerned that each planning application should be considered on its merits without reference to what is going on elsewhere. As I said, my hon. Friend the Minister for Railways and Roads knows my constituency well, so I draw his attention to the Eton college rowing lake and the National Rivers Authority's flood relief scheme. They were decided by planning inspectors without reference to each other, even though they impact on precisely the same area.

The South Buckinghamshire district council gave evidence to the inspector on the proposed development but the inspector chose to ignore it. The fact is, however, that every month the fragile green belt is under further attack. This month, it is a proposal from the Central Railway company to build a new railway through my constituency, complete with a 100-acre marshalling yard in the green belt at Denham.

Forty years ago, Iver was a delightful village in a genuinely rural area. Since then, it has endured the construction of the M4 and its subsequent widening, the construction of the M25 and its widening, mineral extraction on a massive scale, substantial dumping of waste, the threat of a large sludge treatment works to be transferred from Heathrow if the fifth terminal there is given to go-ahead—and now this.

I suppose that Iver might today be described as semi-rural, but if the proposal goes ahead and the last piece of green belt between Iver and London is destroyed, a better description might be "suburban". At that point, one will be entitled to ask what is the point of having a green belt if we keep on making exceptions to it, because, in the end, there will be no green belt left.

I believe that the inspector has seriously misdirected himself. He has concluded that Iver is the best site because no one has come up with anything better. He has gone out of his way to criticise local authorities for their failure to produce alternative solutions, although they have no obligation to do so. He has completely ignored the cumulative effect of development in the green belt. I hope very much that the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Transport will throw out his flawed recommendations.

1.14 pm

Sir Michael Shersby (Uxbridge): I am pleased to have the opportunity briefly to support my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith). My constituency immediately adjoins his, and the residents of the Cowley area of my constituency are especially affected by the proposal.

I object strongly to the proposed development, which, as my hon. Friend said, would mean a further substantial loss of the green belt. As president of the London Green Belt Council, I share my hon. Friend's astonishment that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment could even consider allowing the proposal to go ahead. However, as my hon. Friend said, there is another reason for not allowing the proposal to continue—the danger to public health that would arise if asbestos deposited on the site years ago were to be removed, even under what are reassuringly known these days as controlled conditions.

The danger is the risk of mesothelioma, which is caused by the inhalation of minute asbestos fibres and which results in death many years later. This has been known to the Government and to the asbestos industry for many years. For example, in 1949, Dr. H. Wyers, who was then the medical officer at the Cape Asbestos Company, now Cape plc—the joint developer of the site—reported 115 fatal cases in which asbestosis was mentioned, and provided evidence of lung and pleural cancers accompanying it. The average age of death was 40.8 years. The late 1950s and early 1960s was the time in history when the ability of asbestos fibres to cause mesothelioma was finally and officially recognised throughout the world.

The assessor who was appointed to advise the inspector who conducted the public inquiry was there to advise on technical aspects, with specific reference to landfill and the associated problems of gas and leachite production. With hindsight, it would have been much better had the inspector been assisted by an environmental assessor to help him consider the inherent dangers of developing the site, given that it has been used to dump quantities of asbestos.

Paragraph 14 of the assessor's report states:

"it is known that extreme precautions must be adopted by anyone handling the material in quantity".

That statement is rather misleading, as the Health and Safety Executive Guidelines refer to the need for precautions to be taken by anyone handling asbestos, not only those handling it "in quantity".

The assessor goes on to state that the fact that

"it can be handled in safety is highlighted by the common practice now of the removal of asbestos from schools and many public buildings".

I suggest, however, that it is very difficult to see the connection between such present-day practices and the very open site of some 44 acres being considered for a motorway service area.

It is well known that the technique used to remove asbestos involves the creation of negative pressure, and the removal inside a plastic tent from which the air is sucked through a filter. That is the best way of keeping all the microscopic death-dealing fibres in the working area. However, those fibres are so small that they are not visible to the human eye, and are absolutely lethal when inhaled.

I understand from the information at my disposal that all three of the common types of asbestos—chrysolite, which is white, amosite, which is brown, and crocodilite, which is blue—are present on the site. How would lorries enter and leave a 44-acre site under a plastic tent, going through the necessary airlocks? It is inconceivable. What about the danger to the workmen involved in carrying out such a hazardous operation? It has been suggested that a soil covering of 500 mm be used to cover the operation at night, but there is no recognition of the fact that the soil will then be contaminated, and will similarly have to be excavated and removed.

I invite the House and the Minister to consider the dangers to the environment and to health inherent in any such work involving large-scale excavation and piling on land contaminated in this way. The assessor goes on to say:

"This is by no means an ideal site".

I completely agree.

I therefore tell my hon. Friend, and his colleagues in the Department of the Environment, that there will be a serious risk to human health if this site is excavated for the construction of a motorway service area. That risk is far too great, and should not be taken. I therefore hope very much that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will change his mind and refuse planning permission.

1.20 pm

The Minister for Railways and Roads (Mr. John Watts): I congratulate my hon. Friends the Members for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) and for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) on the clear way in which they have expressed the case on behalf of their constituents. They will know that attempts to provide a motorway service area on the western side of the M25 have a long and complicated history.

In November 1989, the then Minister for Roads and Traffic announced that existing plans for Iver were to be abandoned, and a fresh site search for an MSA on the western part of the M25 would be undertaken. The reasons for this return to the drawing board were summed up in the announcement as

"the very complex problems which make the provision of a single-sided site at Iver very unlikely in the foreseeable future."

My hon. Friends may well think that my predecessor's assessment got it absolutely right. They might equally wonder what has changed since 1989. The most important change was that, in 1992, the provision of new MSAs was deregulated. What this means in practice is that it is now for the private sector rather than my Department, as it was in the past, to identify sites for new MSAs, secure planning permission and acquire the land.

It is therefore under these deregulated arrangements, rather than at the Department's instigation, that the present proposals have emerged. There were, of course, three applications for Woodlands Park; all were submitted by the same developer. All three applications were referred to both the Highways Agency and the planning authority. The agency's response was to object to each of them, on the grounds that development of an MSA at this site would prejudice the proposed M4-M40 link roads. That objection, together with the planning authority's own views on the applications, led to all three being refused.

It was the developers' appeal against those refusals that led to the public inquiry which took place in November and December last year. At the start of the inquiry, the agency maintained its earlier objections to all three schemes. As the inquiry proceeded, however, the developer submitted revised drawings showing amended accesses.

The agency's engineers discussed these revised proposals with the developer, and as a result were able to tell the inspector that the revised proposals met the technical standards for connection to the dual four-lane M25. But the agency maintained its objections to all three proposals, on the grounds that they would prejudice the provision of the proposed link roads.

That was the position when the inquiry closed. There have, though, been some further developments since. In particular, we announced that it was not now proposed to build the link roads, and that we would seek instead to widen the M25 from four lanes to five in each direction between the M4 and M40.

[Mr. John Watts]

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment considered that our revised proposals for this section of the M25 did potentially amount to a significant new factor which he ought to take into account in considering the inspector's recommendation. That is why he announced on 25 September this year that he was minded to allow two of the appeals, but that he would defer his decision for three weeks. The additional time was to allow interested parties to make any further representations to take account of the new factors.

I now turn to some of the more specific points which my hon. Friends have raised. I have already made the point that the Woodlands Park proposal is in no sense a Government proposal. The Department has had plans of its own in the past for an MSA at Iver—although not in the same location—but never reached the stage of submitting a planning application.

The Department's only view, which is set out in its advice to local planning authorities, is that MSAs should not generally be more than about thirty miles apart. That is not simply because we like to see regular MSAs for their own sake. It is important to safety that motorists should have a chance to stop every 30 miles or so. My hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield has accepted that there is a case for a motorway service area somewhere on the western quadrant of the M25, although not at this location.

Beyond that, the Department's direct involvement is limited to ensuring that the proposals meet our technical requirements for an MSA. In other words, we need to be satisfied that, if planning permission were to be granted, the MSA could be connected safely to the M25.

A point which I know has been raised in this context is that we have recently begun the trial of a controlled motorway scheme for the M25 between junctions 11 and 15, a little to the south of the proposed MSA. The scheme is a response to the very heavy volumes of traffic using this part of our motorway network. One of the aims is to reduce the need for motorists to switch from lane to lane—weaving, to use the jargon term. Yet the agency is apparently prepared to agree to an MSA on this, another section of the M25 carrying very heavy traffic flows, even though the inevitable result will be increased weaving movements as motorists seek to get into and out of the site.

This seems, I agree, an odd response, but there are two separate considerations. First, departmental standards lay down a minimum distance which must be preserved between successive motorway junctions. That distance is, to use a foreign measurement, two kilometres. On the latest agreed plans for the Woodlands Park MSA, at least this distance is available to all vehicles entering or leaving the MSA on either carriageway.

The second consideration was whether, even though this technical standard had been met, the Highways Agency should continue to oppose the MSA simply because the extra weaving movements might affect the capacity of this part of the road. Clearly there is a balance to be drawn here.

The aim of the controlled motorway experiment is to make more efficient use of the existing capacity by controlling speeds and encouraging drivers to stay in lane. There is no doubt that introducing a completely new access point, as the MSA would do, means that some of the benefit that we might derive if the controlled motorway experiment is a success—I believe that it is—and is extended past the site would be lost.

The Highways Agency therefore had to balance the extra weaving movements that the MSA would introduce against the benefits to motorists of having a new MSA on a very long stretch of motorway which currently lacks any services. This is a difficult judgment, but I have instructed officials in the Highways Agency to consider whether it is sensible to allow an MSA at this location, with the attendant disruption to traffic flow, when it may be necessary to impose permanent traffic management on this stretch of road when it is widened to dual five.

My hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge has made very clear his own concerns and those of his constituents about the asbestos contamination which affects the site. He will not, I know, expect me either to comment in detail on the technical issues or to anticipate the outcome of the Secretary of State for the Environment's consideration of the inspector's recommendations.

What I can do is remind my hon. Friend that it was because of the contamination question that the original planning application fell to be considered not by the district council, as would normally be the case, but by Buckinghamshire county council. He will also be aware that the inspector at the inquiry was assisted by an independent assessor appointed by my right hon. Friend specifically to consider the questions raised by the presence of asbestos on the site.

I know that measures to deal with the contamination were discussed very thoroughly during the inquiry. I am assured that, if planning permission were to be granted, the Health and Safety Executive would be involved in considering detailed schemes for the disposal of asbestos, and will be responsible for ensuring that the operation is carried out correctly.

That would be guaranteed by conditions which would be attached to any planning permission that might be granted. The conditions would cover, among other things, further site investigations to assess the degree of contamination; measures to deal with it; implementation of those measures; and monitoring of the disposal operations. That is a comprehensive list, which I hope will give my hon. Friends and their constituents some reassurance.

To conclude, I must stress once again that the current proposals are from the private sector, not from my Department or the Highways Agency. Like any other proposals, they fall to be considered first by the local planning authority and then, in the event of a call-in or an appeal, as here, by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

A few days still remain during which interested parties can make representations to my right hon. Friend if they believe that the withdrawal of the Department's link road scheme and the replacement strategy of widening to dual five introduce new considerations which were not adequately aired during the inquiry. Further representations must relate to those considerations. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not agreed to reopen the entire inquiry.

I know that my hon. Friends will understand if I do not allow myself to be drawn any further into consideration of the merits or otherwise of the planning applications. It would be wrong for me to do so. Nevertheless, I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will note the points that my hon. Friends have made. I have no doubt that he will want to ensure that they have all been covered adequately before he announces his decision.

Fireworks

1.30 pm

Mr. Richard Burden (Birmingham, Northfield): I am grateful for the opportunity to talk about firework safety. I am sure that we all want to see this year's bonfire night celebrations go ahead safely and enjoyably. We do not want to wake up on Monday to learn that the number of firework injuries has risen for the third year running. Last year, more than 1,500 people were injured in firework-related accidents. That was a 48 per cent. increase on the previous year. Over half of those affected were children. There have already been alarming reports this year of firework-related injuries.

I am sure that the House would think that the Government should be tightening laws on firework safety. I have no doubt that Ministers will say that they are doing so, but I dispute that. As time is short, I shall bring to the attention of the House only two considerations that illustrate my argument. What I have to say will show that Ministers' zeal for what they call deregulation has made a bonfire of essential firework safety measures and has increased red tape rather than reducing it in enforcing the regulations that remain.

First, I want to draw attention to the sale of fireworks to children under the age of 16 years. Secondly, I shall draw attention to the importing of dangerous fireworks into the United Kingdom. The seriousness of selling fireworks to children under 16 will be clear to anyone who has noted the increased number of "here today, gone tomorrow" shops that open to sell fireworks shortly before bonfire night, only to close soon after.

In Birmingham, an operation planned by one of the local newspapers, the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, and the trading standards department found last week that nine out of 10 shops visited proved themselves to be willing and prepared to sell fireworks to a girl under the age of 16 years. Until this year, the firework safety regulations that were introduced in 1986 gave clear responsibility to trading standards departments to prosecute shops selling fireworks to under-16s. The regulations were swept away, however, because the Government said that they duplicated other provisions, and specifically those set out in the Explosives Act 1875. When the Government swept away the regulations, they also did away with the enforcement mechanism. Confusion now reigns over who is meant to be enforcing the law.

Some trading standards departments, especially in metropolitan areas, do not believe themselves to be authorised to enforce the law.

The Minister for Competition and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Jonathan Evans) *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Burden: I note the Minister's response.

Ministers insist that the law is much clearer than I believe it to be. That being so, why, on 15 May, in answer to a written question that I tabled, did the Minister inform me that the police constituted the enforcing authority for the Explosives Act? When I asked a virtually identical question on 24 October, why did he present a different answer, to the effect that responsibility was sort of with the police, sort of with trading standards officers and sort of with fire authorities? If the Minister cannot make up his mind who is responsible for enforcing the law, how does he expect the law to be enforced?

[Mr. Burden]

Recent events suggest that the deregulation of import controls on fireworks from abroad is an even more worrying issue. In 1993, the Government scrapped the requirement that there should be specific licences for imported fireworks. Ministers and the Health and Safety Executive's chief inspector of explosives assured everyone that that would not mean that controls would slacken. A letter from Mr. G. E. Williamson, the chief inspector, to my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) of 30 November 1993 specifically stated:

> "Importers will still have to make application to HSE, but now for classification and authorization. They will still need to provide evidence that the HSE has classified and authorized the fireworks before the importation takes place, if challenged. Appropriate documentation will be provided. And the importer will need to ensure that the firework meets the British Standard or its equivalent at all times."

Those sentiments echoed the ones in a letter from the Minister to my hon. Friend of 14 November 1993. I think that the letter was written by the Minister's predecessor.

If all that is the case, how is it that seven container loads of fireworks bearing the label "Red Lion" came into the country at Southampton in the past few months? They were produced in China and imported by a firm called Kanash, which is based in Northern Ireland. Once they were on sale, Liverpool trading standards officers received a tip-off about the fireworks and seized some for tests. The found that, despite the fact that the fireworks had British standard labels, virtually none of them complied with the relevant standard. Indeed, some were not even eligible for it. The officers found also that six different lines of the fireworks contained sulphur chlorate, which has been illegal in this country since 1894. It can explode if dropped even if the firework has not been lighted. The address that was shown on the label for the fireworks, which was in Liverpool 6, did not exist.

First, why was the problem with Red Lion fireworks picked up only when they were on the market? Secondly, is it true that Kanash, the importers, contacted the HSE in early 1995 and that the executive gave advice about how the firm could bring in fireworks before the HSE had conducted any tests on the products of that firm? Thirdly, why did the HSE not bother to monitor a brand new company, apparently with a non-existent address in Liverpool and a Belfast connection? Fourthly, is it true that the fireworks were held for several weeks, perhaps even months, at the Royal Ordnance factory at Chorley? Were any tests carried out there?

Fifthly, has the HSE seen records of tests carried out on the consignment of Red Lion fireworks? If so, where and when were the tests carried out, what were the results and what was done subsequently? Sixthly, seven containers came into the country and only three have been located. What steps are being taken to find the remaining four, which we know arrived in Southampton? Seventhly, what attempts has the HSE made to trace customers and what records has Kanash provided to assist it? Eighthly, will anybody be prosecuting Kanash or the Royal Ordnance factory for importing or storing the fireworks? Ninthly, have any assurances been given to either organisation about immunity from prosecution?

There are serious questions about Kanash and Red Lion, but the matter does not end there. Last Friday, Cleveland trading standards department informed Her Majesty's inspector of explosives at the Health and Safety Executive of the presence of sulphur chlorate in the Thunderstorm firework produced by Black Cat Fireworks. That led to the HSE contacting the local radio station and, I understand, issuing a press release saying that Thunderstorm should be withdrawn from sale. Some important questions still remain about that.

First, is it true that the HSE was informed of the presence of sulphur chlorate in Thunderstorm fireworks as long ago as the summer of this year by the managing director of Standard Fireworks? Secondly, what action has been taken on the basis of the information that was supplied? As far as I know, no action was taken. Thirdly, what action, beyond a call to the local radio station and issuing a press release, has the HSE taken to ensure the withdrawal of Thunderstorm fireworks from sale? Fourthly, is it true that Cleveland trading standards department has now found sulphur chlorate in a number of other fireworks produced by Black Cat, and that it has informed the HSE about that? What is the HSE doing about that?

Is the Minister satisfied that Her Majesty's inspector of explosives in particular, and the HSE in general, are doing the job properly? If the Minister is satisfied on that, will he tell me today how many companies' products the HSE tested for sulphur chlorate before 1995, as it has had that responsibility all the way through?

In the light of all of that, I invite the Minister to agree with me that several things need to be done urgently. First, the firework safety regulations of 1986, which were swept away by Ministers, should now been reinstated. Secondly, import licences for fireworks should be reinstated. Thirdly, there should be, for the first time, mandatory compliance with British standard 7114 for categories 1, 2 and 3, for all fireworks that are made available for sale to the public. Fourthly, all other fireworks should be regarded as category 4 and therefore available only for public displays.

Does the Minister agree that there should now be proper vetting, by a licensing system, of all those seeking to import fireworks, and that it should include clear assurances about storage requirements and mandatory sample testing for sulphur chlorate, and that fireworks should comply with British standard 7114 before they are distributed? Does he agree that such testing should take place on licensed explosives sites, with proper independent monitoring and with trading standards officers being involved? Does he further agree that, where a container is shared by more than one importer, trading standards departments should be informed of the destination of all consignments, and not just be given a broad-brush generalisation?

In the light of what has happened with Black Cat, Red Lion and so on over the past few months, I hope that the Minister will be able to give me those assurances today. If he is not able to do so, not only can we not be assured that Her Majesty's inspector of explosives is doing his job properly, but it may be the case that the Minister may not be doing his job properly either.

1.43 pm

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): The Minister has allowed me a minute, for which I am grateful. I am also grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. Burden) for taking up this cause.

Is the Minister aware that Lyn Williams, the general secretary of the Police Federation, wrote to him less than three months ago, saying that previous legislation

> "seemed to work well in practice ensuring that the law was well enforced and that many youngsters were, no doubt, prevented from injuring themselves"?

He continues:

> "I doubt whether any Chief Officer will have the resources available to deal with this problem in the way it has been dealt with over the last fewer years . . . At the present time it seems that there are attempts to 'plug the gap' by seeing if powers under the General Product Safety Regulations 1994 can be used . . . We do not consider this satisfactory."

Is the Minister further aware that the Home Office wrote to the Association of Metropolitan Authorities last week, saying:

> "We have not been able to establish whether the DTI consulted the Home Office before revoking the Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1986 and we are . . . unaware of any consideration which may have been given to the implications of the revocation for enforcement. The present position is that we are consulting the DTI and they are now looking into the question of enforcement responsibility"?

That was written less than two weeks before fireworks were put on sale.

It is quite clear to some of us that the right wing of the Conservative party seems to want to sweep away any laws. They do not care which laws, as long as they can reduce the number. In this case, the victims are likely to be the children and those who have previously had the enjoyment of fireworks, whom the Minister and his party are now putting at risk.

1.45 pm

The Minister for Competition and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Jonathan Evans): I congratulate the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. Burden) on his choice of subject, as it gives me the opportunity to draw attention to the Government's efforts to highlight the issue of firework safety—an issue with which, in fairness, the hon. Gentleman began his speech—and there are many important messages there. It also gives me the opportunity to respond to a great deal of the misinformation that there has been concerning the controls that apply, some of which we have heard in this debate.

For the Government, there are two important matters, the first of which is the misuse of fireworks. The vast majority of injuries—the hon. Gentleman rightly said that more than 1,500 injuries require hospital treatment—result from carelessness and stupidity rather than from the composition of the fireworks themselves. That does not mean, of course, that the Government do not also take seriously ensuring the safest possible structure for fireworks. Indeed, we take measures to ensure that unsafe fireworks do not find their way on to the market. If they have done, we warn the public, in circumstances that have come to the public's attention in recent days, as the hon. Gentleman has already outlined.

It is true that there has been a rising trend in relation to firework injuries. Having said that, that trend may well reflect an increase in the number of fireworks that are sold. The retail value of fireworks sold has increased by more than 30 per cent. in three years to £43.5 million in 1994. Well over 100 million individual fireworks are sold on to the market, so in those circumstances, the accidents, when taken as a proportion of the number of fireworks on the market, pale to a figure in which there is just about one accident for every 65,000 fireworks that are let off. It is very important that the Government take action to try to reduce that still further. However, it is also important that we should set that matter in context.

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): Will the Minister give way on that point?

Mr. Evans: I shall do so, but very briefly, because I have already allowed the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) to speak.

Mr. Sheerman: What proportion of those fireworks are made by the one remaining British firework manufacturer, Standard Fireworks, which operates a plant near my constituency; and what proportion come from places such as China, whose standards many of us are worried about?

Mr. Evans: We have looked at whether imported fireworks have any role to play in terms of the increase in figures. We have no evidence of that at all. Our evidence is that most of the injuries, sadly, are down to complacency, foolishness and stupidity, the illegal use of fireworks and not following the instructions that have been given. That is why I am pleased that Mr. John Woodhead, the public relations director of Standard Fireworks, joined me for the launch of the firework safety campaign a couple of weeks ago and, in fact, endorsed the remarks that I made.

Let me deal with the important point that the hon. Gentleman made about the sale of fireworks to those who are under the age of 16. Let me make it clear that the retail sale of fireworks to under-16s is prohibited in law today. It has been prohibited ever since 1875 by section 31 of the Explosives Act.

The supply of fireworks to the general public is also subject to the requirements of the General Product Safety Regulations 1994. Although both Opposition Members and some trading standards officers have expressed doubt, when I spoke to Warwickshire trading standards officers earlier today, they were in no doubt that they had power to act under the regulations. Moreover, it has been stated on national television today that they have decided to do precisely that.

Mr. Burden: The issue is section 31 of the Explosives Act 1875, not the General Product Safety Regulations. What authorises trading standards officers in metropolitan areas to enforce that legislation?

Mr. Evans: The law was clarified to spell out the fact that the police, in conjunction with the Crown Prosecution Service, have the clearest role in enforcement of the Explosives Act. However, there is also a well-established responsibility for safeguarding the safety of consumers, and that has been vested with trading standards officers over many years. The penalty for breaches of section 31 and the General Product Safety Regulations is already there, and is enforceable.

Mr. Chris Davies (Littleborough and Saddleworth): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Evans: I have given way a number of times, and the hon. Member for Northfield has asked me a number of important questions to which I must respond in the short time that remains.

[Mr. Evans]

My point is that the legislation is there to govern the sale of fireworks to those under 16. The hon. Member for Northfield said that fireworks had been sold to people under 16 in nine out of 10 shops; I hope that that information will be given to the police and trading standards officers so that action can be taken.

Implicit in the hon. Gentleman's remarks was the suggestion that such shops mushroom overnight. Trading standards officers have requirements in relation to the licensing of shops that sell fireworks, primarily because of the requirements for storage of those fireworks. I know from contact with my trading standards office that it is enforcing those measures, and my discussions earlier today with Warwickshire trading standards officers suggested that they were enforcing them as well. If there is evidence that shops have started up without the knowledge of trading standards officers, they should be drawn to the attention of both trading standards officers and the police.

Let me deal with some of the hon. Gentleman's specific points about import controls. More than 100 million fireworks are sold in this country each year, and it is clearly not practicable for each firework to be checked. Apart from anything else, the ultimate test is to let the firework off. In the circumstances, it is simply not logical to expect such a degree of control.

Much has been made of the fact that the position in relation to the licensing of imported fireworks changed in December 1993. Those changes were made to comply with our obligations under the single market, and had nothing to do with the Government's more general deregulation initiatives. However, much misinformation has been disseminated about the changes. Before December 1993, fireworks could be imported only under an import licence that served as a means of authorisation and required fireworks for consumer use to meet British standard 7114. That system has been replaced by an alternative system based on controlling the supply of fireworks, together with reinforced legal provisions for their authorisation.

The essential point, however, is that under both systems there are tight import controls. Imported fireworks supplied in the United Kingdom must meet the same safety standards as those produced domestically: all fireworks must comply with British standard 7114. Under the new system, as under the old, the applicant must apply to the Health and Safety Executive supplying information about the items that he wishes to import; the onus is on the importer to ensure that safety standards are met. The HSE requires fireworks to meet British standard 7114, and, if satisfied, subsequently authorises them. The HSE continues to enforce the requirements for authorisation of fireworks under the Explosives Act 1875.

I was asked some specific questions about the position regarding Red Lion fireworks. I have been in touch with the HSE. Three applications were made, dated 21 and 27 April and 22 May, in relation to seeking classification and authorisation of samples for importation. On 25 May, an authorisation was issued; but its purpose was to limit importation for evaluation and test purposes only. Furthermore, it required evidence of compliance with the conditions for authorisation of explosives in Great Britain before the fireworks could be released to the market.

On importation, the importer arranged for samples to be tested by an independent laboratory. I understand that the laboratory in question, which is known as Hayley and Weller, is established as an independent laboratory. The HSE received the first test results from the laboratory on 28 September.

Subsequently, the HSE raised further questions specifically in relation to an issue that later came to public attention, concerning the possible presence of any sort of prohibited mixture such as sulphur chlorate in the samples. There was an initial response; a certificate was provided from China. The HSE, however, required a certificate from an independent source. Following the provision of independent documentary evidence, authorisation was given for the fireworks to be released for retail sale.

The hon. Member for Northfield suggested that action taken by Liverpool's trading standards office brought the matter to public attention. A public statement was certainly issued by the office, but the HSE had been undertaking a range of tests relating to fireworks that had reached the retail market—quite apart from the mechanisms to which I referred earlier. As part of that process, some 70 samples were received by the HSE, and two relating to Red Lion were found to contain prohibited substances.

The action of which we have heard subsequently was initiated because that information was brought to the HSE's attention. It is certainly also true that the Liverpool trading standards office, acting on information from another manufacturer, conducted its own tests. That suggests that the system contains many more import control elements than the hon. Member for Northfield suggested.

Mr. Burden *rose*—

Mr. Evans: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will excuse me if I do not give way. I am running out of time, and during the three minutes that remain I want to concentrate on what the Government consider to be important messages.

Given that 100 million fireworks are to be set off during the next few days, it is important for the general public to be aware that the vast majority of accidents are caused by carelessness and complacency. Sadly, we have seen examples of that in cases that have come to public attention in the past few days. A child in South Shields has been injured by a banger which was thrown in a public place—that was in itself a criminal offence—and in Northern Ireland children have been injured by sparklers.

Last year, 150 adults—I repeat, adults—were taken to hospital with injuries caused by their own misuse of sparklers. That underlines my point that complacency, stupidity and carelessness are mostly to blame for injuries of this kind. I am grateful to the BBC's "999 Lifesavers" programme, which this Friday will highlight such issues to remind parents of the need for safety at a time when families will naturally want to enjoy their firework celebrations, but must be aware of the accompanying dangers.

The Government are also obliged to Mr. Derek Thompson, the character Charlie from the BBC's "Casualty", and the lead character in the campaign of the Department of Trade and Industry. During the press conference that I launched on the firework safety campaign, he said that, if we were to keep children out of casualty on 5 November, we had to ensure that we followed the messages on following the firework code. I hope that all parents will take that on board.

Betting Tax (Horse Racing)

1.59 pm

Mr. Richard Spring (Bury St. Edmunds): I am most grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to introduce this Adjournment debate and I also thank my hon. Friend the Paymaster General for being here to reply.

The horse racing industry faced a real crisis over national value added tax differentials with the introduction of the single European market in January 1993, but the opportunity to owners to register for VAT threw a vital lifeline to the bloodstock industry. The entire horse racing industry, and my constituents in Newmarket in particular, was most grateful for that crucial concession from the Treasury.

Unfortunately, the national lottery's very success in the space of one year has produced fresh difficulties for racing. I remind my hon. Friend that, during the passage of the lottery legislation, a commitment was made that the actual impact of ticket sales would be monitored and reported to Parliament.

Together with the betting industry, racing employs some 100,000 people in Great Britain. The betting industry generates £4.5 billion in turnover and operates 9,300 betting shops. General betting duty produces some £355 million per annum for the Treasury. Although it is true that betting in real terms has declined over the best part of 30 years, clear evidence exists that it is now falling in absolute terms as well. Bluntly put, the long-term viability of racing is now imperilled. Unquestionably, the arrival of the national lottery and of scratchcards in particular has everything to do with it.

Betting duty produces an exceptionally good deal for the British taxpayer. Racing receives back just over £50 million from the betting levy and the tote. General betting duty stands at 7.75 per cent. If, however, one takes total turnover and subtracts prize moneys, one comes out with an effective tax rate of 34 per cent.; by comparison, for the national lottery, it is only 24 per cent.

That tax burden is manifestly unjust. It is threatening not only the profitability of the bookmaking industry but the crucial level of prize money available to competing race horses. It is also beginning to affect greyhound racing.

My hon. Friend will be aware of significant changes going on in the pattern of racing and of training. Although Britain can claim to be the historic centre of equine activity, new owners and new breeders are taking a much more global view. Some owners now winter their horses in sunnier climes—that would appear to be paying off handsomely. Race meetings outside Europe offer much larger prizes. It has become a cliché to talk of global markets and global communication, but it is happening in horse racing now.

The prize money available in Britain is looking even more increasingly paltry by international standards. Taking prize money per horse expressed as a percentage of keep and training costs, in Hong Kong it is 100 per cent., in Japan 92 per cent., in France 49 per cent., in the United States of America 47 per cent. and in Germany 43 per cent. In Britain, it is only 21 per cent. and looks set to diminish even from that low level.

So what, if anything, can be done by owners and breeders? Clearly, it is difficult to reduce the day-to-day costs of owning a race horse. If the risk-to-reward ratio is so poor, and so poor by international standards, it is unsurprising that up to 30 per cent. of owners leave racing each year.

I alluded to the increasingly international movement of race horses. In a three-year period up to 1994, the number of British-trained horses that successfully competed abroad rose by 75 per cent. For precisely the same reason, foreign-trained entries to British races fell by 30 per cent. The Horserace Betting Levy Board has said that, if the decline in betting activity continues because of the national lottery, it will cause a cut of £6 million from the 1995-96 levy scheme of £55 million. Clearly, the future projections of £57 million for 1996-97 and £59 million for 1997-98 look unattainable.

In other words, the lack of prize money will discourage new owners, and inevitably cause more British-trained horses to compete abroad and fewer foreign-trained competitors to come here. Sooner or later, that will begin to affect the fixture list. All that is disturbing for employment, tax generation and the industry in general, which is increasingly underfunded by any objective standards. Although underfunding has been a feature of racing for many years, it is now tipping into a chronic state of underfunding.

The Bookmakers Committee commissioned a report from the Henley centre which estimated that, this year, the reduction in betting turnover resulting from the introduction of the national lottery is fully 8 per cent. More and more national lottery terminals are being installed and a midweek game is planned. In those circumstances, some 15 per cent. of the 40,000 people employed in the betting office industry could lose their jobs and numerous shops could close, with the inevitable consequences of a decline in taxation income.

I should add that, at the time of the national lottery's introduction, a decision was made not to allow betting shops to offer betting on the national lottery—that is despite the experience in the Irish Republic. That at least would have softened the revenue loss blow. Equally, shops were not permitted to sell lottery tickets. Surely, there is now an opportunity to consider liberalisation.

That is an unnecessarily oppressive restriction on business. Camelot certainly no longer needs such protection. Such moves could restore turnover to off-course betting activity and would certainly be a deregulatory measure. I urge that contact be made between the Treasury and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for National Heritage; that could be the basis for at least a partial solution. That deregulatory measure would help the industry to compete on more equal terms. Nobody could have forecast the national lottery's tremendous popular appeal. However, it has a unique competitive edge on other forms of betting. Newspapers have also introduced scratchcards, thereby compounding the problems.

Simply put, a certain number of punters who might have had a flutter on the races are buying lottery tickets or scratchcards instead. I mentioned the redundancies and shop closures that have already begun. There are other clear signs: there has been a doubling of

[Mr. Richard Spring]

cancellations by betting shops of satellite information services; equally, race sponsorships by bookmakers have been cancelled.

To sum up, we are caught in an unvirtuous circle: betting turnover diminishes, betting duty revenues fall, the prize money pool shrinks and, at every level, there is ultimately an employment impact. In the bookmaking industry, shops will close and employees get laid off. In the horse racing industry, the direct impact will be on jockeys, trainers and stable staff.

Of course, I welcome the arrival of the national lottery. I applaud its tremendous success and popular appeal. No other industry, however, is being more directly and clearly hit than horse racing. I have the honour of representing in the House the world's racing capital. I cannot be silent about the impact that the position I have described will have on many of my constituents and their livelihoods. Despite an admirable record of self-help in the industry, only the Government can practically resolve this problem.

How can that be achieved? Clearly, the level of betting duty must be reconsidered. I have already said that the effective tax burden on punters compares unfavourably with the national lottery. A cut in betting duty would give a considerable and essential boost to racing.

I need hardly mention that many of the jobs under threat are in rural areas where alternatives are hard to find. A cut in duty would stimulate betting turnover, although, in my view, it is vital that part of that cut finds its way via the levy directly into racing. I hope, therefore, that if my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor in his Budget decides to reduce betting duty, he will express his expectation that part of that reduction should go via the levy into racing. My right hon. and learned Friend could, of course, say that the reduction would be contingent on a suitable agreement to enable that to happen.

The racing industry is overwhelmingly financed by owners, at about three times the total levy and tote contribution. Without a reasonable spread of owners, especially new owners, the industry's financial liability will become impossible. We come back to the unvirtuous circle: diminished prize money reduces the desire of individuals to own race horses, fixture lists become smaller, attendances fall and revenues decline further.

Racing has an unassailable case for increased investment. The levy provides capital for upgrading facilities at race courses, not only for spectators but for jockeys and horses. Race courses need to be upgraded continuously to attract increasingly demanding race goers and to provide proper safety arrangements. By international standards, the integrity of British racing is extremely high, and this too requires money.

Other less obvious benefits flow from the proceeds of the levy. Breeders are rewarded for improving their bloodstock and equine veterinary research in Britain needs to be supported. It is probably the finest in Europe and we have been mercifully spared strains of illness that have cropped up elsewhere in the world. Of course, private capital finds its way into all those activities, but, at the minimum, funds from the levy can be used to complement those important endeavours. While prize money continues to remain at the heart of racing's financial problem, there are numerous ancillary activities and projects that provide the backdrop to race meetings themselves.

It is, of course, the race horse itself that is the linchpin of the industry. A decline in horses in training ripples out in negative ways which I have sought to describe. In a recession, people hold on to their possessions longer. With racing, the unfavourable prize money to cost ratio manifests itself in a current reluctance in Britain to purchase younger horses. Indeed, the number of horses in training is below both the peak 1989 level and even the level of 10 years ago, despite the undoubted attractiveness of VAT registration for owners and the growth in the number of horses in multiple ownership. Only 5 per cent. of new owners and only 7 per cent. of the more long-standing owners cover their costs.

I do not wish to give the impression that it is only owners who are beneficiaries of prize money. About a quarter of the pool is distributed among stable staff, jockeys and trainers. That, in turn, spills over to a whole spectrum of individuals, such as vets, insurers, farriers, feed merchants, transporters and saddlers. There is an extraordinary misconception about the true and substantial size of employment that racing helps to create.

At 7.75 per cent., general betting duty is punitive in a uniquely harsh way. The Select Committee on Home Affairs produced, in 1991, a yardstick that there should be the possibility for a race horse to cover its costs, of from £1,000 to £1,500 a month, if it won three races. At present, that is pie in the sky, and it has become even more clear since the inception of the national lottery.

An urgent cut in general betting duty of an appropriate size is required to restore the industry, at the minimum, to its pre-lottery state. My hon. Friend the Paymaster General has had specific representations and recommendations on that score. My own clear view is that any cut should be divided between the punter and, through the levy, racing.

Millions of people enjoy racing; it is part of our national heritage. Millions of people participate in the national lottery. The two are now inextricably linked, but to the great disadvantage of the former. Any fair-minded person would conclude that the high level of tax currently imposed on betting turnover is unreasonable. Racing can be stimulated and prize money increased only by a decisive reduction in the cost of betting. I ask my hon. Friend the Paymaster General to give the matter his fullest consideration in the lead-up to the Budget.

2.15 pm

Sir Fergus Montgomery (Altrincham and Sale): I praise my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Spring) for bringing this important subject to the House today. I declare an interest in that I am a consultant to the National Association of Bookmakers. I want to draw attention to the effect of the national lottery on the betting industry. The Government did, after all, do something for the football pools to help them with the problems that they encountered with the national lottery.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds pointed out, betting duty is at present 7.75 per cent. of turnover. The bookmakers are asking for a reduction of 2 per cent. because they feel that, if they get that reduction, they can pass it on to the punter. That would be very helpful to the people who use betting shops and there would, therefore, be an increase in turnover. I realise that my hon. Friend the Paymaster General can say little today in the lead-up to the Budget, but I hope that he can assure us that such a reduction is being carefully considered.

2.16 pm

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): I too congratulate the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Spring) on a first-class speech. He has obviously studied the issue and all the points he raised are ones that anyone who is interested in the betting industry would support.

I want to expand on the case for the greyhound industry which is also viewed by millions of punters and which provides thousands of jobs. I also declare an interest in that I own five greyhounds which run at Shawfield.

Ms Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): And they never win.

Mr. McKelvey: They win regularly, but I am still poverty-stricken. Owners have a difficult task, as do trainers.

I now turn to the levy and the portion of it that is meant to go to greyhound racing. Unfortunately, it is a voluntary contribution and, although the big, respectable bookmakers have paid their share of the levy, a percentage of the others have not; there is always a shortfall. If any reduction in betting duty, which I support, is to find its way to the greyhound industry, there must be some mechanism by which the voluntary contribution is collected.

I know that the Paymaster General knows a great deal about this subject. Many of us have written to him and we shall go to see him next week. Although he is knowledgeable, we need to work out a technical way around the problem of voluntary contributions. If we do not, the shortfall will wreck the greyhound racing industry.

2.17 pm

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Spring) on initiating this debate. I recognise that, this side of the Budget, my hon. Friend the Paymaster General cannot respond to points relating to the Budget. However, I simply make one point in echoing what has already been said.

We are all pretty tired of people saying, on fairly thin evidence, that the national lottery has hit either the money they raise or the business they run. It is clear to me from the evidence, however, that the betting industry, especially off-course betting shops, has been extremely hard hit because of the similarity of its business and the scratchcards. People make a direct choice to buy scratchcards rather than to go into a betting shop. Clearly, the industry needs help.

Whatever methodology of the revenue impact the Treasury accepts, I simply ask it to look at the methodology it has used before when it has believed that there would be a gentle decline in revenue or even an increase in revenue by leaving tax at existing levels. I refer of, course, to the withholding tax for American film stars, which was a disaster for the film industry and in terms of revenue.

There could be a rapid decline in revenue unless something is done. If such a decline happens, it will hit jobs across the country, particularly in Ladbroke Racing Ltd., which is a major employer in my constituency. I very much hope, therefore, that my hon. Friend the Minister will look at that point when considering the Budget later this month.

2.19 pm

The Paymaster General (Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory): My hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Spring) introduced this debate with knowledge and eloquence. He has already become an effective advocate of horse racing and its associated industries. He will have been pleased, as I am, by the speeches of other hon. Members and the interest that they have shown in this debate.

I would be the first to acknowledge that horse racing is part of our sporting heritage. It adds excitement and colour to our national life. It is also, as my hon. Friend pointed out, a substantial employer and important as an industry.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds fairly mentioned that the Government have introduced several helpful measures in recent years, such as the opportunity for owners to register for VAT and thereby recover that tax. There have also been a number of separate deregulatory measures such as those enabling betting shops to open in the evenings and the advent of Sunday racing and betting.

There has also been a further relaxation of restrictions on betting shop facilities—resulting, for instance, in the opening up of betting shop frontages. More recently, my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary has proposed that amusement machines should be allowed in betting shops. He hopes to put a draft order before the Deregulation Committee soon, with a view to the proposal being introduced and coming into effect next year.

Of course, some of those deregulatory measures have been somewhat two-edged in their effect, and I am aware that some bookmakers consider that, for instance, Sunday racing and the opening of betting shops on Sunday have led to higher overheads, which more than cancel out the corresponding increase in revenue and profit. But that must be a commercial decision for them. In general, we seek to remove restrictions unless they are justified.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds asked that betting be permitted on the national lottery. It is true that, under the law as it stands, bookmakers cannot accept bets on the lucky numbers. That is a matter not for the Treasury but for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for National Heritage. I hope that she will consider my hon. Friend's arguments carefully and I shall ensure that his remarks are drawn to the attention of Ministers in that Department.

[Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory]

The question of duty rates was central to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds and was also brought up by other hon. Members. My hon. Friend referred to a study which claims that the very success of the national lottery has caused a marked switch of expenditure away from betting shops. That same point has been made to me in representations from the betting industry and the British Horseracing Board.

As the House will understand, with the Budget only a few weeks away, I cannot comment on what my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer might say in his Budget speech. However, I can assure the House, hon. Members who have spoken and those who are listening that my right hon. and learned Friend and I will make decisions in the light of comments made today, and that all representations will be very carefully considered before the announcement on 28 November.

2.24 pm

Sitting suspended.

2.30 pm

On resuming—

It being half-past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, pursuant to Order [19 December].

DEATH OF A MEMBER

Madam Speaker: I regret to have to report to the House the death of Derek Anthony Enright, esquire, Member for Hemsworth. I am sure that Members on both sides of the House will join me in mourning the loss of a colleague and in extending our sympathy to the hon. Member's family and friends.

PRIVATE BUSINESS

CITY OF WESTMINSTER BILL *[Lords]*.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That the Promoters of the City of Westminster Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That, if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That, as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be read the first and second time and committed (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read and committed) and shall be committed to the Chairman of Ways and Means, who shall make such Amendments thereto as have been made by the Committee in the present Session, and shall report the Bill as amended to the House forthwith, and the Bill, so amended, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

LOCH LEVEN AND LOCHABER WATER POWER ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

Read the Third time, and passed.

Oral Answers to Questions

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Assisted Areas

1. **Sir Roger Moate:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the timetable for the next re-examination of the assisted area status map. [38649]

The President of the Board of Trade and Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Ian Lang): When the present map of the assisted areas was introduced in July 1993, the Government made clear that it would remain in place for at least three years. Areas need time to take full advantage of assisted area status, and frequent changes to the map could create uncertainties for potential investors. The Government have no plans to review the map during this Parliament.

Sir Roger Moate: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reassuring reply. In my constituency, in the travel-to-work area of Sittingbourne and Sheerness, assisted area status is much appreciated and has already produced several hundred jobs. However, the unemployment level is still 10.8 per cent, and it must be clear that areas such as mine and many others take longer than three years to gain the full benefit of such status.

Can my right hon. Friend give some assurance that the general tendency would be to favour renewal of the three-year periods where unemployment remains high, and furthermore that there will be no automatic cut-off at the end of the three years, and that cut-offs, if they are to occur at all, will do so only when the House has reviewed the orders and passed new ones?

Mr. Lang: I am happy to assure my hon. Friend that there is no question of a cut-off. The map will remain in place until it is changed. The previous map remained in place for nine years. I am glad that assisted area status is helping my hon. Friend's constituency. I understand that 34 offers of assistance have been made in the Sittingbourne and Sheerness travel-to-work area, worth £2.4 million, and associated with more than 650 jobs.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Why can there not be an urgent review of the assisted areas map, especially in the light of the decision of Campbell's Soups of America to close its Homepride plant in my constituency? That was a profitable operation that made £3.9 million last year, and it has one of the most modern canning plants in western Europe. Is it not an outrage that a foreign predator can move into a small town such as Maryport, destroy jobs and create such anguish and concern in that small community?

Mr. Lang: I recognise the hon. Gentleman's protectionist instincts, but the assisted area map can operate effectively only on a long-term basis. If changed periodically at a whim, in the light of temporary economic circumstances, it would not have the intended impact of enabling mobile investment projects to be decided upon in the context of a secure and stable economic background.

Mr. Nicholls: While assisted area status may be helping the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Faversham (Sir R. Moate), it is not helping my constituency of Teignbridge. Will my right hon. Friend ensure that there are proper safeguards to ensure that, when a business locates in an assisted area, the jobs created there are real and have not been pinched from elsewhere?

Mr. Lang: I am happy to reassure my hon. Friend that the effect of the assisted area status map and regional selective assistance is primarily to create new jobs. The attraction of inward investment to the United Kingdom is a result of a number of factors, but the assisted area map certainly helps in that direction.

Mr. Wigley: Will the President of the Board of Trade give urgent attention to west Gwynedd, north Meirionnydd, Dwyfor and Arfon and give them full development status? When the assisted area map was last drawn up, the Transfynydd nuclear power station was open, but it has subsequently closed and employment in the area has fallen. The Government's plans to provide an enterprise zone in the area have now been abandoned. In the light of that, unemployment is now at an unacceptably high level, and the area desperately needs help to attract new industry.

Mr. Lang: The hon. Gentleman knows that the Government are keen to help attract investment to areas of high unemployment, and that and there is a range of ways in which that can be done. Regional selective assistance, through the assisted area map, is only one method but, as I said, the map does not benefit from frequent changes. It benefits only from stability, which allows decisions to be taken on a proper long-term basis. I cannot give the hon. Gentleman any encouragement that a review will take place in the near future.

Mr. Michael Brown: Will my right hon. Friend reassure my hon. Friend the Member for Faversham (Sir R. Moate) on the basis of what happened in my constituency after the Government decided—correctly—that we no longer needed assisted area status? Will he assure my hon. Friend that there is more inward investment and that more jobs are being created now, without assisted area status, than before?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend makes a good point. It is also the case that the financial assistance offered under the arrangement is substantially less than that offered in many other countries. We are able to win inward investment because of the other qualities that Britain has to offer. Among the major inward investment projects which have come to this country without assistance are Nissan, Toyota and Samsung Heavy Industries.

Mr. Bell: The President will know that those inward investment projects were assisted by Labour-controlled local authorities throughout the country.

The hon. Member for Faversham (Sir R. Moate) reminded the House that the assisted area scheme has been extended to areas that have known prosperity and then known mass unemployment. Even the Deputy Prime Minister admitted at lunchtime that the UK is 21st in the international league table of investment per capita, and 18th in the league table of national income. In a moment of honesty, the right hon. Gentleman might also admit that Britain has halved its level of investment since 1979.

The House will welcome the assurance from the President of the Board of Trade that the assisted areas map will not be rewritten in the short term. That will obviate the suspicion that existed last time—when the map was redrawn by the right hon. Member for Hove (Sir T. Sainsbury)—that it was written in blue pencil to help the Tory party, and not the country.

Mr. Lang: I must point out to the hon. Gentleman that the figures used in the Labour party's advertisement in *The Times* today were taken from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which recently described Britain's performance as "impressive", and added:

> "The United Kingdom's sweeping structural reforms are yielding dividends in a more flexible, competitive and less inflation-prone economy".

The OECD endorsed our approach to deregulation and a flexible labour market and adopted all of the policies that we are supporting in the face of fierce opposition from Labour.

Midlands Electricity

2. **Mr. Robert Ainsworth:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what representations he has received in respect of consumers regarding the PowerGen bid for Midlands Electricity from the Midlands Electricity consumers committee. [38650]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Jonathan Evans): None.

Mr. Ainsworth: Is the Minister aware of the Midlands Electricity consumers committee chairman's concern that the proposal will not be in the interests of consumers? Is he aware that the centre for the study of regulated industries has shown that, while the cost of generating electricity since privatisation has fallen by 6.8 per cent., bills have fallen by only 1. 6 per cent.? The interests of consumers have certainly not been protected to date. Is it not about time the Minister started doing so? Will he refer the proposal to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission?

Mr. Evans: The interests of consumers have been served by the privatisation of the electricity industry in terms of the price to domestic and industrial consumers. I remind the hon. Gentleman of the structure that relates to these matters. It is a matter for the Director General of Fair Trading first to produce a report, which will then be passed to my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade. At this point, any representations should be directed to the Office of Fair Trading and the director general so that they may be incorporated in the advice that he will tender in due course to my right hon. Friend. My advice to the hon. Gentleman is that he should ensure, if he has not already done so, that his representations are passed to that quarter.

Mr. Harvey: Without anticipating the Budget, can the Minister tell the House whether the Government are still opposed in principle to a windfall tax on the electricity companies?

Mr. Evans: Yes.

Mr. Harry Greenway: Does my hon. Friend recall that electricity prices rose by 2 per cent. every six weeks in the midlands and the rest of the country under the Labour Government? Labour has no right to lecture this or any other Government about electricity price rises.

Mr. Evans: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The Opposition were then determined to ensure that the electricity industry remained a 100 per cent. state-owned monopoly. In those circumstances, the great benefits that are now pouring on consumers would not have been possible.

Shipbuilding

3. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many merchant vessels of 500 gross registered tonnes or more were constructed in United Kingdom shipyards in each of the past four years. [38651]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Ian Taylor): The number of merchant ships of 500 gross registered tonnes or more completed by United Kingdom yards between 1990 and 1994 was 18, 17, 14, nine and 11 respectively. The total tonnage of the completed ships almost doubled over the period.

Dr. Godman: The Minister knows that, on the Clyde, we have witnessed a decline from 32 shipyards to three. Even though Kvaerner Govan won a tidy little order recently, those three shipyards are in a perilous condition. Will the Minister seek a reappraisal of the decision to end the seventh directive of the shipbuilding intervention fund? Should he refuse to do so, will he urge upon the European Commission the need for fair competition in the Italian and Spanish yards, against which our yards bid for European contracts?

Mr. Taylor: The hon. Gentleman slightly underplays the small order to which he referred, because Kvaerner Govan has won a £60 million contract to launch communication satellites from a platform in the Pacific. I am sure that he welcomed that order in his constituency, so I hope that he will also welcome it in the House.

The agreement within the European Union on the OECD shipbuilding agreement effectively means the end of the shipbuilding intervention fund. The hon. Gentleman must know that. That will, however, benefit his yards and others, in the sense that there will be a fairer basis of international competition. At the moment, we compete against highly subsidised yards elsewhere. It is in Britain's interest that that agreement should come into effect as soon as possible, and that we should continue to improve the competitiveness of ships carrying the red ensign.

Mr. James Hill: May I congratulate my hon. Friend on his roving commission along the south coast? We were pleased to see him in Southampton. As he roves along the south coast, he will find many small shipbuilding yards that would appreciate orders. Some years ago, there was a scrap and build scheme operated by the European Union, but I am afraid that we did not take it up. When my hon. Friend is in Brussels, he may have reason to raise that scheme. Any more support for our small shipyards would be welcome.

Mr. Taylor: I understand my hon. Friend's concern for the yards along the south coast. I am delighted to be the sponsor Minister for those south coast towns. I have recently visited Southampton, Portsmouth and Hastings, and I am aware of the local difficulties. I shall look at my hon. Friend's proposal, but there is no substitute for our competing with the rest of the world for contracts. I therefore welcome the fact that other countries are having to abandon their subsidies.

Exports By Heavy Goods Vehicle

4. **Mr. Rendel:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the approximate value of the goods exported from Britain in heavy goods vehicles in the last financial year. [38652]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Phillip Oppenheim): The latest figures for the value of exports broken down by mode of transport are for 1992. Since then, the abolition of relevant customs documents for intra-EC trade has resulted in no figures being available.

In 1992, the value of seaborne exports carried by vehicles was £40.4 billion.

Mr. Rendel: Does the Minister agree that the extremely valuable trade carried by heavy goods vehicles can cause considerable environmental damage, especially where it is forced, on its way to the ports, on to roads that go through old market towns? Can he assure the House that he will do his utmost to ensure that the Government go ahead with the Newbury bypass as soon as possible?

Mr. Oppenheim: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's constituency concerns, but he would do better to address his remarks to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport.

Mr. Atkins: Is my hon. Friend aware that an increasing proportion of the heavy goods vehicles that are used to improve our export trade are made in my constituency by Leyland Trucks? Does he recognise the achievement of the reformed Leyland Trucks in terms of its share of the heavy goods vehicle market, which is a direct result of the Government policies with which my hon. Friend and I have been associated for many years?

Mr. Oppenheim: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. UK commercial vehicle manufacturers took nearly 60 per cent. of the UK market last year. They export nearly 40 per cent. of their output. He is right that the policy of the Opposition was to intervene and pour in Government money, which would have created another disaster along the lines of the one that they created with British Leyland in the 1960s and 1970s. Our policy has allowed the company to recover not only in the domestic market but so that it is exporting at record levels.

Scotch Whisky Exports

5. **Mrs. Ewing:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what recent representations he has received from the Scotch Whisky Association on improving the promotion of Scotch whisky within international markets; and if he will make a statement. [38653]

Mr. Oppenheim: We fully recognise the importance of the spirit drinks industry and its contribution to UK export performance and to our performance in general. We have wide-ranging contact at all levels with the Scotch Whisky Association and we give it extensive assistance towards its export effort.

Mrs. Ewing: Does the Minister recognise that the best international promotion that could be given to this vital industry would be to recognise at home the value to domestic industry of the Scotch whisky industry? As more than 45,000 jobs in Scotland are directly and indirectly dependent on the Scotch whisky industry, is it not time for the excise duty levied on Scotch whisky to be put on an equal footing with the rest of the spirit industry throughout the European Union and the rest of the international community? Can the Minister give us an assurance that the DTI will make such representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer?

Mr. Oppenheim: I appreciate the hon. Lady's concern. In fact, excise duty on spirits has fallen by 15 per cent. in real terms during the past 10 years. If we were to halve excise duty on spirits, and that reduction were fully passed on, the result would be a fall in price for consumers of only about 20 per cent. It is worth remembering that. I expect that my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has been known to enjoy the odd glass of whisky himself occasionally, will take the hon. Lady's comments into account at the end of the month.

Mr. Quentin Davies: Does my hon. Friend agree that the present excise system for taxing alcoholic drinks is not just discriminatory and distortionary as between alcoholic drinks and other drinks or products, but distortionary within the alcoholic drinks business? It would be logical and desirable to move to taxing alcohol content, irrespective of whether it occurs in Scotch whisky, beer, wine or any other alcoholic product. I know that it cannot be done overnight—any reasonable person would accept that—but should we not try to move towards it as a strategic objective?

Mr. Oppenheim: There is much validity in what my hon. Friend says, but he would not expect me to pre-empt my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement at the end of the month.

Mr. Graham: The Minister will not be aware that Chivas Regal is building a massive plant in my constituency which will create a wide distribution network. I therefore have a strong interest in Scotch whisky, as well as enjoying it. Scotch whisky is one of the most popular drinks in the world. Why do the Government not take steps to tackle measures such as those taken by the Japanese Government, who have put massive charges on to Scotch whisky and thereby created further unemployment in our country? We welcome Japanese products, but our products should be welcomed in Japan without being subject to punitive taxation. The Government should do their best to ensure a level playing field.

Mr. Oppenheim: I fully recognise the hon. Gentleman's enjoyment and extensive knowledge of the finer things in life. I assure him that we have referred the Japanese taxation system to the World Trade Organisation disputes settlement procedure, and we hope for a favourable decision before too long.

Export Promotion

6. **Mr. Mark Robinson:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what steps his Department is taking to promote British exports overseas. [38654]

Mr. Lang: British exports have been breaking new records. This may be due in part to the recent White Paper which announced more support for companies attending trade fairs and missions abroad, more commercial staff at embassies and high commissions around the world, and improved local help through business links.

Mr. Robinson: Given the excellent performance of British companies overseas, does my right hon. Friend agree that they have every incentive to go out and win even more orders in the coming year?

Mr. Lang: I do indeed. My hon. Friend will be pleased to note that the volume of our exports has risen by no less than 91 per cent. since 1979. We are breaking records in a wide range of new markets around the world.

Mr. MacShane: While we welcome any increase in British exports, is not the real problem the fact that our trade balance continues to widen in favour of imports? What are the Government doing to address that problem, particularly in light of today's very disturbing news that we have slumped to 18th in terms of gross domestic product per capita? Britain is going downhill: we are importing more and not exporting enough.

Mr. Lang: The hon. Gentleman seems to have overlooked the fact that our recent trade figures show that the trade gap is relatively narrow, taking no account of invisibles. Our trade gap last year was the narrowest since 1986. The export component of that figure, excluding oils and erratics, was a record. Why does the hon. Gentleman not welcome that fact?

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Does my right hon. Friend accept that the best way to assist and promote United Kingdom exports is by providing incentives to investment, improved training, low interest rates, continuing low inflation and the continuation of a Conservative Government?

Mr. Lang: I am happy to say that, as is almost always the case, I agree with my hon. Friend. The economic policies pursued by the Government have led to that very satisfactory outcome. It is only by continuing to pursue those policies, rather than espousing those of the Labour party, that we will be able to sustain it.

Mrs. Beckett: Surely the Secretary of State is aware that the Confederation of British Industry reports increased anxiety among exporters. Today's figures not only reveal a deficit—and a growing deficit—in our balance of trade, but include the forecast that that deficit is set to grow wider still. That shows our lack of competitiveness after 16 years of Conservative government. Does the Minister deny that the trade figures reveal our lack of competitiveness and the fact that Britain has slumped from 13th to 18th in the prosperity league behind France, Germany and Italy, when we had the oil?

Mr. Lang: I welcome the hon. Lady to her new responsibility for trade and industry matters. I regret that I disagree with almost everything she has said, including the accuracy of her figures—particularly in relation to France. The hon. Lady asked primarily about exports. I must point out, lest she has not noticed, that our exports are breaking records. We are exporting more now than at any other time in our history. She should recognise that achievement. If she takes account of invisibles, she will realise that the export:import balance and the balance of trade is very much more favourable than she allows. It is certainly vastly more favourable than it was under Labour Governments.

Mr. Batiste: Does my right hon. Friend agree that one way to assist British exporters is by bringing to an early and final end the Arab boycott of Israel? If he agrees, what action is he contemplating to bring that about?

Mr. Lang: Of course I agree with my hon. Friend that it is desirable to achieve peace and harmony in that area on a long-term basis. That would certainly lead to increased trade, and probably more exports for the United Kingdom. However, my hon. Friend will recognise that that is primarily a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary.

Nuclear Safety

7. **Mr. Hanson:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what assessment he has made of the projected standards of safety to be applied in the nuclear industry following privatisation. [38655]

The Minister for Industry and Energy (Mr. Tim Eggar): The Health and Safety Commission made it clear in its evidence to the nuclear review that the current regulatory regime is a rigorous system which ensures that a high level of safety is achieved. The same high standard of safety will apply after privatisation.

Mr. Hanson: Is the Minister aware of the recent statements by Scottish Nuclear safety expert Dr Richard Killick, which say that privatisation will lead to a massive reduction in safety and will have long-term implications for the safety of the industry at large? Will he now abandon privatisation or, at the very least, reconsider safety—or will he allow dogma to influence his decision at the expense of the public's health?

Mr. Eggar: I read about Mr. Killick's allegations in the newspapers and I asked for a full report because I take safety extremely seriously.

I can tell the House and the hon. Gentleman that at no time while Mr. Killick was employed by Scottish Nuclear did he ever mention those anxieties to the company, or to the chief inspector of nuclear installations, or to the relevant nuclear installations inspectorate staff, or to my Department. Those anxieties have surfaced only since he left the company.

Given Mr. Killick's background, he is well aware that, if he has genuine anxieties about safety, the first place to go to express them is to the independent regulator, the NII. Apparently, instead of doing so, he has spoken to the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) and to the press. That is irresponsible behaviour and, if I may say so, it is irresponsible of the hon. Member for Delyn (Mr. Hanson) to mention those anxieties as he has.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: Did my right hon. Friend read the evidence that Greenpeace gave to the Trade and Industry Committee on precisely that subject? Specifically, it said that there was no reason to believe that

"the management of a"

privatised

"nuclear company should . . . be"

any

"less sensitive to safety concerns. For operating power stations . . . ownership is less important than strength of regulation."

It is obvious that that should be so, because a shut-down nuclear station will earn no revenue, which would be to the commercial disadvantage of a privatised company.

Mr. Eggar: I noted what Greenpeace said. Post-privatisation, safety concerns will of course be at least as important as, if not more important than, they are at present, and they will be guaranteed by the independent nuclear inspectorate.

Mr. Battle: Can the Minister confirm that the Treasury expects to receive less than £3 billion from the proceeds of the nuclear privatisation deal, and that it cost the Government more than £3 billion to build Sizewell B power station alone? Does that mean that the Conservative Government are prepared to give away seven power stations for nothing? On those terms, will not that prove to be a shabby, short-changing deal for taxpayers and consumers alike?*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Eggar *rose—*

Madam Speaker: Order. There should be only one debate in the House at a time. There is some cross-questioning going on below the Gangway and there should be only one lot of questioning—to Ministers at the Dispatch Box.

Mr. Eggar: I welcome the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) to his new role. To the last of his questions I answer, "No."

Small Business

8. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade when he next expects to meet representatives of small firms to discuss Government measures to encourage start-ups. [38656]

Mr. Ian Taylor: Ministers, my Department's officials and business links regularly hold meetings with small firms organisations. Support for business start-ups is regularly discussed. With a net increase of about 60,000 businesses in 1994 and a projected increase of about 100,000 businesses in 1995, Government policy is effective.

Mr. Bellingham: Is my hon. Friend aware that one of the biggest problems that confronts small firms in my constituency is excessive regulation? Does he agree that the Government's small businesses litmus test scheme will help firms because they will be consulted first? Is not that yet another example of the Government helping small firms? It is all very well the Opposition sneering, but does my hon. Friend agree that, as long as they support the minimum wage and the social chapter, they cannot claim to support small businesses?

Mr. Cummings: Henry, try to live on less than a minimum wage.

Madam Speaker: Order. *[Interruption.]* Order. I am inclined to name Members and ask them to leave the Chamber if they are not able to contain themselves while we are at Question Time. Hon. Members below the Gangway on both sides of the House must stop blaming each other and behave like the adults they are supposed to be in this Chamber.

Mr. Taylor: My answers usually give rise to excitement after I have given them, not before. The key point about the small business litmus test is that all regulation will be considered in the light of its impact on small businesses. That is a welcome step forward.

As for the minimum wage, it is important to ensure that when Opposition spokesmen talk to small businesses, small businesses understand what they are being told. The Association of British Chambers of Commerce had to correct a recent Labour press statement. It is clear that the Labour party has not understood the devastating effect that the minimum wage and social over-regulation would have on small businesses.

Mr. Sheerman: Is the Minister not aware of the devastating effect of the cancellation of the business start-up grant on business start-ups? Training and enterprise councils, business links and economic development units across the country are already reporting a 25 per cent. drop in small business start-ups. If the Government are serious about small business, is it not about time they reintroduced that useful grant, and soon?

Mr. Taylor: The grant is now part of the single regeneration budget, which is important in that local people come forward with partnership schemes which have, as part of their scope, the generation of small business start-ups. The announcement yesterday about the national network of business links will provide enormous help to those wishing to start up small businesses. The Department for Education and Employment's training for work scheme is also a great asset. I believe that the Government have in place a range of possibilities to which small businesses can look when they need help.

Sir John Cope: Does my hon. Friend recognise that it is not only start-ups that are important but that it is important to allow existing small businesses to flourish and expand? In that connection, it is extremely good to see on the Order Paper the flow of deregulation orders following the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994. Will my hon. Friend and his colleagues do all they can to speed up the flow of those orders?

Mr. Taylor: My right hon. Friend speaks from experience, having been a Minister with responsibility for small businesses. I know that the creation of a small businesses Minister in every Department will accelerate the interests of small businesses in relation to any proposals for regulation that come to the Floor of the House and will speed up ideas about what we can do to deregulate.

Mrs. Roche: When the Minister next meets representatives of small businesses, will he explain to them in detail why the consultancy brokerage service has had to be axed before it was even launched, at a cost to the public purse of almost £3 million? Is not such incompetence yet another example of how, under the Conservative Government's management, Britain has slumped to 18th in the world prosperity league?

Mr. Taylor: The slumping going on in the House is in the originality of the questions being asked by Members on the Labour Front Bench. The business links system, which is now countrywide and which combines training and enterprise councils, enterprise agencies, universities and business interests, is the best business support system of any country. In those circumstances, I hope that the hon. Lady, who has just made her debut in the Labour Front-Bench team, will enjoy seeing what a Conservative Government are delivering in the field.

Mr. Gallie: Is my hon. Friend aware of the start-up of flights between Prestwick and Stansted airports? Does he believe that it breaks the mould of expensive flying within the United Kingdom? Does he further believe that it gives a great opportunity to small businesses in my constituency to extend their areas of operation and that it will greatly encourage those who wish to start up new businesses?

Mr. Taylor: My hon. Friend is an indefatigable fighter for the interests of businesses in his constituency. I am sure that the new airport arrangements will assist, and I wish the new venture the very best of luck. I am sure that Ministers at the Scottish Office and the Department of Trade and Industry will take a close interest in the progress being made.

Electricity Industry

9. **Ms Coffey:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade when he last met the electricity regulator to discuss regulation policy. [38657]

Mr. Eggar: I hold discussions with the Director-General of Electricity Supply on a regular basis.

Ms Coffey: Does the Minister agree that the proposed acquisition of Norweb by North West Water raises certain issues about the current regulatory system? Clearly, neither the water regulator nor the electricity regulator has in the past been able to anticipate the massive profits generated by those industries. The benefits have not been passed on to customers—shareholders have been the major beneficiaries. Does the Minister agree that it is now time to look again at the regulatory framework, to ensure that, in any future mergers, customers and employees as well as shareholders get a much better deal?

Mr. Eggar: As the hon. Lady knows, that matter is shortly to be considered by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, so it would be wrong for me to comment on it at this stage.

Mr. Riddick: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that, since privatisation, the price of electricity in Yorkshire has fallen by 16 per cent? Will he further confirm that my constituents will enjoy the benefits of a £50 rebate next year as a result of the demerger of the National Grid, and that the regulator has stipulated that the distribution prices charged by Yorkshire Electricity should be reduced by 3 per cent. per year for the next four years? Does the Minister agree that that is excellent news for consumers of electricity—our constituents—and that the Labour party is desperately trying to divert attention from it?

Mr. Eggar: Privatisation has brought enormous benefits to electricity consumers. Prices have fallen by 9 per cent. in real terms over the past two years, and next year prices for the average electricity consumer will be £90 lower than they were last year. My hon. Friend is right to say that further reductions beyond next year are in the pipeline.

Mr. McWilliam: If electricity companies are so successful, why do I have to pay so much for my electricity from Northern Electric while it keeps being the subject of predatory takeover bids from friends and bankers of the Conservative party or from American multinationals? Why can I not get my electricity at a fair price?

Mr. Eggar: Assuming that the hon. Gentleman has lived in the Northern area of electricity provision for many years, I might point out that for the first time he will already have had, and will have in future, a real reduction in the price of his electricity—a feat never achieved before, and certainly not under nationalisation.

Mr. Allason: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the electricity regulator has a role to play not just in protecting the interests of the consumer but in protecting those of the shareholders? Is he aware that during the recent merger involving South Western Electricity, some shareholders were denied the right to retain their shares in the company? Would it not be right for the regulator to take up that matter?

Mr. Eggar: My hon. Friend is right to say that the electricity regulator must, under statute, take account of the interests both of consumers and of the financial situation of the companies that he regulates. It is a matter of company law, not peculiar to the electricity industry, that, once 90 per cent. acceptances have been received, there is effectively a compulsory right for the acquiring company to purchase the additional shares. That does not apply only to the utility companies; it is a general rule which has been on the statute book for a number of years.

10. **Mr. Ashton:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what steps he has taken to increase competition in the electricity industry. [38658]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: Privatisation has opened the electricity industry to the disciplines of the market, and it has provided for increasing competition where previously there was none.

Mr. Ashton: Is the Minister aware that that increasing competition has meant that the East Midlands electricity board closed 60 shops last year, putting hundreds out of work and providing a far worse service for pensioners and others who want to pay their bills? The money from that has gone to increase earnings per share from 12p to 78p and the chief executive has paid himself a bonus of £120,000. Is the Minister further aware that, when the National Grid is sold off, households will receive £50 each, while shareholders will be given £2 billion and the chief executive who handles this legalised theft will receive a bonus of £200,000? Is that competition?

Mr. Evans: It is curious that Labour Members all spend their time deriding the regional electricity companies but then write to me saying that every proposed merger application should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and that the companies should remain in the hands of those now in charge of them.

Mr. Stephen: Does my hon. Friend agree that the electricity industry exists to provide electricity for consumers, not jobs for employees? Does he think that the electricity consumer would like to return to the old days of nationalisation, when a chief executive was paid rather less and electricity cost much more?

Mr. Evans: As my hon. Friend has made clear, privatisation has ensured that the consumer's interest has been to the fore. That is illustrated by the powers exercised by the Director General of Electricity Supply. I endorse my hon. Friend's remarks. Consumers would not have obtained the present deal under the old 100 per cent. state monopoly which Labour Members fought in the trenches to retain.

Ms Eagle: Does the Minister not appreciate the anxiety in the north-west with the takeover of MANWEB by Scottish Power and the proposed merger between North West Water and NORWEB, with the possible loss of thousands of jobs, fat cat salaries for those who run the industries and poorer services for customers? There is no good deal, merely a privatised monopoly.

Mr. Evans: With regard to the Scottish Power-MANWEB deal, the hon. Lady should know that the Director General of Fair Trading advised my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade that there were neither competition nor public interest grounds to warrant a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The hon. Lady referred to the proposed merger between North-West Water and NORWEB. Had she been listening earlier, she would have heard my right hon. Friend the Minister of State say that the matter is on my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's desk. It is therefore inappropriate for Ministers to comment.

Military Equipment Exports

11. **Mr. Bayley:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what proportion of export credit guarantees last year were used to support the export of military equipment. [38659]

Mr. Oppenheim: Eighteen per cent. of the value of guarantees issued by the Export Credits Guarantee Department in 1994-95 were for contracts for the export of military equipment.

Mr. Bayley: Does the Minister realise that less than 2 per cent. of our total exports are of military equipment but that they receive more than 30 per cent. of all export credit guarantees? How does he justify that? Does he realise that, if United Kingdom manufacturers of civilian equipment received the same Government support as arms manufacturers, we would not have slumped from 13th to 18th position in the world prosperity league, and the York carriage works in my constituency would not have lost vital far east export orders to competitors in Germany and France, and would not, therefore, be closing, with the loss of all 750 jobs?

Mr. Oppenheim: Let me put the hon. Gentleman's mind at rest on one matter. The Labour advertisement which appeared in this morning's press stated that France had overtaken us in the past 15 years. That is wrong. France overtook us when the Labour Government were in office. To fiddle the figures in its advertisement, Labour included Hong Kong and Singapore, which were excluded in the 1960s and 1970s. According to the World Bank, in terms of gross domestic product per head, Hong Kong and Singapore are also ahead of Japan and Germany, so we are in fairly good company.

The hon. Gentleman talked about the Export Credits Guarantee Department. He should be focusing on the percentage of export credits relating to the export of capital goods to non-OECD countries. Given the total figures, ECGD cover is the right proportion when compared with the overall proportion of exports. If the hon. Gentleman is saying that we should reduce ECGD cover for defence exports, he should make that absolutely clear, as such a reduction would have severe job implications for many people represented by Labour Members.

Mr. Nigel Evans: Is my hon. Friend aware that, in my constituency, thousands of people are employed by British Aerospace in the military defence industry? Many small to medium-sized businesses are supplying British Aerospace. It is important that those businesses receive Government support through export credit guarantees, and that the Government support projects—as we have done—such as the Eurofighter 2000, which means that we are able to secure many thousands of jobs and manufacturing skills in the north-west, especially in the smaller industries to which I have referred.

Mr. Oppenheim: My hon. Friend is right. The House should be aware that 400,000 jobs are dependent on the defence industry. Those jobs are concentrated in various constituencies, including those of the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) and the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett). If it is now Labour policy to cut back export credit support for defence sales, perhaps the Opposition will let us know. We can then assess the effect on their constituents' jobs.

Manufacturing Output

12. **Dr. Lynne Jones:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what estimate he has made of the likely date by which manufacturing output will be at least 3 per cent. higher than in 1990. [38660]

Mr. Oppenheim: My right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be publishing a new forecast for manufacturing output later this month.

Dr. Jones: I was—*[Interruption.]* I was taken aback by the fact that the Minister was not prepared to give any kind of estimate. Is not our manufacturing production only just about where it was before the recession began? It is no wonder, then, now that the competitive advantage of the devalued pound has faded away—[HON. MEMBERS: "Question."]—that we are back in the red with our balance of payments in manufacturing, which never occurred before the Conservative Government came to power. *[Interruption.]* What mark out of 10—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Speaker: Order. The more the House calls the hon. Lady to put a question, the longer it will take her. Will the hon. Lady come to her question now?

Dr. Jones: Yes, Madam Speaker. What mark out of 10 would the Minister give the Government for that performance?

Mr. Oppenheim: If I could give them 11 out of 10, I would. Manufacturing output grew by 4 per cent. last year and it is forecast by the Confederation of British Industry to grow by 4 per cent. this year. It is at record levels. When the Labour party was in charge of the commanding heights of British industry, British Steel was the world's largest loss maker and British Leyland made cars that were the butt of music hall jokes. Manufacturing output fell under the last Labour Government and growth in manufacturing productivity was bottom of all the main industrial countries.

Since 1979, not only have we got record manufacturing output, but the growth in our manufacturing productivity and in our manufacturing exports has been 80 per cent. Manufacturing has done very well under the Conservative Government.

Mr. Dover: Does my hon. Friend agree that it will reach the 3 per cent. extra above the boom times provided that the country is sensible enough to re-elect a Conservative Government? We are the only party that understands the needs of manufacturing industry.

Mr. Oppenheim: The proof of the pudding is very much in the performance. In the 1960s and 1970s, Britain was bottom of the Group of Seven league of major industrial countries in terms of manufacturing output growth and growth in productivity. In the 1980s and 1990s, we were top in the growth of manufacturing productivity and ahead of Japan and equal to the average of the G7 countries in growth of manufacturing output. As I have said, manufacturing has done very well indeed under the Conservative Government, in stark contrast with the disastrous state in which the last Labour Government left it.

Mr. Purchase: Did we not lose 350,000 jobs in manufacturing during the reign of the Conservatives in the 1980s? Did not imports of manufactured goods exceed exports in 1984 for the first time in Britain's industrial history? Is not manufacturing investment now lower than it was five years ago under the present Government? What has the Minister to say to that?

Mr. Oppenheim: There is one very big difference between our trading performance and that of the last Labour Government. Under the Labour Government, there was a period of surplus, but it was declining very rapidly. Under the Conservative Government, the performance has improved and, for the first time in many decades, we have maintained our share of world exports in manufactures. I also remind the hon. Gentleman that under the Labour Government jobs in manufacturing fell at the rate of 700,000 a year, output fell and productivity was stagnant. Under the Conservative Government, output has risen and productivity is at record levels.

Mr. Day: Is my hon. Friend aware that part of the improvement in manufacturing output in this country has been due to companies such as Avro International, which is based at Woodford in my constituency of Cheadle and has just recently made a marvellous export sale to Australia? Will my hon. Friend take the opportunity to congratulate the management and work force of Avro International on that breakthrough in the Australian market?

Mr. Oppenheim: I will indeed take that opportunity. The performance of British Aerospace is indicative of the improved performance of British manufacturing since 1979. Looking back to the 1970s, companies such as BAe, British Steel, British Leyland—all the nationalised, monopoly industries—were almost dead on their feet; they were industrial basket cases, whereas now they are highly successful, exporting all over the world. Rolls-Royce has trebled its share of the civil aero engine market, BAe is profitable again, and British Steel, which was the world's largest loss maker, is now one of the most profitable steel companies in the world—it exports 40 per cent. of its output, accounts for 80 per cent. of the domestic market and is once more a highly efficient industry. That is the story of what has happened to British manufacturing in the past 15 years.

Scientific Invention

13. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what new proposals he has to improve the application of scientific invention to industry. [38661]

Mr. Ian Taylor: The Government are committed to innovation and wealth creation through science and technology. The £40 million foresight challenge, the Office of Science and Technology and DTI competitions in industry/academic collaboration and technology transfer and the improved Smart, Spur and Link schemes are recent initiatives.

Mr. Flynn: What sort of example is the Conservative party setting in regard to the application of scientific inventions on the Internet? The web sites of the Labour and Liberal parties are fully interactive, but the only way to interact with the Conservative site is by means of a game which features the Prime Minister playing cricket and invites the public to "spot the ball". Is not one of the reasons why this country has slipped from 13th to 18th in the prosperity league the fact that all that the Conservatives can offer it on high technology is balls?

Mr. Taylor: I was in charitable mood and intended to congratulate the hon. Gentleman on putting a science question on the Order Paper following the transfer of responsibility for science to the Department of Trade and Industry, but he has mentioned a competition that Labour would constantly fail, because it can never spot the ball.

We have done an enormous amount to advance all the technologies in this country and their application on the Internet and the super-highways. We have made possible new processes which help education, hospitals and schools. The Conservative party's Internet site is independently regarded as the most exciting of the political parties' sites, as indeed it must be, as I launched it at the Conservative party conference.

Mrs. Lait: I thank my hon. Friend for coming to Hastings last week and visiting Instrument Technology Ltd.—a company which is applying industrial techniques to the sciences of vacuum generation and semi-conductors. Does he agree that there are administrative blockages in some of the international scientific programmes such as CERN? What action is he taking to try to help British companies win contracts?

Mr. Taylor: I valued my visit to Hastings last Friday, and I was impressed by the company that my hon. Friend took me to see. There is no doubt that it is one of the leading companies in the vacuum generation part of the industry, supplying research to establishments such as CERN. Unfortunately, many of the procurement techniques adopted by CERN make it difficult for companies to tender properly. Having led a trade delegation to CERN about a year ago, I am engaged in continuing discussions with it.

Mr. Ingram: Is the Minister prepared to accept that what is happening in the international prosperity league table is mirrored in the league table showing percentage of gross domestic product spent on research and development? The United States spends 2.72 per cent. of its GDP on research and development and Japan spends 2.93 per cent. while Britain is much further down the league, spending only 2.19 per cent. Given those figures and the link between research and development expenditure and industrial performance, is it any wonder that Britain has slumped to 18th place in the world prosperity league table?

Mr. Taylor: I am beginning to think that the record has stuck. Throughout Question Time the Opposition Front Bench has been given evidence of which it was not previously aware, but it has not yet adjusted its own records. Our science base is widely regarded as excellent. The research in our universities and the work done by the research councils is remarkable and our science and engineering base has grown by 10 per cent. in the past 10 years, so we need not suffer by comparison with other countries. Indeed, in many of our best industries—the pharmaceutical industry, for example—we are world leaders.

I welcome the hon. Gentleman to his position shadowing me on science. When he has considered some of the establishments in this country, he will realise what the centres of excellence are. Nevertheless, I concede that we must do better: there is no question but that there are too many holes in our good performance and too many sectors where there is not enough read-out from the excellent science base into industry and where British industry is not examining the longer-term requirements of encouraging science, both applied and basic, for the benefit of competitive performance. The purpose of the DTI and the Office of Science and Technology is to try to remedy that, both by encouraging the science base and by increasing technology transfer and innovation.

Trade with North America

14. **Mr. Fabricant:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade when he next plans to visit his counterparts in North America to discuss bilateral trade with the United States and Great Britain's relationship with North American Free Trade Agreement countries; and if he will make a statement. [38662]

Mr. Lang: I shall be visiting the United States of America and Canada next week to discuss the United Kingdom's successful trade and investment relationship with my counterparts in the American and Canadian Governments and with others in both countries.

Mr. Fabricant: I am delighted that my right hon. Friend will be visiting the United States of America and a united Canada. Is he aware that British companies are the biggest investors—they invest more than companies in any other countries—in the United States, and vice versa? Is he also aware that the United States is our second largest trading partner? Does he not think that that is partly due not only to our historical connections, but to a common language, a common culture and a common legal system? Does he agree that talk from the Labour party that we should concentrate only—[HON. MEMBERS: "Get on with it.]

Madam Speaker: We could have an Adjournment debate on that interesting topic. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would apply for one, but as this is Question Time, would he now put a direct question and resume his seat?

Mr. Fabricant: I stand chastised, Madam Speaker. Does my right hon. Friend agree that there is no mutual exclusivity and that we can trade well, not only with Europe, but with the United States of America and the NAFTA countries, too.

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is right in all his points. I appreciate his difficulties as there is so much good news to impart to the House and such a great need for education among those on the Opposition Benches. He is right that the United States of America is the United Kingdom's second largest market. Our exports this year are running at some 8 per cent. higher than last year so far and, at £16.8 billion, our exports last year were a record.

Mr. Eastham: If it is so glorious to have our investments pumped into America, would it not be wise if some of that investment were pumped into Britain? Instead of the Tory Government swanking about the Japanese investing in Britain, why are we not investing in Britain ourselves?

Mr. Lang: The hon. Gentleman might like to know that investment in plant and machinery in the UK has risen by 50 per cent. since 1979, and that since 1981 investment has risen faster than throughout Europe.

Isle of Wight Ferry Services

15. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade when he expects to publish the further report on ferry services and fares to the Isle of Wight. [38664]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: I understand that the Director General of Fair Trading expects to announce the outcome of his review of the market for the supply of cross-Solent ferry services in December 1995.

Mr. Field: I thank my hon. Friend for that answer. There is no denying that there has been massive investment in all ferry routes to and from the Isle of Wight—in new vessels, better terminal facilities and improved timetabling—but the House will recognise that the Isle of Wight sees itself as a captive market whenever it wants to visit England. I hope that my hon. Friend will bear that in mind when he receives the report.

Mr. Evans: My hon. Friend has always kept the position under close review on behalf of his constituents. He will know that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission concluded that, although there was a monopoly position, it could not be said to operate against the public interest. Nevertheless, it was decided that there would be a review after three years to ensure that the public interest was in no way damaged. That review has been undertaken, and I assure my hon. Friend that I will closely consider its contents when they are received.

Nuclear Safety

16. **Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what steps he is taking to ensure that safety standards are being maintained in the nuclear industry. [38665]

Mr. Eggar: The independent Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate continues to monitor closely the safe operation of all UK nuclear installations. The Government will not permit any weakening of the existing regulatory regime, nor of the safety standards currently in force.

Mr. Foulkes: Why was the Minister so dismissive earlier of the remarks by Captain Richard Killick, who has spent a lifetime in the industry? Should he not pay serious concern to the fact that Mr. Killick is worried about nuclear safety if the Government go ahead with privatisation? If the Government nevertheless press ahead with this crazy privatisation, will it not be further evidence of their frenetic lurch to the right?

Mr. Eggar: I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman has at least tried to produce a new soundbite. That is a relief to us. He should have a word with his hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Mandelson) and must try to ring the changes rather more often.

On the substance of the question, I would take Mr. Killick's comments rather more seriously if he had raised them with Scottish Nuclear and if he had taken them up with the nuclear installations inspectorate rather than going first to the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) and the press. In my judgment, scaremongering about nuclear safety is highly irresponsible and hon. Members should have no part in it.

Mr. Whittingdale: Did not the worst nuclear accident that the world has ever seen occur in a state-owned nuclear power station? Does my hon. Friend agree that we already have one of the toughest safety regimes in the world governing nuclear generation and that, if anything, that regime will be made still tougher once the industry is transferred into the private sector?

Mr. Eggar: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. This Government will do nothing to imperil nuclear safety. The NII is the independent arbiter of the continuance of the extremely high safety standards which have been such a feature of the British nuclear industry.

Beaufort Dyke

3.30 pm

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): I thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity to request a debate under Standing Order No. 20. You will recall that three years ago, on the previous occasion that I asked for such a debate, in relation to Rosyth, you were kind enough not only to grant it, but to grant it on that very day, so I have my fingers crossed that I may get the double.

I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the danger to the public and the work force arising from the British Gas operations at Beaufort dyke off the coast of south-west Scotland."

The matter is specific, as, for the past three weeks, phosphorus incendiaries have been washed up on the shores of Ayrshire, Arran and Argyll. In spite of protests by local Members of Parliament, including my hon. Friends the Members for Cunninghame, South (Mr. Donohoe) and for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham), and the hon. Members for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie), for Ayr (Mr. Gallie) and for Moray (Mrs. Ewing), and in spite of a meeting with the Secretary of State for Defence and a meeting with Cedric Brown of British Gas, the dangerous pipe-laying work is continuing.

For a few days, the Health and Safety Executive imposed a prohibition order on the work because of the concern expressed by the work force. The sub-contractors and the local people also expressed that concern. However, for some reasons, which have never been explained to anyone, the order was lifted by the Health and Safety Executive, and the work, which is already behind schedule, was allowed to recommence.

Today, we have the overriding reason for an urgent debate. The Scottish *Daily Mail*, in a three-page exclusive report, reveals that depth charges are now lying inches away from the gas pipeline, and that there are other explosives in the vicinity, so it would be quite irresponsible for British Gas to continue. The Scottish Office announced last week that there is to be a marine survey later this month. British Gas must suspend its operations until the results of the survey are known and until action is taken to make the munitions safe.

Ministers whom my colleagues and I have approached keep passing the buck from one to the other. It is only today that I realise that it is not those in the Department of Trade and Industry or the Ministry of Defence, but the Department of the Environment which is responsible for the Health and Safety Executive. Ministers in that Department should be brought to book before the House.

Local Members of Parliament have not had an answer. The only way in which we shall get answers from Ministers is to have an emergency debate. I request urgently, on behalf of my colleagues, that you grant it, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I have listened very carefully to what the hon. Gentleman has had to say. I have to give my decision to the House without stating my reasons. I am afraid that I do not consider that the matter which he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20, and I therefore cannot submit the application to the House.

Points of Order

3.34 pm

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. It follows a similar point of order which was raised by the hon. Member for Ayr (Mr. Gallie) on 24 October, on which you ruled, and arises from the actions of the hon. Member for Cardiff, North (Mr. Jones).

In the summer, the hon. Member wrote 18th birthday congratulations, in the form of a letter on his constituency notepaper, and claimed to be acting in a ministerial capacity. Unfortunately for the hon. Gentleman, perhaps, one of the letters went to a constituency activist of mine, who brought it to my attention and said that it had spoiled her 18th birthday. She would be very happy to receive a birthday card from me, but was not happy to receive a lot of Conservative propaganda from the hon. Member for Cardiff, North—to whom I gave notice at midday by telephone and by note of my intention to raise the issue today.

I was adding to the problems since I wrote to the hon. Member for Cardiff, North protesting about the matter when it was drawn to my attention three weeks ago. So far, I have not received a reply giving some explanation of why he was writing to my constituents. Indeed, when I spoke to him last night and asked him when I would get a reply, he told me that he did not intend to reply, which is why I have no option but to resort to bringing the matter to the attention of the House.

Not only is there the issue of writing to other hon. Members' constituents—the point made by the hon. Member for Ayr, on which you ruled last week Madam Speaker—there is a rule of the House, as I understand it, that birthday greetings from hon. Members must be no more than greetings, and must not include propaganda about Conservative achievements in Wales, and so on.

Thirdly, there is the fact that the hon. Member for Cardiff, North has not answered my letter, and, fourthly, he has claimed specifically that he was writing in his ministerial capacity, which he has no right to do in the form of birthday greetings to 18-year-olds in Cardiff, West.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Gentleman's principal concern is that one of his constituents has been approached by another Member. I can confirm his understanding that it is a clear convention that, unless otherwise agreed between the hon. Members concerned, the interests of members of the electorate can be represented only by their constituency Member—in this case, the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan). But as he and the House know, I, as Speaker, have no means of enforcing those conventions; I have to leave it to the good sense of Members to work out their problems between them.

Mr. Ian Bruce (South Dorset): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I know that you in particular are keen to defend both the reputations of this House and Members of it. I have a difficulty with *The Independent*. Several days ago, the *Labour Research* magazine, which is linked to the Labour party, did its usual accurate level of research in supposedly revealing a secret document about Members who belong to the freemason organisation. I might add that that secret document is available in most public libraries, and the magazine demonstrated only that it could not read it correctly, since it misnamed me as a senior official of the freemason organisation.

The article attempted to smear colleagues who are members of the organisation, which does a great deal of good charitable work. It presented the matter as something sleazy, which Nolan should be looking into.

The particular point that I raise is that, as we all know in this place, a lie is halfway round the world before truth has got its coat on. The item has been retracted by the newspaper in a piece which nobody could see if they did not have their glasses on—

Madam Speaker: Order. I cannot allow debates, or these lengthy statements by Members. I do not think that the House quite understands what a point of order is about. A point of order has to be something with which I, as Speaker, can deal. Now come to the point of order.

Mr. Bruce: The point for you, Madam Speaker, is whether, when Lobby correspondents refuse to put the record right as quickly as possible in a sensible way, you can remove the passes from those people and—

Madam Speaker: Order. An individual complaint that the hon. Gentleman has against the Lobby is not a matter for me as Speaker to deal with. He must deal with the Lobby himself, as I have done for the past 23 years.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): On another point of order, Madam Speaker. During Question Time, I was astonished to hear Captain Richard Killick, who was formerly one of the Royal Navy's senior experts on nuclear safety, being defamed by the Minister for Industry and Energy. Will you confirm, Madam Speaker, that a constituent has an absolute right to raise matters of concern, both local and national, with his or her constituency Member of Parliament? The idea that a constituent should be prevented from doing that, and instead should have to go to the Government—the sponsor of the legislation about which he is complaining and wishes to express concern—is absurd, and extremely dangerous.

Madam Speaker: Any individual in this country has an absolute right and liberty to go to his or her own Member of Parliament to seek redress. That is the way in which we all deal with our constituents; there is a perfect right of access.

Several hon. Members: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order. Just a moment. I can see hon. Members standing.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): I agree with you, Madam Speaker, that constituents have an absolute right to come to their constituency Member to raise matters on their own behalf. Could you therefore do something about the fact that the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson), who has just made that very point, came to my constituency without advising me in advance, in order to take a petition from constituents on a matter that they had not had the courtesy to raise with me in the first place? *[Interruption.]*

Madam Speaker: Order. I think that we could probably take up many afternoons with such matters.

I have given many rulings on the subject, and I expect Members of the House to behave as adults. *[Interruption.]* Order. I have given my rulings, and explained to the House about the convention. I expect Members to observe that convention, and to arrange matters between themselves.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Will you let us know, Madam Speaker, whether the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) has yet submitted any evidence in support of the allegations that he made yesterday?

Madam Speaker: I have not yet received any information from the hon. Gentleman.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. You will be aware that today Yorkshire Water is applying for a drought order for permission to introduce 24-hour rota cut-offs in Halifax and Huddersfield. If that happens, industry in my constituency could be desperately affected. Even worse, schools could close, and the elderly and sick in nursing homes could be put gravely at risk.

My point of order for you is to ask whether the Government have said that a Minister will make a statement on what, thanks to the mismanagement of the privatised utility, Yorkshire Water, is a grave crisis for my constituents and for people in Huddersfield.

Madam Speaker: No, I have not been told that a Minister seeks to make a statement today. Had that been the case, we should all have known about it, because it would have been on the Annunciator.

Ms Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): Have you, Madam Speaker, any information about a Government statement on the case of Ken Saro-Wiwa, who has been sentenced to death on trumped-up charges by a military tribunal under the discredited military regime in Nigeria? Given the circumstances, severing diplomatic relations and severe economic sanctions are the least that people will expect from the British Government.

Madam Speaker: I refer the hon. Lady to the point of order and exchange that took place on the matter yesterday. No, the Government have not told me that they seek to make a statement.

Mr. Brian H. Donohoe (Cunninghame, South): Although obviously I accept your ruling, Madam Speaker, on the application for an emergency debate under Standing Order No. 20 made by my hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes), I wonder what other avenues are open to us as Members of Parliament to pursue the matter.

Madam Speaker: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman had been in the House long enough to know that there is more time now for Back Benchers to raise such issues than ever before. If he does not know what they are, he can come to my office and I will give him a seminar.

Mr. Thomas Graham (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): Further to that point of order, Madam Speaker. I seek your guidance, too, because of my extreme concern for my constituents who live on the coast near the area where the explosives are being washed up. Our concern is environmental. Will the Government make a statement—

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman seeks to raise the same matter again. There are many opportunities—through Adjournment debates, on the Loyal Address and in many other ways—for the matter to be raised in the future.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Further to the point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), Madam Speaker. If the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) does not supply you with the evidence to which he referred in his spurious allegation yesterday, what steps—if any—can be taken to bring the hon. Gentleman back to the House to withdraw the allegation?

Madam Speaker: I cannot answer hypothetical questions.

Representation of the People (Amendment)

3.44 pm

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to extend and improve methods of electoral registration.

It is timely to be promoting a Bill which seeks to extend and improve the methods of electoral registration, because we are likely to have a general election using registers which will operate from February 1996 to 1997. If the election is not held with those registers, it certainly will be held with the registers for the year after that.

There is still time to register on the current electoral register, as the qualifying date for registration is 10 October in Britain and 15 September in Northern Ireland. People can still register even if they fail to do so before those dates, as long as they have qualified for the registers to be published on 16 February. Supplementary lists can be produced afterwards, so everyone who is not registered should make an effort to ensure that they are placed on a register.

They should ensure that they are on a register, not just because there is a legal requirement to do so, but because the franchise arrangements of this House have been based upon the struggles of the chartists in the 19th century and the suffragettes in the 20th for one person, one vote. One would have to look in a broom cupboard to see how the chartists and the suffragettes have been remembered, despite what they did to extend the electoral arrangements in this country.

Everyone should register, but help is needed to ensure that that is done. Money should be spent on advertising that goes beyond the recent advertising campaign on the subject, and a amount of money should be spent at least comparable to the amount spent on advertising the electricity and gas privatisations, to ensure that people are encouraged to take advantage of this fundamental right.

The best practices of electoral registration officers should be spread throughout the country, but the resources they require to do that are often far greater than are available to local authorities. An examination must take place of standard spending assessments and other provisions, to ensure that those funds are made available.

Political parties can also play a role in canvassing to ensure that people are registered. Keir Hardie said that, if Labour looked to the electoral register, it would surely achieve victory. Political parties must be aware of the importance of getting people on to electoral registers. Probably the best thing that could be done to encourage people to register would be for Parliament to make politics seem relevant to people. If people felt that Parliament expressed their views or that the Government were concerned with and linked to the people of this country, they would rush to the polling stations to ensure that they were on a register to exercise their franchise.

Even if we all do our best under the current arrangements to get people on registers, there are serious defects in how the system operates. If someone moves home today—or has done since 10 October—they cannot appear on the relevant electoral register in their area until 16 February 1997. They might not appear on that register even then, because they may have moved again to some other area. We are supposed to have an increasingly mobile society, but we do not have the electoral arrangements to deal with it.

In 1991, the Hansard Society reported that, by the time a typical constituency register was finished, 16 per cent. of the names on it were redundant, and were no longer eligible to vote in the area. The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys study in 1991 on electoral registration by Stephen Smith showed that non-registration in England and Wales amounted to between 7. 4 per cent. and 9 per cent. of those eligible to vote. The figure was especially high in inner London. Other OPCS publications on electoral registration show that similar problems exist within other cities.

The figure is high among the young—particularly among people coming up to vote for first time, known as "attainers"—among the black population, and among people who live in private rented accommodation.

The rate of non-registration is astronomically high among those living in furnished private rented accommodation—exactly the sort of people who move around. It is also higher among men than women. It is my modest claim that between 3 million and 4 million people are missing from electoral registers.

Following a dispute I had with certain people at the OPCS about that claim, Dennis Roberts, director of statistics at the OPCS, wrote an internal memo stating:

> "Surely the estimate produced by Mr. Barnes MP is broadly correct."

If I had time, I could easily prove how at least between 3 million and 4 million people are missing from electoral registers.

My Bill would tackle the serious problem of under-registration by introducing a rolling register, so that people could be added to their local register when they moved into a new area, and deleted from it when they moved away. People who died would also be deleted from the register, to avoid electoral communications being sent by political parties.

The duty of the electoral returning officer would be to contact people as they moved into the area. They would do so by means of the information supplied to them from statutory undertakings, educational institutions, local authorities, Government Departments, and other electoral returning officers. They would also receive information from the registrar of births, marriages and deaths, so that the necessary deletions could be made as a result of death.

The EROs would then give people who had moved into their area the opportunity to comply with the registration requirements before adding those people's names to the register. The EROs could therefore check whether those people should be added to that register. The registers would cease to roll when an election was called, but it would still be possible for a person's name to be added, because the new qualifying date would then be the date of the announcement of the election. After the election, the registers would roll again. That requirement is included to ensure that no particular area is packed with people during a by-election.

A key element within the proposed system would be the early issue of polling cards, accompanied by the most extensive publicity possible. People who did not receive one would realise that they were probably not on the register. They would still have time to register as long as they qualified to do so on the date when the election was announced.

There is little time for my Bill to become law, but I offer it to the Government for inclusion in the forthcoming Queen's Speech. No doubt Ministers will tell me to get lost—much to their shame. I must stress that my Bill has all-party support—in fact, the list of supporters sounds like a coalition Government.

Apart from my Bill, the Government should also consider the work done by a non-party organisation, Full Franchise, which has argued in favour of my Bill. It has also argued for access to polling stations for disabled people. That proposal was included in the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill which I introduced this year, and which is still before the House.

Legislation should also be introduced to establish a register of homeless people to ensure that those people are given their full registration rights.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Harry Barnes, Mr. Robert Maclennan, Mrs. Margaret Ewing, Dr. Norman A. Godman, Mr. Dafydd Wigley, Mr. Dale Campbell-Savours, Mr. Richard Shepherd, Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mr. Roy Beggs, Mr. David Alton, Mr. Bill Michie and Mr. Paul Flynn.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (AMENDMENT)

Mr. Harry Barnes accordingly presented a Bill to extend and improve methods of electoral registration: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 10 November 1995, and to be printed. [Bill 186.]

Orders of the Day

Gas Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Madam Speaker: Before I call the first amendment, I must tell the House that I have not selected the amendment to Lords amendment No. 211 in the name of the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham).

Clause 1

GENERAL DUTIES UNDER 1986 ACT

Lords amendment No. 1 agreed to.

Madam Speaker: We now come to Lords amendment No. 2. By leave of the House, I will put Lords amendments Nos. 2 and 3 together.

3.55 pm

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I thought that Lords amendments Nos. 1, 2 and 4 had been moved as a group and I was waiting for Lords amendment No. 3, to be taken with amendments Nos. 13 and 22, to be called before opening my comments. I did not hear it called.

Madam Speaker: I put it, but it is confusing to deal with Lords amendments, as the whole House agrees. If it is in order with the Minister, I am quite happy to go back to amendment No. 3 if the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) wishes to speak on that. I would have to have Lords amendment No. 3 properly moved by the Minister and we will debate also with it amendments Nos 13 and 22.

Lords amendment No. 2 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 3, in page 2, line 27, at end insert ("chronically sick,")

The Minister for Industry and Energy (Mr. Tim Eggar): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

If it would help, Madam Speaker, I shall comment on this group of amendments, which was made in response to a point made by my right hon. and noble Friend Lord Boyd-Carpenter in Committee in a debate on an amendment that had been moved by Baroness David. My noble Friend suggested that we needed to look again at whether the Bill's definition of those who are disabled or of pensionable age as requiring special consideration or services need to be expanded to encompass those who had suffered very severe and prolonged illness. Having considered the point, we accept the broad thrust of that argument and, through this group of amendments, we are trying to answer the point made by my noble Friend.

Mr. Battle: I am grateful to you, Madam Speaker, for allowing us to open the debate on this group of amendments.

We welcome the return of the Bill at this late and perhaps non-controversial stage. It launches British Gas into the brave new world of domestic competition. Labour does not oppose the principle of opening up the domestic market to competition since British Gas has been privatised. It would have been better if the changes that

[Mr. Battle]

we proposed in Committee and on Report had been accepted, but it would be churlish not to accept and acknowledge that crucial progress has been made in the other place. We welcome the fact that the Minister is prepared to accept the amendment.

Our concerns are still focused on the Bill's effect on consumers. The amendments introduce protection for the chronically sick as well as for those who are elderly and disabled. That is welcome. It is a broader definition. We would have preferred what I would call a fairer distribution mechanism to ensure, for example, that there is no regional discrimination. As the biggest and, perhaps, more attractive markets will be in London and the south-east, we need to be assured that less attractive markets will not be starved of what the Minister considers to be the benefits of opening the market.

Even the Minister would not want a regime in which gas costs more for people in Newport than for those in Norwich simply because Newport is further away from the gas's landing point. I think that it is important that the Bill does not have a regressive effect, in that the more affluent customers are considered to be profitable to suppliers and therefore enjoy the benefits of choice and competition, while prices end up much higher for the elderly, the disabled and the chronically sick, who are more likely to suffer from fuel poverty.

It would be churlish not to acknowledge that there has been some progress and that some common-sense amendments dealing with consumer protection have been moved in the other place. However, we do not think that they go far enough. We must ensure that those on lower incomes experience the benefits of competition rather than suffer its adverse effects.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): Amendment No. 13 adds the word "disabled" to section 7A—the anti-cherry-picking provision. Does the Minister envisage that licences granted under the provision may discriminate on the grounds of social disability or sickness? I find it difficult to understand how a licensee could ensure that that does not occur. Will the licensee base his or her calculations on the number of people in a street?

As my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) said, there is a danger of a strong regional element. Licensees could look at the valley communities, for example, and try to avoid having to compete for gas in that area. How will we get around the issue of competition and discrimination on a regional basis, especially as one consequence of the Bill will be discriminatory pricing on a regional basis?

Mr. Eggar: I shall pick up the rather wide point that the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) has raised. There will be a transportation charge differential. That flows not from the Bill but from decisions made by the Director General of Gas Supply before the Bill's introduction. We have never made any secret of that fact. That differential will not be more than plus or minus 2 per cent. of current consumer prices

The Bill's structure—this point was raised in Committee—has potential benefits for the more remote communities that are perhaps not connected to gas. It will make it easier for local communities and individuals to take the initiative and many competitors of British Gas believe that they will be able to connect consumers to gas at a lower cost than British Gas. The Bill also contains powers that will allow the connection costs to be spread over a number of years, rather than having one upfront charge, as applies under the Gas Act 1986.

As to the hon. Gentleman's other point about what is loosely described as "cherry picking", the appropriateness of precise licence area is a matter for the director general. The various issues may be encapsulated by saying that the Bill's structure and the licences are designed to make it as difficult as possible to engage in cherry picking, however the cherries may be defined and however much people may want to pick them.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 4 to 13 agreed to.

Clause 6

LICENSING OF GAS SUPPLIERS AND GAS SHIPPERS

Lords amendment: No. 14, in page 8, line 27, at end insert—

("(6A) If the holder of a licence under subsection (1) above applies to the Director for a restriction of the licence, or for the revocation of the licence in accordance with any term contained in it, the Director shall, subject to subsection (6) above, accede to the application if he is satisfied that such arrangements have been made as—

(a) will secure continuity of supply for all relevant consumers; and

(b) in the case of each such consumer who is supplied with gas in pursuance of a contract, will secure such continuity on the same terms as nearly as may be as the terms of the contract.

(6B) A person is a relevant consumer for the purposes of subsection (6A) above if—

(a) immediately before the restriction or revocation takes effect, he is being supplied with gas by the holder of the licence; and

(b) in the case of a restriction, his premises are excluded from the licence by the restriction;

and in that subsection 'contract' does not include any contract which, by virtue of paragraph 8 of Schedule 2B to this Act, is deemed to have been made.")

Mr. Eggar: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Madam Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss also Lords amendment No. 15.

Mr. Battle: We welcome amendment No. 14. It underpins the guarantee of the security of supply, because it provides that, if a supplying company goes bankrupt, it will not be in a position to withdraw the supply until it has found a replacement. That adds some essential protection of consumers, who will not be subject to liquidation and therefore will not have their supply cut off.

I was slightly surprised, when I approached the Bill at a late stage, to find that that amendment was not in the original Bill. Perhaps it should have been on the face of the Bill. It has been added by Lords amendment. I hope that it is welcomed by the Government, as it is welcomed by the Opposition.

Mr. Rowlands: I wish to make a variation on that argument. As I understand it, that amendment will clarify what happens if a licensee decides not to continue to supply, and it clarifies the means by which that termination occurs.

I assumed that the amendment was needed because the Government gave the impression, in some of the early undertakings that we received about competition in gas, that a huge, new, great, wonderful pool of entrepreneurial skill would emerge—that new companies would emerge that are capable of delivering that new competitive gas supply. Inevitably, if there is a new style of supplier, a risk arises that that company may go bust or go into liquidation or run into trouble. I therefore understand the aim of the amendment.

I have read some troubling press reports. We now have an opportunity to ask the Minister to clarify matters. Will he tell us whether some of those reports are accurate? Is it true that the new suppliers are likely to be anything but new entrepreneurial skilful newcomers who will be exciting new players in the gas market? Recent press reports suggest that it will be Amoco Corporation of America, linked with Seeboard plc, the English regional electricity company. It will be BP and the Norwegian Statoil-Den Norske Stats Oljeselskap AS. It will be Total and Texaco Ltd., linked up with Calor Group plc. Those are huge oil moguls, which will dominate the market in supplying domestic gas as much as any of the new entrepreneurial companies of the type against which the amendment was presumably aimed to safeguard consumers.

The Minister should try to give us a flavour of the type of new licensee that he expects to emerge—or is it that, as it appears from press reports, we shall have not a marvellous burgeoning of exciting new gas suppliers but huge new forms of concentrated power? Is it true that oil companies will drill, produce gas and deliver into the households of the United Kingdom? That is not exactly an image of a wonderful new spirit of competition. It is a huge collection of other big barons entering the market to compete with the baron British Gas.

I believe that there is a serious issue as to what image and vision Ministers had when they went down that road of gas competition. I wonder whether the Amocos and the Totals and the Amerada Hesses and so on will reach Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney—that is why the amendment is important. Who will be the new competitor in our district? I have a horrible, nightmarish feeling that it will be the electricity company—perhaps even the electricity company taken over by the water company. It would be wonderfully rich if one of the consequences in our district was that we had somehow reconcentrated what were public monopolies into combined private monopolies in which the same company delivered gas, electricity and water.

Those questions arise as a result of the pattern or type of new competition that may emerge. Certainly, if that arises, those amendments are unnecessary. However, if it does—if my interest and worry are proved right in the longer term—what would one have achieved if the result is that our water, electricity and gas are supplied by the same big brother, but privatised instead of public?

Mr. Eggar: I deal first with the provenance of the amendment, which is essentially technical. Hon. Members who considered the Bill in Committee will remember that there are in it a number of protections to ensure that a licence is granted not only to financially viable companies but to companies that meet various other criteria set by the director general.

The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) referred to what he described as a concentration of power. I do not want to get too mischievous in what is, and has always been, a basically friendly debate, but the idea that the Bill will lead to an extra concentration of power is a bit rich, considering that there was previously an absolute monopoly supported by the hon. Gentleman. Under that system, one company bought all the gas produced in the North sea and supplied it to the consumers. The Government were determined to break that monopoly and to introduce competition.

The Bill is an attempt to provide a framework within which different types of competitors can emerge. We are not thinking only of the type of companies to which the hon. Gentleman referred and which have so far publicly announced that they will supply nationally. We wanted to produce a framework within which regional suppliers could emerge. I have always been keen to safeguard opportunities for very localised producers.

Let me describe a scenario that I have in mind and how it can come about under the Bill. Personally, I believe that a major source of gas supply to the United Kingdom will be coal-bed methane. We have to get the technology right but there is no reason why, over a period, we should not be able to produce it competitively, as the United States has managed to do.

Because of the location of the major consumers of gas in the United Kingdom—they have historically been around the coalfields—there is a ready and nearby market for constant supplies of gas which are particularly appropriate to coal-bed methane producers. That might also apply to remoter villages in, for example, South Yorkshire, which are perhaps not on gas supplies but which are near mains gas supply systems and coal-bed methane supplies.

I wanted to provide a framework in which, over time, localised suppliers could emerge, producing for perhaps three or four coal-bed methane wells and supplying to relatively few purchasers. I have never heard it suggested that there were tremendous opportunities in the south Wales coalfields because I have never heard it suggested that there was the same methane availability there as there almost certainly is in other parts of the country.

The hon. Gentleman also asked whether people will want to compete in the valleys. I see absolutely no reason why they should not. I also see no reason why the Bill's provisions should not make it easier for communities that are not already on gas to be put on gas. There will be an average reduction in the price of supply.

Mr. Rowlands: I am grateful to the Minister for the thoughtful way in which he has replied. However, I do not think that it would be much of an achievement if the overall effect is that the alternative supplier turns out to be our electricity company. Is that the type of company that the Minister envisages as British Gas's main competitor in areas such as mine?

Mr. Eggar: It is probable that in most parts of the country the relevant regional electricity supplier will want to be able to supply gas. How successful and competitive it will be is another matter, but the huge advantage from the hon. Gentleman's constituents' point of view is that they will no longer have to buy from just one supplier. Whatever the alternative or alternatives—incidentally, I think that there will be more than one alternative to British

[Mr. Eggar]

Gas—consumers will have a choice. The history of competition is that it drives down prices and improves the quality of service because it is only when that happens that consumers can be persuaded to move from existing suppliers. Whoever British Gas's competitors are, the hon. Gentleman's constituents are likely to benefit.

Mr. Michael Connarty (Falkirk, East): I completed an Industry and Parliament Trust fellowship with British Gas, and therefore took a self-denying ordinance and did not seek to serve on the Committee scrutinising the Bill. I can assure the Minister, however, that much of the drive for competition came from British Gas, which felt that it would get the regulator off its back and that a free-for-all would ensue.

As a former graduate of the dismal science of economics, I am reminded of the fact that all capitalist endeavour tends towards monopoly. My hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) was right about the small regional monopolies that will emerge as competitors, just as they have in the water and electricity industries. I cannot envisage many people making large amounts of money from, according to the Minister's vision, extracting methane, although I hope that some will take that technology forward.

4.15 pm

The Lords amendment has to do with the holder of a licence applying to have that licence restricted. The worry is that, when the licences are drawn up, there will be profitable, cherry-picking areas and also areas of marginal profit—for instance, when I was studying British Gas, a decision was taken not to run the pipeline to Gretna all the way across the border to the north of England, because it was thought that that would be a loss-making venture compared with a pipeline direct to Gretna. The same sort of scenario will recur with these monopolies. Some people will be supplied with gas; many more will be left aspiring to be supplied with it.

My worry is that people will apply to remove from their licences areas that are not currently being supplied—and that would be allowed, because the amendment stipulates only that a person is a relevant consumer under the new section 6(B) if

"immediately before the restriction or revocation takes effect, he is being supplied with gas by the holder of the licence".

So people whose homes are not on the pipeline may be excluded from the licence holder's area and will never be connected. To change the licence, another supplier would have to be found. So many areas of Britain, under competition, will not be linked up, because all the competition will be about making money out of buying and then selling gas to end users. The companies will continually try to make profits from their regional monopolies, not to serve the needs of consumers.

Thus, although the Government laud competition, the chances of people in the remoter parts of the United Kingdom getting a gas supply will diminish with this Bill, even if it includes the Lords amendment.

Mr. Eggar: I am keen to be helpful. Two distinct issues are involved here. First, will customers already connected to a gas supply benefit from competition; and will there be more connections? All the evidence so far is that competition will lead to reduced prices and improved standards of service and choice for consumers. Once people are linked up to the gas system, there will be no difference resulting from the Bill. The right to withdraw from the market is carefully circumscribed, and the interests of the consumer as regards supply are protected.

The other issue concerns whether people and enterprises not currently linked up to a gas supply will have a better or worse chance of being linked up as a result of the Bill. I strongly believe that their chances will be improved, for a number of good reasons. The first is that, under the Gas Act 1986, it was in practice impossible for British Gas to spread the charge of initial connection over a period. If householders have to pay as much as £1,300 for connection, and have to buy boilers and so on on top of that, that will represent a considerable outlay. So that was a negative factor, which will be removed once this Bill gets Royal Assent.

Secondly, it will be open to any competing transporter to link with the main gas supply, having regard, of course, to safety considerations. It may well be that competitors will be able to lay the necessary pipes at a lower cost than British Gas and therefore make things possible that would not otherwise be possible. Thirdly, individual householders will have the right, again subject to safety provisions, to link their properties—trenches will have to be dug and pipes laid, for example—directly with the nearest supply.

For all these reasons, I think that it is likely that more connections to the gas supply will take place when the Bill is enacted. There is some evidence to support that. For example, under the 1986 legislation, competitors may compete to supply gas to certain new developments. There is some evidence that British Gas's competitors have been able to supply such developments at a cheaper price and have won some contracts.

The Bill will help our constituents rather than harm their interests and meet the concerns to which the hon. Gentleman has drawn attention.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 15 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 16, in page 8, line 38, leave out from ("no") to ("before") in line 39 and insert

("domestic supply licence shall authorise the supply of gas to any premises")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Eggar.]*

Madam Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss also Lords amendments Nos. 17 to 21.

Mr. Rowlands: I wish to know more about the context in which the amendments have been tabled. The Government have supplied helpful notes on the amendments, and I thank them for so doing. It would seem that, during the introduction of pilot areas, before there is full competition after 1998, there can be monopoly suppliers. A monopoly supplier can be British Gas or any authorised licensee. British Gas is to assume the responsibility of being a monopoly supplier in most of Britain between now and 1998, yet the director general, Miss Spottiswoode, has made the extraordinary statement that British Gas's future is in considerable doubt because of long-term North sea contracts that have tied it to high prices.

Perhaps the Minister will comment on the plight, as it were, of British Gas—I hold no brief for British Gas, and the Minister knows that I was a great supporter of Sir James McKinnon during the earlier part of his regulatory activities—as a result of entering into long-term contracts when it was a monopoly supplier. After all, it had a statutory responsibility to deliver a secure supply. It was willing to pay quite high prices because it expected to be the supplier for the next 20 years and beyond and responsible for domestic gas supply. That is the context in which some long-term contracts were entered into.

There are questions to be asked. Miss Spottiswoode caused more than a flutter in the dovecote when she commented on the future of British Gas if long-term contracts remained around BG's neck at the end of 1998. We know that British Gas will be the monopoly supplier throughout most of the United Kingdom between now and the end of 1998.

It is reasonable to ask the Minister how he thinks that any difficulties might be resolved bearing in mind the shadow that hangs over the future operations of British Gas because of the long-term contracts to which I have referred. Does he share Miss Spottiswoode's view that the survival of British Gas is in doubt given the structure of the Bill and long-term contracts? As I have said, it had a statutory role to play, a role different from that which it will play in future years.

Mr. Eggar: I could not help but smile when the hon. Gentleman said that he holds no brief for British Gas. I remember when he was No. 2 to the now noble Lord Owen on the Labour Front Bench, and he did indeed read out a brief that was provided to him by Sir Denis Rooke, who at that time was the chief executive of British Gas, in order, as he saw it of course, to demolish a point that I was trying to make from the Conservative Back Benches. If the hon. Gentleman casts his mind back, he will see that from time to time there has been a slight liaison between himself and British Gas.

The main justification of the amendment is, of course, to clarify the drafting. It is also to deal with an anomaly that has arisen. As I mentioned earlier, there are already provisions for suppliers other than British Gas to supply consumers, and they are fairly limited; they are for new developments. As originally drafted, the Bill would have made it impossible for those developments to be supplied with gas. That is the background for the clarification.

My next point is a more general one about comments made, and which I have read, by the director general in the newspapers. I have made it clear on a number of occasions, going back a considerable number of months, and it is now widely accepted, that the contractual arrangements for gas purchases entered into by British Gas, in the context of the monopoly industry, are not appropriate for the new competitive world. It is therefore both inevitable and desirable that some degree of contract renegotiation should take place. I see that renegotiation as a matter to be pursued commercially between British Gas and the other companies involved. I understand that some preliminary discussions have taken place, and I shall continue to follow developments closely. It would not be appropriate at this stage for the Government to intervene.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned the director general's alleged concern about the financial health of British Gas. The director general made it clear that there was no immediate threat to British Gas. She was at pains, I believe, to point out that it is her responsibility as director general, under her statutory duties, to consider all possibilities, however remote they are. These renegotiation discussions are important and I have no difficulty with the director general drawing attention to the importance of the negotiations. I note that British Gas has also welcomed the fact that she had done so. I hope that that assists the hon. Gentleman.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 17 to 68 agreed to.

Schedule 2

THE GAS CODE

Lords amendment: No. 69, in page 23, line 11, at end insert—

("Supplies of gas illegally taken

8A.—(1) Where any person takes a supply of gas which is in the course of being conveyed by a public gas transporter, the transporter shall be entitled to recover from that person the value of the gas so taken.

(2) Where—

(a) any person at premises which have been reconnected in contravention of paragraph 10(1) below takes a supply of gas which has been conveyed to those premises by the public gas transporter; and

(b) the supply is taken otherwise than in pursuance of a contract made with a gas supplier, or deemed to have been made with such a supplier by virtue of paragraph 8 above or paragraph 15 of Schedule 5 to the Gas Act 1995,

the transporter shall be entitled to recover from that person the value of the gas so taken.

(3) Each public gas transporter shall make, and from time to time revise, a scheme providing for the manner in which, and the persons by whom, the number of therms or kilowatt hours represented by a supply of gas taken in such circumstances as are mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) or (2) above is to be determined for the purposes of that sub-paragraph.

(4) Sub-paragraphs (8) and (9) of paragraph 8 above shall apply in relation to a scheme under this paragraph as they apply in relation to a scheme under that paragraph.

(5) In this paragraph—

"gas supplier" includes a person authorised to supply gas by an exemption granted under section 6A of this Act or an exception contained in Schedule 2A to this Act;

"value", in relation to any gas taken in such circumstances as are mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) or (2) above, means the amount which, if the gas had been taken in such circumstances as are mentioned in sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 8 above, could reasonably be expected to have been payable in respect of the gas under a contract deemed to have been made by virtue of that sub-paragraph.")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Eggar.]*

4.30 pm

Mr. Rowlands: The amendment inserts an entire new paragraph in schedule 2, allowing the supplier to claim the value of gas taken illegally. Is it a long-standing provision? Does it exist in any previous gas legislation? I foresee a good deal of argument about the value of gas

[Mr. Rowlands]

that is taken illegally, and about how that value is to be clawed back. I know of no such cases in my constituency, but I can envisage them in the future.

Mr. Connarty: Will the Minister explain how the charge will be levied? Will it be levied on premises or individuals? I do not want the legislation to penalise a person who has been named in a formal contract as the recipient of the gas supply when someone else may have taken the gas when the premises were empty, for instance. The premises might be rented or sublet by the contracted gas consumer, or someone might be living there illegally. The commercial position may be easily explained, but what about individual gas consumers in domestic premises?

Mr. Eggar: The Gas Act 1986 allows gas charges to be recovered by public gas suppliers, whether or not the gas was taken by arrangement. That is not a novel concept. The hon. Gentleman is right, however, to say that the amendment makes an additional provision in relation to the theft of gas. Paragraph 8 of schedule 2 provides that the owner or occupier is to be deemed to have contracted with the appropriate supplier when gas is taken without authority, but that the existence of that deemed contract will not provide a defence in any criminal proceedings for theft of gas. The amendment is therefore to plug a potential loophole.

There are, however, other circumstances where gas might be stolen and where it is appropriate for the public gas transporter and not the gas supplier to be responsible for recovering the sums concerned. For example, where premises may have been permanently disconnected or where gas is stolen in the course of its conveyance—directly from one of the pipelines—there may not a supplier with title to the gas who is able to recover the money. If gas is taken from a pipeline, no one quite knows to which company the gas belongs and a deemed contract does not exist, one must have a way of taking action against the thief because, in effect, someone is stealing gas. That is the reason for all the provisions.

Mr. Rowlands: Do the provisions apply only to the transporter? Do they not cover the gas supplier?

Mr. Eggar: The scheme that is made under the new paragraph will contain provisions for determining who is responsible to the transporter for the taken gas. One must consider this in the light of the particular circumstances of a case. We are trying to cover every eventuality and ensure that there is a case to be answered for someone who nicks gas, in the colloquial term.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 70 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 71, in page 23, line 42, after ("above") insert

("—

(a)")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Eggar.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael Morris): With this, it will be convenient to discuss also Lords amendments Nos. 72, 73, 81, 286 and 287.

Mr. Battle: In relation to the Minister's comments in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands), today it was revealed that Clare Spottiswoode, Director General of Gas Supply, has taken a part-time job with Booker McConnell. That is surprising due to her high work load, to which she has often referred. I do not know whether ministerial consent was sought or needed, but it suggests that her work load would be more than cut in dealing with the complex and brave new world opened by the Gas Bill shortly after it becomes law. That she has time to take up a part-time job at this stage is surprising.

Mr. Nick Harvey (North Devon): Does the hon. Gentleman recall that the justification for the regulator's increase in salary earlier this year was precisely that she did not have time to take on other jobs, which had been the basis of her original contract?

Mr. Battle: The hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Connarty) share my surprise. We can simply note our surprise at this stage, but, in view of our debates today, it puts something of a question mark over the regulator's role.

Amendment No. 81. deals with entry following discontinuance of supply. In the other place, Earl Ferrers tabled the amendment, which has serious implications for all gas consumers, and is of concern to the Gas Consumers Council and to us. The Lords amendment reads:

> "Any officer authorised by the public gas transporter or gas supplier"—

after 24 hours' notice to the occupier or to the owner of the premises if they are unoccupied—

> "may at all reasonable times, on production of some duly authenticated document showing his authority, enter the premises for the purpose of ascertaining whether the premises have been reconnected, or the supply has been restored, without the relevant consent."

The amendment gives the gas supplier the right to enter the premises of a consumer who is not a customer of the supplier, perhaps because he has had his supply previously disconnected. As a result of the drafting of the amendment, the supplier will need to give no reason why he wants to enter the premises. He will not need to show the evidence that has led him to suspect that there has been illegal reconnection of the gas supply. The amendment could lead to an infringement of civil liberties and private property rights. We should know where we are. The amendment allows no redress for consumers who may have suffered disruption, inconvenience and perhaps even distress as a result of the operation of this power. The power could clearly be open to abuse.

The amendment refers to

> "Any officer authorised by the public gas transporter or gas supplier"

being able to enter the premises, which compounds the concern that meter service providers should be registered and subject to a code of conduct. Entering premises could be an additional service that metering companies could provide to the supplier who has subcontracted out the work to them.

It is not clear whether, purely as a result of the authorised officer being able to produce a "duly authenticated document", he will be allowed to enter the premises of a consumer even if the consumer is not there. The present requirement is to give 24 hours' notice; that is short notice, especially at weekends or in holiday periods.

I have some recommendations for the Minister and I urge the Government to take them on board. We suggest that the supplier or the public gas transporter should be required to give at least 48 hours' notice, by recorded delivery, of the intention to enter the consumer's premises. The letter should clearly state who the authorised officer will be; any deviation should make the authorisation null and void. Any authorised officer, whether or not he is an employee of a public gas transporter or supplier, should be an employee of a meter service provider registered with Ofgas. We suggest that it should be spelt out in the Bill that the authorised officer must be an adequately qualified person to undertake the work and one in whom consumers have confidence.

A clear procedure must be established as to the grounds on which a supplier or public gas transporter may enter a consumer's premises. The consumer must be informed in the letter. The procedure should also cater for redress for consumers suffering inconvenience as a result of a pointless visit, for example. We want to ensure that the new shippers, suppliers and transporters or their subcontractors do not use less qualified people than at present, thus lowering standards.

Although we cannot make any changes at this stage, we ask the Minister to take our comments seriously and to use the delegated responsibilities that the Bill will give him to do something practical about our concerns.

Ms Judith Church (Dagenham): I entirely agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle). We are trying to ensure that the consumer is properly protected, but the amendment will not achieve that. Many consumers will be disconnected for one of several reasons, one of which obviously is non-payment of their gas bill. We must know who might go to their homes and with what authority. If the person coming into their homes is someone authorised to do so, rather than the gas supplier, how will consumers know about it? Will a requirement for proper communication be written into contracts to ensure that we know who is doing what? A problem could arise if an engineer from a rival gas company went into the home of one of my constituents. There are to be all sorts of reasons for such visits.

The Minister told us in Committee that we were thinking of about 30 new suppliers of domestic gas; so rival companies will be trying to carve each other up in the competition for new customers. I do not suppose that they will be rushing to get as customers those people who have been disconnected—but that is another point on which I shall not expand, because it is not relevant.

4.45 pm

We are considering the most vulnerable of people, quite often not the most educated, who do not understand. At the moment, they know that gas from British Gas is coming into their homes, that there is a British Gas van outside their homes, that there is a British Gas maintenance or service engineer, with a British Gas uniform and a British Gas card. Yet we are talking of sending in anybody, with some other sort of card, which people will not have seen. People are warned all the time about allowing others into their homes, yet they would have to admit people who might not be properly safety-conscious and who might not be there for the proper purposes.

There are many dangers and people need the 48-hour period which my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West has pressed the Minister to reconsider. At least such a period would enable people to ring up to verify the letter that they had received about a forthcoming visit—presumably, it would have a telephone number on it—if they were in some confusion about who might visit their home to carry out work. A consumer could be put at risk, especially if representatives of companies are visiting homes on a fraudulent basis.

Mr. Connarty: My concern is very similar to that of my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Ms Church) but goes slightly further. Someone who has lost the gas supply because of financial difficulty may be in a stressed situation—not necessarily in relation only to the gas supply. When a person receives a letter to say that someone is coming along wanting to check if the gas supply has been reconnected, it is likely that that that person will not deal with it immediately—it would be one more thing behind the clock on the mantlepiece to be dealt with when such a person got his or her life sorted out.

It worries me immensely that someone could visit homes without any reason to suspect a consumer—just to check that the gas supply had not been reconnected—and force entry. The Minister should consider the additional stress placed on someone who is already in some social, family and financial disarray in such a case. Tremendous safeguards must be written into the Bill.

Perhaps the Minister could explain how original suspicions would be triggered and how safeguards would be provided. I am thinking especially of the parallel situation of wheel clamping. Wheel-clamping agencies are hired by councils and others to go around clamping cars. It appears that they do it in the most maverick way. When I lived in London, I regularly came across people who had been wheel-clamped in the areas where I liked to park as a resident. It seems that such agencies are in the business of trying to clamp as many cars as possible. They trigger the incident, and we know of the hue and cry among the public about that.

Duly authorised persons who do not belong to a gas company at all but are part of an agency could be allowed to take on the spying and breaking into premises to try to cut the possibility of illegal gas supplies being reconnected. It is a frightening prospect for us to consider, but it must certainly be much more frightening to someone who is under stress and has financial and other social problems with which to deal.

Mr. Eggar: I shall deal first with the first point raised by the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle). My understanding is that the director general's non-executive directorship is entirely consistent with her letter of appointment. No conflict of interests is envisaged. I understand that the hon. Member for Leeds, West did not cover energy matters at the time, but it was fully explained and anticipated then. There was publicity and an announcement by the Government about a salary adjustment for her. If the hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for North Devon (Mr. Harvey) look back at the press cuttings, they will find that there

[Mr. Eggar]

was an agreement, which was made clear at the time, for her to take up a certain number of days with a non-executive directorship.

As for the other matters, I understand Opposition Members' concern, but we must put our thoughts in context. We are talking about cases in which it is suspected that somebody is stealing gas. That is the basic background. There are provisions now, effectively identical to those before us except that they rest on a right to inspect gas equipment. It was felt that, because we had a Bill before us, it was appropriate to make it clear in this circumstance that there is no concept of inspecting gas equipment, and that the inspector is looking for possible theft of gas.

From a constituency point of view, we are making a legal change but not a practical change. It is a desirable legal change because we are making the background clear. There are concerns about forced entry, for example, and I assure the House that, as at present, that will require a magistrate's warrant. There is no change there.

In Committee we spent much time discussing the various conditions that will be imposed in the licence to ensure, so far as possible, that there will be no impersonation. It is proposed that the licences will require authorised officers to be able to identify their authority, by methods including ID cards, badges, and so on. There will also be provision for special arrangements such as passwords for pensioners and the disabled, because we are concerned that they might be worried.

The licences will also oblige licensees to safeguard the ID documents, and so on. They will be obliged to take steps to prevent impersonation. Some of the matters raised are fully dealt with in the next but one group of amendments, which we shall discuss with Lords amendment No. 82. I understand hon. Members' concern. What always worries us is the impact on our constituents, but in practice there will not be a substantive change.

Mr. Connarty: While the Minister was speaking I remembered a Faraday lecture sponsored by British Gas last year at which was demonstrated an electronic device that could read the flow of gas in a household from outside. It was said that metering as we know it, whereby the volume of gas is mechanically controlled and regulated, with meter readings, would be a thing of the past in a few years' time.

If we are moving, however slowly, into the future, the idea of someone's having to force entry to a house to find out whether there is a flow of unauthorised gas is already a somewhat outmoded concept. The Minister said that a magistrate's or justice's warrant would be needed to make an entry. Can he assure me that those duly authorised persons will not be like the wheel clampers—agencies that go around making money out of breaking into people's homes and causing them distress?

Mr. Eggar: I hope that I have made the position on forced entry clear. I have reservations about a period of notice because we are talking about investigations into people who are stealing gas. Almost by definition, if we give 48 hours' notice of such an investigation, we may find that a reconnected supply has been disconnected again.

Much work is being done on what is known as "intelligent metering" systems, including on a site adjacent to my constituency. It is believed that within the next decade or so, gas, electricity and water—if it is appropriate—will be remotely metered, but we are some way off that. The consensus is that, while it can be done from a technical point of view, it is not cost-effective in most situations. Most people believe that remote metering will become cost-effective before very long, but in the meantime we need some provision to keep the human race involved in the process.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 72 to 81 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 82, in page 29, line 6, at beginning insert

("No officer shall be authorised by a public gas transporter, gas supplier or gas shipper to exercise any powers of entry conferred by this Schedule unless—

(a) the transporter, supplier or shipper has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that he is a fit and proper person to exercise those powers; or

(b) in cases of emergency, those powers are powers conferred by paragraph 19 above.

(1A)")

Mr. Eggar: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss also Lords amendments Nos. 144 to 147, 177, 178, 197, 205, 216 and 217.

Mr. Rowlands: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The amendments grouped with No. 82 include Lords amendment No. 197, to which I wish to address a few words. Should I do so now, or when we reach No. 197?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman should speak to the amendment now.

Mr. Rowlands: Lords amendment No. 197 is designed to create a new offence for those who make false statements or bogus calls, and it is very welcome. The thing that slightly astonished me was that such acts may not have been serious offences hitherto. Has the sad growth in bogus calling and other similar acts led to this very important provision?

I would be grateful if the Minister could tell the House what provision exists at present with regard to such acts. Are our consumers and householders far less protected than they ought to be? I welcome the amendment very much, although it may be a sad comment on the changing times and the increasing problems with law and order that our communities are encountering. Bogus calls and false statements have led not only to thieving and burglary, but in many cases to violence against elderly people. While I support the amendment in the strongest possible terms, I must ask the Minister whether householders have been left unprotected until now.

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Gentleman asks a fascinating question, and the answer goes to prove that there is no new form of human trickery known to man. The common law used to provide for an offence of false personation, but apparently the House abolished that offence in England and Wales with the Theft Act 1968, thereby creating a hole that the common law had filled probably for several hundred years. We are now refilling that hole.

That is the background to the matter, and I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising it. I was not aware of it myself.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 83 to 132 agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 133 agreed to [Special Entry].

Lords amendments Nos. 134 to 178 agreed to.

Schedule 3

OTHER AMENDMENTS OF PART I OF 1986 ACT

Lords amendment: No. 179, in page 53, line 15, at end insert—

("*Duty of Director to investigate certain matters*

.—(1) In subsections (1) and (2) of section 31 of the 1986 Act (duty of Director to investigate certain matters), for the words "an enforcement matter" there shall be substituted the words "a reserved matter".

(2) For subsection (3) of that section there shall be substituted the following subsections—

"(3) In this section and section 32 below "reserved matter" means any matter—

(a) in respect of which any functions of the Director under section 28 above are or may be exercisable; and

(b) which has not been designated by the Director as a matter which is to be investigated by the Council.

(4) A designation under subsection (3) above may be made—

(a) either generally or in relation to matters of a particular class or a particular matter; and

(b) either unconditionally or subject to such conditions as may be specified in the designation.

(5) Conditions specified in a designation under subsection (3) above may contain provision for the designation to cease to have effect, either generally or in relation to matters of a particular class or a particular matter, in such circumstances as may be determined by or under the conditions." ")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Eggar.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 180 to 185 and 293.

5 pm

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): The amendments relate to the duties of the Director General of Gas Supply and the additional duties that we would like her and the Gas Consumers Council to take on.

Since the Committee's and their Lordships' deliberations on the Bill, figures are available to show that, sadly, and contrary to the predictions from Ministers, the number of complaints from gas consumers has reached record levels. In the first half of this year the number of complaints to the Gas Consumers Council totalled the same as those recorded for the whole of last year. I understand that the rate of complaints is such that in the first nine months of this year the Gas Consumers Council has received a record number of complaints—more than in any other year, even its peak year of 1988.

The amendments are designed to give greater powers to the director and the Gas Consumers Council to track down the source of some of those complaints. There is no doubt that the deterioration in services of which we are aware and which has been evinced in a number of services offered by British Gas has led to an increase in complaints. The closure of 160 gas showrooms has led to a deterioration in the services on offer in the high street. Those showrooms used to offer a number of services, including the important one of offering advice on the payment of bills. The Post Office cannot offer such advice. Because of those cuts in services, gas showrooms have been merely left to sell appliances. Those closures have led to an increase in reported complaints.

Consumers have also complained because of poorer services to homes: 50 home service advisers have been axed, which must have had an effect on the speedy and essential help to which elderly and disabled gas users had become accustomed.

At present I do not believe that the regulator has made any connection between those poor levels of service and the behaviour of British Gas, especially in the boardroom. Since our Committee concluded its deliberations, the Greenbury recommendations have been published on boardroom pay and the way in which salaries and share options should be handled. I am sorry to say that British Gas does not seem to be at the forefront of companies implementing those recommendations to the letter.

At the same time as we have heard of bonuses of £1 million given to a few British Gas directors and record levels of complaints against it, the regulator does not have the power to make a connection between those facts, nor does she have the power to ask the Gas Consumers Council to investigate those problems and make the necessary recommendations. The amendments are designed to bring those functions together so that the director general herself has a duty to consider boardroom remuneration and evaluate the services offered by British Gas.

British Gas has received a record number of complaints against it. Despite the threat that it may lose the charter mark issued by Ministers at the beginning of the year because of that, things have gone from bad to worse. I should be sorry to see it lose its charter mark. It has given us no pleasure to see a company that was a byword for safety, efficiency and helpfulness, and which had one of the best records on customer help, become in such a short time the subject of universal criticism. That criticism has been expressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House, although it has been voiced by just one or two Conservative Back Benchers.

Unless British Gas improves its customer services, it will, I am afraid, go from bad to worse and lose customers. Its ability to respond to the needs of its 18 million domestic consumers and several million industrial consumers will therefore deteriorate.

Through the amendments, we want to send a clear message to the Director General of Gas Supply. She must take a greater interest in the concerns of gas consumers. She must not, as she has told Members at recent meetings, concentrate on fostering the competitive aspects of the industry.

People in houses who feel that their gas service is deteriorating do not look to competition to solve those problems, but to British Gas. They want that company to ensure that it provides the services that it has always provided. People are particularly critical of the resources that those in the boardroom of British Gas have devoted to boosting share option schemes and salaries rather than getting down to running the core business and keeping British Gas customers satisfied.

Mr. Rowlands: I agree with the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths).

I should like to know about the function of amendment No. 179. According to the useful note from the Government it is intended to revise section 31 of the Gas Act 1986 so as to

> "empower the director to designate matters to be investigated by the council either generally or specifically and either unconditionally or subject to conditions."

That is plain enough language and it suggests that the Gas Consumers Council could become the creature of the director general. According to the amendment, it appears that the terms of reference of the Gas Consumers Council's work will be defined and designated by the director general. That is how I read it and, if so, should we be in favour of the amendment?

As my hon. Friend has already said, the director general has made it clear that she sees her remit to be the development of competition. The Gas Consumers Council may find that the character of the competition that is being encouraged by the director general is having adverse affects in other respects on the interests of consumers. The roles of the director general and the Gas Consumers Council are not necessarily compatible or consistent. I have always assumed that those roles were separate. If they have the same function, why have both? We have always assumed that the Gas Consumers Council, as a representative body with regional presence and, therefore, with feedback from the grass roots consumer movement, has a role different from that of the director general. It is a different animal.

It is not clear whether the amendment is inclusive or exclusive. Does it mean that the director general can limit, determine or define the investigative function of the Gas Consumers Council? That is what is suggested by the layman's language of the notes provided by the Government to accompany the amendment. The amendment talks of general or particular matters and of designations being unconditional or subject to conditions. What sort of conditions is it envisaged that the director general could impose on the Gas Consumers Council?

Could the director general say to the Gas Consumers Council, "Thou shalt not investigate an activity," or forbid it to investigate her decisions? If the Gas Consumers Council found an activity it wanted to investigate or if gas consumers felt that the director general was letting consumers down in some way, would the council be able to investigate in an independent, free spirit? If the amendment does not make the Gas Consumers Council a creature of the director general, it certainly gives the director general power to investigate and define the work of the Gas Consumers Council. I do not like the sound of it and I do not know whether we should accept it.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, South said, British Gas in recent years has suffered one of the saddest declines in consumer confidence. One reason for that is that all the changes and convulsions that have happened have meant that the sense of identity that we had with, for example, Wales Gas, has been broken up. The regional structure of British Gas was significant. I know that the Bill and the Minister are not responsible for that. It stemmed from reports of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. One consequence of that upheaval has been that British Gas's feel and touch for consumer matters has declined.

My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, South mentioned gas showrooms. The most vivid—dare I say, amusing—debate on the Gas Act 1986 was on what was called the Merthyr gas showroom amendment, with which I stoutly sought to defend my local showroom against what I saw would be the impact of that Bill. After all these years, my worst fears have come true, and the Merthyr gas showroom has been closed. Indeed, showrooms all over the country have been closed. That is a withdrawal from the community and from the important close contact points that British Gas had with consumers. The use of those showrooms as advice centres and contact points—not only for paying bills—was important. The staff who worked in those showrooms—this was certainly true of the Merthyr showroom—enjoyed respect and were highly regarded.

The withdrawal of important contact points with consumers has led to the sad saga, vividly described by my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, South, of the rise in the number of complaints. Regionally, Wales Gas was an important part of the institutional framework of life in Wales and the capital. A remnant of it is still there, ably led by the local manager, but it is not the same. The result of the changes and convulsions is to be found in the figures that my hon. Friend quoted.

5.15 pm

I should like to know a bit more about the role that the Gas Consumers Council will have and its relationship with the director general. I hope that my worst fears about the wording of the amendment are not justified and that the role of the Gas Consumers Council will not in some way be restricted by conditions or definitions suggested by the director general. Those are serious points, but behind them lies the much more serious point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, South about the sad way in which British Gas has lost touch with many consumers as a result of the convulsive changes that have taken place in the industry.

Mr. Eggar: I shall deal first with the point made by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands).

When we were originally consulting on the Bill's structure, we had to decide whether the Gas Consumers Council would be amalgamated with Ofgas. That had been the formula we had followed for Offer. We decided against that. It was a fundamental policy decision.

The amendments were suggested jointly by the Gas Consumers Council and Ofgas to introduce an element of flexibility. The amendment deals with complaints and only with complaints. Under the Gas Act 1986, the Gas Consumers Council has to pass complaints about enforcement matters to the director general. There is no option under the terms of the Act. The amendment gives some flexibility.

The Gas Consumers Council might very well decide that it thought that it could deal with a matter and the director general would say, "Fine, go ahead and investigate it." However—this deals with the point about the conditions that the director general might set—she might then say, "If there is a breach of the licence, for which I am responsible, please refer it back to me." That was only an example. The amendment is designed to provide a better practical working relationship and is supported by both the director general and the Gas Consumers Council.

Mr. Rowlands: I am grateful to the Minister for that example. It is reassuring that it is a joint suggestion. The Gas Consumers Council, then, can proceed to investigate what it wants but where that would infringe on the specific duties of the director general it would refer the matter to the director general. It will be a free agent in every other sense. Is that the assurance that the Minister is giving?

Mr. Eggar: Not in the precise terms in which the hon. Gentleman puts it. He is talking about very wide-ranging powers. We are talking about keeping the existing division between Ofgas and the Gas Consumers Council but allowing some of what I would call practical flexibility. In other words, where there are matters which clearly fall to the Gas Consumers Council to be investigated, which it has a desire to investigate and which do not conflict with the overriding powers of Ofgas, the council can go ahead. It is a practical working relationship. The strict division originally imposed by the Gas Act 1986 has proved to be a hindrance in responding to reasonable complaints from the average consumer. This is therefore a significant step forward on behalf of consumers.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) made the same speech as I have heard from him several times before. There was the odd wry smile among hon. Members on both sides of the House as they heard more or less the same phrases tripping out as tripped out on the first day of the Committee.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: What about September's results?

Mr. Eggar: Garbage stays garbage, however often it is repeated. The hon. Gentleman seems incapable of understanding that, from the consumer's point of view, the advent of competition will be the ultimate spur for British Gas. If consumers are dissatisfied with the standard of service provided by British Gas, they will be able to go elsewhere. Nothing will concentrate the mind of British Gas or any other gas supplier more than consumer choice.

I cannot comment on the hon. Gentleman's remarks about the charter mark. A review is being conducted involving British Gas, the Gas Consumers Council and other interested parties, and I expect that the results will be announced later this year. While it is true that the absolute number of complaints is at an historic high, we should also examine the way in which British Gas is meeting its service standards in the regulated market. Last year, British Gas met 36 of the 39 service standards agreed with Ofgas and came very close to achieving the other three. That performance matched the performance of British Gas in 1993, which the GCC had described as "excellent". I do not wish to dismiss the rise in the number of complaints, but if one examines the level of performance one can see that British Gas has met 36 of its 39 service standards.

Lords amendments Nos. 179 to 192 agreed to, some with special entry.

Schedule 3

Duty to consider representations and give reasons

Lords amendment: No. 193, in page 59, line 7, at end insert—

("Duty to consider representations and give reasons

. After section 38 of the 1986 Act there shall be inserted the following section—

"Duty to consider representations and give reasons.

38A.—(1) The Secretary of State may by order exercise any one or more of the powers conferred by subsections (2) to (4) below.

(2) This subsection confers power to provide that, before the Director makes a specified decision in relation to a licence holder, the Director—

(a) shall give to the licence holder a written notice stating—

(i) that he is considering making the decision and the reasons why he is considering doing so; and

(ii) that the licence holder may, within a period specified in the notice, make written representations to him or, if the licence holder so requests, make oral representations to a person appointed by him for the purpose; and

(b) shall consider any representations which are duly made and not withdrawn.

(3) This subsection confers power to provide that, where the Director makes a specified decision in relation to a licence holder, the Director shall as soon as practicable give to the licence holder a written notice explaining why it appeared to him to be appropriate to make the decision.

(4) This subsection confers power to provide that, where a specified decision made or proposed to be made in relation to a licence holder will or may materially affect any specified person, any provision made by virtue of subsection (2) or (3) above shall, with any specified modifications, apply in relation to that person.

(5) Nothing in any order made under this section shall require the Director to disclose any information the disclosure of which he considers would or might seriously and prejudicially affect the interests of a particular individual or body of persons, whether corporate or unincorporate.

(6) An order under this section—

(a) may make different provision in relation to different cases or different circumstances; and

(b) shall be made by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.

(7) In this section—

'decision' means any decision under this Part, or under a condition of a licence, other than a decision to make a provisional order under section 28 above;

'specified', in relation to an order under this section, means specified in the order or of a description so specified;

and references to a licence holder include references to an applicant for a licence." ")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Eggar.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss also Lords amendment No. 194.

Mr. Battle: Amendment No. 193 refers to the annual report that the director general must now make on the state of the industry. The amendment was put down in the other place by my colleague the noble Lord Peston, and the Government have agreed to require the regulator to

[Mr. Battle]

draw up an annual report which will be presented to Parliament. The report will assess the progress of competition and the extent of improvements in price and customer services.

The Government have conceded considerable ground in allowing the amendment, not least because I understand that they repeatedly refused Labour amendments in Committee that required the assessment of competition in the pilot areas before competition was extended nationwide. I believe that the amendment is a good second best option.

Some progress has been made with regard to customer protection, although we do not think that the Government have gone far enough to ensure that those on low incomes will not suffer the adverse effects of competition. The Government have had to introduce a large number of technical amendments to their Bill, particularly in the House of Commons, which suggests that the details of the legislation were not thought through properly before it reached the Floor of the House. That is water under the bridge, and I know that the Chairman of the Standing Committee commented on that point.

The amendment connects the role of the regulator with competition policy. The relationship between the regulator and competition policy will remain an essential point of focus in the future brave new world. Labour Members intend to keep a very close eye on competition. If consumers suffer any deleterious effects when the Bill becomes an Act, it may be necessary to re-examine the arrangements and perhaps even the definition of the powers of the regulator and the director general.

Although the Minister has given his assurances in that regard today—we are grateful for those assurances and we take them at face value—we do not always get every jot and tittle of legislation correct in this place, and we often underestimate the effects of legislation on our constituents. I hope that the Minister will agree to reserve the right to return to the issue if necessary, as the relationship between the role of the regulator and competition will remain central to any future debate on energy policy.

Mr. Rowlands: I, too, welcome the amendment. At one stage I considered amending it, but I decided to accept the Minister's verbal assurance—he is an honourable man—that the Director General of Ofgas will get the message as to what should be included in the annual report.

The amendment says that the report should include a statement about effective competition and a general survey of developments in respect of such competition. Will the report also explore the success or otherwise of the pilot areas? My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) touched upon that issue, although he might have pursued it a little further. Will the terms of the report cover the performance of competition in the pilot areas?

I hope that the Minister will ensure that the Director General of Ofgas accepts as part of his remit in the next 18 months an investigation of the growing claims about potential price cuts in the first pilot area in the west country. I do not know whether the Minister's fingerprints were on the weekend press reports, which stated:

> "Whitehall sources now expect prices to fall by 25% in the West Country."

There is no reason why the director general or Ministers cannot report on whether that target has been achieved.

Will the Minister say whether his Department is responsible for such assessments? The price cuts were first estimated at 10 per cent, but we are now talking of cuts of 25 per cent. in the west country pilot area. That is a very interesting benchmark against which to gauge the success of competition. Will the Minister say whether the press reports are, shall we say, reasonably inspired? If they do not have his fingerprints on them, does he endorse their estimate of the price cuts in the pilot area?

The annual report should cover the impact of the pilot area projects, and it should deal also with regional pricing. I hope that the director general will include a special section in his report about the impact, not of this Bill, as the Minister chided me earlier, but of other decisions that will lead to discriminatory regional pricing. We shall need to know the consequence of those decisions—the amount of the differential in gas prices.

The Minister has spent most of his parliamentary lifetime since I have known him, all those years—*[Laughter]*—over some years—attacking British Gas, but I repeat that, in fairness, British Gas produced in Merthyr Tydfil, in Rhymney and in many other parts of the country, a uniform, reasonably priced system of gas. That gas was securely delivered, with a tremendous record of safety and of bringing natural gas to our regions.

I doubt whether that gas pipeline system, which will now be privatised, would have been built, had it not been by the public sector. It was the success story—a great technical achievement—of, yes, a public monopoly. That monopoly created a gas pipeline structure that is one of many things that we can be really proud of, in infrastructural terms. Let us not deride the historical contribution that British Gas has made.

5.30 pm

In addition, at least British Gas did not discriminate against us because we were a long way from the North sea. I hope that the Minister will ensure that the annual report of the Director General of Gas Supply includes an assessment of the regional pricing that emerges, not necessarily as a result of the Bill, but as a result of a combination of factors, of which the Bill may be one, contributing towards discriminatory pricing of one type or another.

I assure him that we shall keep a vigilant eye on it, but it is hard to know exactly what tariff is being charged in place x, y or z. Such comparisons should be an integral part of the annual report that the amendment establishes for the Director General of Gas Supply.

Mr. Eggar: It is inconceivable that any report would not specifically cover the pilot area performance. I will draw the director general's attention to the argument that the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) makes about regional pricing. It is interesting that, at present, British Gas is free to differentiate on a regional basis and it has chosen not to do so; who knows what it will do in future?

I have read all sorts of comments about what might happen to prices, but it is interesting that, universally, it has been said that prices will decrease as soon as there is competition. Those decreases will be welcomed by consumers, whether they are 10 per cent., the 15 per cent.

that a company has spoken about openly, or the speculation about as much as 25 per cent. Consumers will ultimately benefit from the introduction of competition.

May I gently pick up the remarks of the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle)? Yes, there are very many technical amendments to the Bill. I claim some foresight. I said on Second Reading that we would be revising the Bill extensively. The reason is that I have always been determined that we would consult, and respond to anxieties when expressed.

The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney has been kind enough to comment twice on the yellow document that I have introduced. That is a feature at the present stage of consideration, at the previous Commons stages and at the Lords stages. It is an innovation—I believe that it has never been done before. It was designed deliberately, on a technical Bill, to help hon. Members through.

I say this to the hon. Member for Leeds, West. I cannot claim that, even in spite of all that consultation and the further forthcoming consultation on licences, we shall not find that there are aspects that, with the benefit of practical experience, we would have wanted to do differently or that we need to amend—I think especially of the licences. Everyone must understand and appreciate that.

So far, the way in which the House and the other place have dealt with the issue shows that we can, in a reasonable spirit, tackle a complex technical piece of legislation in a way that responds to the various different interests and, ultimately, the interests of consumers throughout the country and our constituents.

I thank the hon. Gentlemen for the debate. It has been a useful exchange.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 194 to 201 agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 202 agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 203 to 210 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 211, in page 62, line 2, at end insert—

("(2) In sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 1 of that Schedule, for the words from "placing in" to the end there shall be substituted the following paragraphs—

"(a) placing pipes, conduits, service pipes, cables, sewers and other works, and pressure governors, ventilators and other apparatus, in or under any street; and

(b) from time to time repairing, altering or removing any such works or apparatus placed in or under any street (whether by him or by any other person."

(3) After sub-paragraph (3) of that paragraph there shall be inserted the following sub-paragraphs—

"(4) The Secretary of State shall by regulations provide that, in such cases and to such extent as may be provided by the regulations, a public gas transporter shall pay, by way of compensation for any loss sustained by any person in consequence of the exercise of those powers, such sum as may be determined in accordance with the regulations.

(5) No regulations may be made under sub-paragraph (4) above which amend, or re-enact with modifications, regulations previously made under that sub-paragraph."

(4) In paragraph 3(2) of that Schedule, for the words "giving a supply of" there shall be substituted the word "conveying".")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Eggar.]*

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): I am delighted that we have managed to place amendment No. 211 before the House, because my right hon. Friend the Minister will remember that the matter has a long history.

The Minister just said that he was determined to listen, consult and respond, so that the Bill might be amended as appropriate, but perhaps I should congratulate him on his neat attire and dapper appearance at the Dispatch Box, because he might have given a slight appearance of having been dragged backwards through a hedge, kicking and screaming a little, because we have had a long history of battling to include the amendment in the Bill.

The Minister may remember that I wrote to him initially, without success, and then brought delegations to visit him, when he said that he would be able to consider the matter further. It was not until we received a letter from the chairman of British Gas that we were aware of any progress.

The Minister took that as being of some comfort, but the terms of the letter were something of a mass, in which the chairman said that, in the case of small businesses, British Gas would give

"sympathetic consideration . . . on an ex-gratia basis."

I did not feel that that went anything like far enough. We did not press the matter any further in this House, but I am pleased to say that, when the Bill went to the other House, strong feelings were expressed. I am grateful to Baroness Nicol and the eight peers who spoke about that issue at various stages in the other House.

Strong anxiety was expressed by six trade associations, led by the British Retail Consortium, about the need for stronger action. I was delighted when Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, after the Government reshuffle and his appointment, was able to propose an amendment showing that there would be regulations. However, I wish to express my anxiety that those regulations may not go far enough—although, as they are couched, we cannot be too sure exactly where they do go.

British Gas originally spoke about businesses with only a turnover of £250,000, and then said that they could go up to £500,000. That is far too low a limit, and I find it difficult to understand why there should be any limit. If one private company—we are now discussing private companies—causes damage to another private company, why should there be any restriction on the statutory right to compensate that other business? There is a lack of logic.

My right hon. Friend the Minister will be aware that I wrote to him and sent on a letter from the British Retail Consortium on that subject. I hope that he will bear it fully in mind.

Reading the *Official Report* of the debate in the other place on 25 October, I see that Lord Peston said:

"we have moved seven-eighths of the way towards our destination. I am not sure whether it is a constitutional point or a point of honour but since the regulations are in response to your Lordships' demands it seems clear that the Government will introduce them corresponding to what we have discussed. It would be appalling if the Government, having introduced the regulations in response to what we have said, formulated them in a way which did not bite on the issues we have put forward."—*[Official Report, House of Lords,* 25 October 1995; Vol. 566, c. 1133.]

That sums up my worries, because there are strong anxieties.

[Mr. Peter Thurnham]

In my letter to the Minister, which I faxed the other day to his office, I drew attention to the fact that £500,000 by no means covers 90 per cent. of all small businesses, which I think he had been led to believe at an earlier stage. The British Retail Consortium says that many of its members would not be covered.

Only a third of the members of the British Hardware Federation would qualify. Only half of the membership of British Small Shops and Stores would qualify. Spar (UK) Ltd, which works for most of the smaller retailers, estimates that only half of its members would be able to apply for compensation. Equally, the Association of British Chambers of Commerce is concerned that many of its members will fall outside the threshold.

I do not think that there should be any limit but, if the Government are determined that the figure should be lower, I refer my right hon. Friend the Minister to the Companies Act 1989, in which a small company is defined as one whose turnover is not more than £2 million. If that definition is used in that Act, why can it not be used in the Bill? It is poor logic to say that there should be a limit.

At the outset, my right hon. Friend was not overly keen on statutory compensation, thinking that it would be a burden that would be passed on to consumers. That perhaps reflects his Department's old-fashioned thinking about nationalised industries, in which all costs were passed on to consumers. We should instead consider it as an incentive to make firms avoid incurring costs in the first place.

Representatives of North West Water came to see the Minister as part of a delegation. They told him that they try to conduct business in a way that led to the minimum amount of damage because they were aware that they have a statutory duty to pay compensation. If North West Water can regard the legislation as good in this respect, I am sure that it will be good for British Gas and any other utility that might be causing damage on such a scale.

My right hon. Friend the Minister will be aware that local authorities can reduce a rate assessment when street work is undertaken. That is done without regard to the size of the company involved. If local authorities can be flexible, why does British Gas feel that there has to be a limit? After all, we are no longer dealing with a public utility but with a series of private companies. Why should they be immune from the damage that they inflict on others? Privatised monopolies should be just as accountable and subject to market rules as any other businesses.

Water industry compensation has been on the statute book for many years, but I do not think that the public regard it as anomalous. Indeed, they believe it to be perfectly sensible. We should regard compensation for the gas industry in the same light. If we regarded it as an incentive for it to conduct its operations more profitably, we could all benefit as a result.

I should like my right hon. Friend the Minister to accept in principle the notion that compensation is right. If he believes that there has to be a ceiling, it should certainly be much higher than £500,000. Whatever compensation scheme there is should be transparent, accountable and universal.

I thank my right hon. Friend the Minister for having got the Bill this far. I understand that the consultation period will run for three weeks from this month, and ask him to confirm that, during that time, full account will be taken of the points made by the numerous trade organisations—the Country Landowners Association, the National Farmers Union, the Forum of Private Business, the Association of British Chambers of Commerce and the Association of Convenience Stores—about the need for a much higher limit so that we can draft regulations with which we can all be satisfied.

I apologise for not having been able to table the amendment in my own name at an earlier stage, but it will be appreciated that it has been only a few days since the Bill came back from another place.

Mr. Battle: I read the report of proceedings in another place and, having also listened carefully to the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham), I believe that he makes a cogent and logical case, which the Minister should answer. I hope that any response to the hon. Gentleman does not involve our getting stuck on the question of how small a small business is.

The issue of statutory compensation is an important and practical one. I hope that we shall not see wrangles, with our streets dug up and left with holes, while companies have to produce accounts to prove their financial position. That would be intolerable and unacceptable. I hope that this important, local issue can be sorted out positively, and I look forward to the Minister's response.

5.45 pm

Mr. Eggar: I congratulate the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) on his first change to Labour party policy. When the amendment was first introduced, I think I am right in saying that the Opposition spokesman was as sceptical as I was. I must say that the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) also listened to the arguments. In any event, I do not want to spoil the atmosphere of what has been a good-natured exchange.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-West (Mr. Thurnham) on his determination. As always, I listened carefully to the arguments. I had a major hand in the debate in another place. I shall not go over the arguments about the difference between gas and water or the reasons for deciding access to the public highway.

My hon. Friend's substantive point related to companies with a turnover of £500,000. May I gently say to him and those who associate themselves with his remarks that it is not ideal to have the issue raised at this stage. The first that I knew about the definition, which we raised from £250,000 to £500,000, being queried was when his fax reached me on 31 October. His argument until now has consistently been on behalf of small businesses, so his present argument that there should be no limit at all seems slightly inconsistent. However, I do not wish to argue fiercely with him about that.

There will be a limit, but I am willing to listen to arguments about what exactly it will be. Of course, problems arise with the percentage of small businesses that qualify, because retail businesses have higher turnovers than other small businesses. We are prepared to examine the issue, but need to do so rapidly. We have no time for formal consultation, and the various concerned bodies that have not yet put their views to us need to do so quickly. Having said that, I support the amendment, and commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords Amendments Nos. 212 to 269 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 270, in page 76, line 4, at beginning insert

("(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2) below,")

Mr. Eggar: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss also Lords amendments Nos. 271 and 272.

Mr. Eggar: As this is the last group of amendments, I should like to extend my thanks to the Opposition, my officials and the Clerks of the House for the way we have managed to get through a complex and technical Bill in a good spirit and with maximum co-operation, always mindful of the many benefits that will flow to consumers from the Bill.

Mr. Battle: I echo the Minister's remarks. Although I came to this Bill at a very late stage, I know of the work that has been done on it by the Clerks of the House and others. I would also offer a word of thanks to the Minister for the book that his Department published, carefully setting out how the amendments relate to the Bill. If other Departments of Government followed that practice, it would greatly help us all—and perhaps improve legislation generally.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 271 to 298 agreed to.

Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill

5.51 pm

The Secretary of State for Transport (Sir George Young): I beg to move,

That further proceedings on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill shall be suspended until the next Session of Parliament;

That if a Bill is presented in the next Session in the same terms as those in which the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill stood when proceedings on it were suspended in this Session--

(a) the Bill shall be ordered to be printed and shall be deemed to have been read the first and second time;

(b) the Bill shall stand committed to a Select Committee of the same Members as the Members of the Committee in this Session;

(c) all Petitions presented in this Session which stand referred to the Committee and which have not been withdrawn shall stand referred to the Committee in the next Session;

(d) any Minutes of Evidence taken and any papers laid before the Committee in this Session which have been reported to the House shall stand referred to the Committee in the next Session;

(e) only those Petitions mentioned in paragraph (c) above, and any Petition which may be presented by being deposited in the Private Bill Office and in which the Petitioners complain of any proposed additional provision or of any matter which has arisen during the progress of the Bill before the Committee in the next Session, shall stand referred to the Committee;

(f) any Petitioner whose Petition stands referred to the Committee in the next Session shall, subject to the Rules and Orders of the House and to the Prayer of his Petition, be entitled to be heard by himself, his Counsel or Agents upon his Petition provided that it is prepared and signed in conformity with the Rules and Orders of the House, and the Member in charge of the Bill shall be entitled to be heard by his Counsel or Agents in favour of the Bill against that Petition;

(g) the Committee shall have power to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House, to adjourn from place to place, and to report from day to day the Minutes of Evidence taken before it;

(h) three shall be the Quorum of the Committee;

(i) any person registered in this Session as a parliamentary agent entitled to practise as such in opposing Bills only who, at the time when proceedings on the Bill were suspended in this Session, was employed in opposing the Bill shall be deemed to have been registered as such a parliamentary agent in the next Session;

(j) the Standing Orders and practice of the House applicable to the Bill, so far as complied with in this Session, shall be deemed to have been complied with in the next Session; and

(k) if the Bill is reported from a Select Committee in the next Session, it shall thereupon stand re-committed to a Standing Committee.

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael Morris): I understand that with this, it will be convenient to discuss the following motion:

That it be an instruction to the Select Committee to which the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill is committed in the next Session—

(1) that it have power to consider—

(a) alternatives to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding the approach of the rail link to St. Pancras station from the west of Highbury Corner;

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

(b) the provision of rail sidings on the Midland Main Line on the western edge of the King's Cross Railway Lands;

(c) the relocation of Tarmac plc's existing concrete-batching facilities to a site in the north-west corner of the King's Cross Railway Lands;

(d) alterations to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding railways in the throat of St. Pancras station in the vicinity of the Regent's Canal;

(e) alterations to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding diversion of the Camden sewer;

(f) the provision of an additional road into the King's Cross Railway Lands from York Way, in the London Borough of Camden;

(g) alterations to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding ticket halls and subways of the London Underground Railways;

(h) the provision of a sewer forming a diversion of the St. Pancras sewer;

(i) alterations to the table in paragraph 1 of Schedule 7 to the Bill (buildings authorised to be demolished), so far as relating to the London Borough of Camden;

(j) the running through a tunnel of so much of the rail link as lies between Barrington Road, in the London Borough of Newham, and Dagenham Dock, in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham;

(k) works required in connection with the accommodation of the easterly portal of the main London tunnel;

(l) the undertaking of additional overhead line diversions in the vicinity of the A13 in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and the London Borough of Havering;

(m) realignment overground of the rail link and Tilbury Loop Railway in the vicinity of the Mardyke Park housing estate at Thurrock, in the county of Essex, and associated works;

(n) the provision of additional roads in the vicinity of Crowbridge Road, Ashford, in the county of Kent;

(o) the provision of sidings on the Ashford to Canterbury Railway to the east of the River Stour at Ashford, in the county of Kent;

(p) alterations to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding the junction of the rail link and the Eurotunnel Railway at Folkestone, in the county of Kent;

(q) alterations to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding planning permission for development authorised by Part I;

(r) alterations and additions to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding the compulsory acquisition of easements and other rights over land by the grant of new rights;

(s) the disposal of land acquired for the purposes of or in connection with the works authorised by Part I;

(t) the inclusion of additional land within the limits of land to be acquired or used; and

(u) additional power to stop up highways in connection with the construction of the A2 and M2 improvement works;

and, if it thinks fit, to make Amendments to the Bill with respect to any of the matters mentioned above, and for connected purposes;

(2) that any Petition against Amendments to the Bill which the Select Committee mentioned in paragraph (1) above is empowered by that paragraph to make shall be referred to that Select Committee if—

(a) it is presented by being deposited in the Private Bill Office not later than the end of the period of four weeks beginning with the day on which the first newspaper notice of the Amendments was published or, if that period includes any time during which the House is adjourned for more than four days, not later than five weeks beginning with that day, and

(b) it is one in which the Petitioners pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel or Agents;

That it be an instruction to the Clerk of Private Bills that, on receiving an original copy of the first newspaper notice of any Amendments to the Bill which the Select Committee to which the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill is committed in the next Session is empowered by paragraph (1) of the above instruction to make, he shall publish the date of the notice in the Private Business paper.

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.

Sir George Young: There are two motions on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill to be debated today. The first is an instruction on additional provisions, and the second is a carry-over motion. It may be helpful to the House if I say a brief word about both.

The channel tunnel rail link is one of the country's most important infrastructure projects of this decade, probably of this century. The House gave the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill an unopposed Second Reading on 16 January, with hon. Members on both sides expressing a wish to make rapid progress with the passage of the legislation and the implementation of the project.

The carry-over motion takes forward that unanimous will of the House. It is simply a procedural requirement to allow the Bill to run from this Session into the next. It is a hybrid Bill, which therefore has to be considered by Select Committees in each House in addition to all the usual stages of a public Bill. Because of that, and because of the scale of the rail link project, the Bill will inevitably take more than one Session to complete its passage.

Good progress has been made since the Bill's introduction on 23 November last year and its Second Reading on 16 January. The Select Committee, chaired by my hon. Friend the Member for Reading, West (Sir A. Durant), started work on 21 February. The Committee has spent 60 days so far considering the 993 petitions received, which is well over 250 hours. The House will, I am sure, join me in paying tribute to the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Sir I. Patnick), and the seven other members of the Select Committee for the way in which they have tackled this daunting task. They have kept proceedings moving forward and have listened to petitioners with unfailing courtesy, concentrating on the important issues. They have already reached and announced a number of key recommendations and decisions.

The Committee needs to complete its work in the new Session, and the carry-over motion provides for the Committee to continue on the same basis as approved by the House in the original committal motion on 16 January. The House has already made clear its support for the CTRL project, and carrying over the Bill is essential to bringing the project to fruition.

The other motion, instructing the Select Committee with regard to certain additional provisions, is to give effect primarily to the Select Committee's own wishes, announced on 20 July, on changes to the route of the rail link. The procedures of the House require that the people whose interests may be affected by the new route changes must be afforded the right to petition and be heard by the Select Committee. This is achieved by a formal instruction of the House to the Select Committee that the Committee may consider the route changes, which then enables the Government to deposit the necessary additional provisions and notices to be issued to those affected.

The major route changes are at Mardyke park in Thurrock, Barking and the approach to St. Pancras. Following the Select Committee's announcement in July, the route changes have been developed in sufficient detail for plans to be produced, property to be referenced and environmental assessments to be undertaken. For Mardyke park, the route is being realigned and a viaduct moved away from the housing estate. For Barking, there is a longer tunnel than the Select Committee sought. For the St. Pancras approach, the Select Committee accepted the promoters' proposal that two options for changing the route should be considered, and the motion allows for that.

I do not intend to run through other items in the motions, although the Minister of State will be prepared to respond to any particular concerns raised by hon. Members. Generally, the other items are minor alterations to works and land to be acquired or used, some of which are a consequence of the Select Committee's decisions. Others are tidying-up provisions, often to meet concerns raised by petitioners during negotiations.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I have a personal concern about blight: the tunnel goes immediately underneath my house. I am quite happy about that, but is there any compensation in this for me? My property, along with many others, has been blighted; its value has gone down. People do not want to buy a house over a tunnel.

Sir George Young: As the hon. Gentleman will know, there are statutory compensation schemes, to which he, like other members of the public, is entitled. Union Railways is operating its own scheme for people whose properties are affected by blight. The best advice that I can give the hon. Gentleman is the advice that I would give my own constituents: to take legal advice if he believes that his property interests are affected.

Mr. Banks: You are the Secretary of State.

Sir George Young: I am not a solicitor. I do not have the relevant qualifications, and I would hesitate to give the hon. Gentleman any unqualified legal advice.

Ms Margaret Hodge (Barking): I share my hon. Friend's concern. Hundreds of my constituents' properties were blighted by the original proposals, and they remain blighted. The Secretary of State said that it was up to Union Railways to come up with a scheme for voluntary purchase, but Union Railways tells me repeatedly that it works under directions given to it by the Department of Transport. We therefore seek tonight the assurance that the properties that will remain blighted—despite the revisions in the proposals—will be covered by a compensation scheme that will be fair to the people whose homes have been blighted for many years.

Sir George Young: As I am sure that the hon. Lady knows, the Select Committee has not yet dealt with this subject. It will come to the matter, I believe. She is right to say that Union Railways is buying homes on request within the safeguarded zone for the CTRL. That includes all homes taken wholly or in part by the link. It also operates a discretionary purchase scheme for properties seriously affected by the construction or use of the CTRL in cases of severe hardship. Union Railways published new guidelines for the operation of the scheme on 19 July; they are broadly in line with the arrangements for the road schemes. In our view, widening the purchase schemes to less affected properties could worsen any blight.

The Select Committee, as I have said, is still considering property and compensation issues connected with the CTRL.

The instruction by the House does not approve the additional provisions listed; it merely empowers the Select Committee to consider them formally, with the benefit of petitions from those affected. The Committee is not obliged to adopt all or any of the provisions.

The Government's aim is to deposit the additional provisions in two batches: the first—including Mardyke and Barking—in a few days' time, and the second—principally the St. Pancras approach—in early December. This should enable the first batch to be considered by the Committee starting just before Christmas. The second batch should start in Committee after the Christmas recess. The House will, I am sure, share the Committee's wish to complete its hearings without delay so that the CTRL project can go ahead as soon as possible.

6 pm

Ms Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): I shall begin by saying something personal about the Secretary of State for Transport. I hope that he will remember the time—it was some years ago—when we worked together in the project Re-unite, the purpose of which was to give more support to parents—usually mothers—whose children had been abducted. It was a worthy and important cause. I hope that the period during which we work together on transport matters will be as productive as our earlier work.

I have made a comment about the Secretary of State behind his back that perhaps I should make in front of him. I know him to be intelligent and socially concerned, and that being so, I have a basic respect for him. As we begin our new transport relationship, I find it impossible to believe that the right hon. Gentleman judges the current rail privatisation proposals to be in the national interest. I am sure that we shall return to that issue. The more I see of the proposals, the more people I meet who are involved with them and the more of the detail that I come to examine, the more I become aware that they are massively destructive to our transport systems.

I cannot believe that a man of the quality of the Secretary of State could possibly support the proposals. It seems—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I do not wish to intervene too strongly when there might be harmony. I hope, however, that we shall restrict the debate to the motions that are before us.

Ms Short: I am grateful, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wanted to get my compliments in first.

Along with many other Members, I accepted an invitation about a year ago to travel to Paris from Waterloo on the new Eurostar service. I think that we were all invited to make the journey. I tried to register the journey in the Register of Members' Interests and was told that if something is offered to all Members, it is not necessary to register it. That is an interesting concept.

I made the journey with my mother. It is interesting when people in their 70s travel by rail. For them, the smoothness of the ride is of great importance. I met my

[Ms Short]

hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) and he, too, was taking his mother to Paris. We had a mothers' day out to Paris, in the rain.

I found—many others have found since—that the quality of the service on the French side of the Channel was massively more impressive than that on our side. Some British people are ashamed about that when they make the journey. President Mitterrand, when he opened the French link to the tunnel on 18 May 1993, said:

> "Passengers will race at great pace across the plains of northern France, rush through the tunnel on a fast track and then be able to daydream at very low speed, admiring the English countryside."

Speed and comfort are important. With a poor-quality service there is spilt coffee on the English side but not on the French. There are stops and starts on our side and it is difficult to walk through the train as it sways. I felt sad and rather ashamed that the quality of the service on the French was so massively higher.

Dr. Robert Spink (Castle Point): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms Short: I shall give way to ascertain whether the hon. Gentleman's point is sensible.

Dr. Spink: The hon. Lady will not be aware that I travelled on the Eurostar service today. I returned to Waterloo this afternoon. I can assure the hon. Lady that the service that I received was excellent on both sides of the channel. There was no difference in the service on either side. I do not recognise her description of the service. Again, our service is being berated at the expense of British Rail. That is deplorable.

Ms Short: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman was sleeping during the journey. No one is suggesting that the quality of service provided by the British staff is lower than that given by the French. I am merely saying that the train travels a great deal more slowly on the British side. That is fact. I am not berating anyone. If the hon. Gentleman did not notice the difference in speed, his sensitivity—*[Interruption.]*

We support the motions that are before us. Given that it is possible that the Bill will be given Royal Assent during 1996 and that instructions for work to begin will be given in 1997, we, Labour, expect and intend to take over responsibility for the project and see it through to completion as early as possible in the new millennium. We are critical, however, that one of the largest civil engineering projects in Britain for a long time has progressed so slowly and that so much anguish and pain has been caused by planning blight because of the Government's mad ideological commitment to market forces and private sector control of all projects, rather than a partnership between the public and private sectors that would bring the best from both sides to the project. The Labour party is firmly committed to the latter approach, which would be much more strongly in the national interest than the Government's arrangements.

Any review of the details and the history of the project—I have obviously engaged in such a review in preparing for the debate—makes enormously depressing reading. It is a story of delay, dither, blight and wasted resources. That stems from the Government's initial determination that no Government grant or subsidy should be provided for the project. As a result, it had become clear by the end of 1991 that London's investment community was unenthusiastic. That error of judgment led to the big U-turn in March 1993, when the then Secretary of State for Transport said that the Government had decided that the project would have to go forward as a joint venture. We were told in January 1994 that the Government were willing after all to provide substantial public sector support for the project.

We now know that the Government intend to hand over to the successful bidder as much as £1.7 billion in cash subsidies and asset transfers without taking any public stake or power to ensure public accountability in return for such massive public investment. That is deeply wrong, both morally and democratically. The tax burden is higher now as a percentage of gross domestic product than it was in 1979. The burden is more inequitably distributed with the result that those on lower incomes are paying more tax now than they have for a long time. It seems profoundly wrong to hand over massive public resources to private companies without ensuring that the public interest is secured. The Opposition object to that.

It is to be welcomed that the Government have responded positively to the proposals that are set out in the report of the Select Committee on Transport. We are concerned, however, about the delays caused by the Government dithering over the best way in which to finance the scheme. We are also concerned about planning blight. We note that there is good news for those who live along some sections of the route. A pamphlet is being issued in Barking that states that there is good news at last. Many people will be comforted by the progress that has been made, and that is to be welcomed.

Some extremely serious allegations were made in an article that appeared in *The Sunday Telegraph* on 27 August. It suggested that the Secretary of State and his Ministers had attempted to nobble the work of the Select Committee. It is such a serious allegation that I imagine that Ministers will want to respond to it. The article states:

> "Sir George Young, the transport secretary, has told Cabinet colleagues that the Select Committee has already accepted too many points made by objectors, especially in Labour-voting areas of London."

I hope that the Secretary of State has not proceeded in that way. Citizens' rights to compensation and other matters should be protected regardless of voting behaviour.

The article continued to the effect that *The Sunday Telegraph* had learnt

> "that Sir George is to send a discreet message to the two senior Tory MPs on the committee that it would not take much more to make the project no longer viable."

That is interesting. The article stated:

> "Sir George and John Watts, the rail minister, intend to approach Sir Anthony before the committee's next meeting on October 17. They will urge him to resist widespread demands for a more generous approach to compensation."

That is extremely serious and something that should be mentioned on the Floor of the House.

Sir Anthony Durant (Reading, West): I received a letter from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport in which he outlined his views. He told me that he did not intend in any way to influence the Committee. I read out the letter to the full Committee at one of its meetings. The Committee accepted his word, as I did. No attempt has been made to influence me in any way. I assure the House that if that were tried, I might go the other way.

Ms Short: The letter seems peculiar. I think that the Minister, when he is winding up, might want to come back to that point.

Another specific point that I would like the Minister to address when winding up is where things stand on the ombudsman's report, which found the Government guilty of maladministration leading to injustice over their refusal to pay compensation to some residents. As hon. Members may well remember, the report included some extremely distressing cases: a couple who wished to move because their son had hanged himself in the property; and another where a woman with a degenerative illness wanted to move closer to her family but was unable to do so. I understand that there is a meeting this evening. I also understand that there might be some suggestion that the Government will be rather more helpful than they have been about the ombudsman's report. I very much hope that that is true and that we can have some news on that.

I should also be grateful to know what progress has been made to ensure that when passengers arrive at St. Pancras station the infrastructure can cope with the traffic, because one of the great worries about rail privatisation is that there will be separate writs breaking up the national network and that there will not be the necessary co-ordination of the system. I want to know whether those developments are in hand and, in particular, whether we can now have a firm date for the commencement of direct services via east coast and west coast main lines to the rest of the country.

Our view is that the project is essential to the updating and strengthening of Britain's rail network, and we as a party are absolutely committed to the maintenance of a united national rail network that will co-ordinate transport services throughout our country and remain in public ownership. We also believe that it will improve comfort and efficiency for travellers and that our trade and business relationships with our European neighbours will be strengthened. We deeply deplore the terrible delays that the project has suffered because of the Government's ideological obsessions, but we strongly support it and look forward greatly to taking responsibility for it in government and carrying it through to success.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is self-evident that a large number of hon. Members wish to speak. The debate must finish at 7.21, so I appeal for short speeches.

6.11 pm

Dame Peggy Fenner (Medway): I am grateful to get your help in this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and will try to comply with your injunction.

I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench two particular points. First, today on the front of a national tabloid appeared a report—I do not know whether it was leaked—which concluded that the M2 road widening between junctions 1 and 4 has been postponed. I remind my right hon. Friend that the Select Committee sought assurances that it would be completed within the same construction period as the channel tunnel rail link. The Government themselves gave the qualification that if either were delayed for funding reasons, they would not delay the other indefinitely.

I should make it quite clear about the widening of the M2 road that, as soon as I learned the price of building another bridge—hon. Members will be aware that we are to have two road bridges and one rail bridge adjacent to one of my villages, Borstal, near Rochester—I said that it was a bridge too far, and asked whether we could ban the road. I ask my right hon. Friend to look again to see whether that road really is needed, as it is a great imposition and additional noise to my constituents.

Secondly, I had hoped to read in the instructions to the Select Committee—I accept that they cannot be too detailed—some instruction to look again at the mitigation of noise, because my constituents are certainly not satisfied with noise barriers that cover only one portion of each of these three confounded bridges. They want noise barriers that go right the way across. Their living environment must be balanced against the visual impact that the barriers would have. I hope that my right hon. Friend will consider that some of the £13.6 million that was allocated from Brussels should be given to ensure the protection of the living environment of the people in Kent and in London who perforce must have this link running through their section of the country.

I have read a rumour, but being a politician I do not believe much that I read in the newspapers, that the Select Committee, when it continues into the next Session—I hoped that this would be in the instruction—will look specifically at generic matters, such as blight, compensation, noise mitigation and construction, because in those matters hon. Members like myself are very worried about people who want or need to move. We are worried about construction—in the case of my constituents, not only of a rail bridge but of another road bridge, and all that that implies. My constituents hoped that building of the two bridges would run simultaneously, but they opened their paper today and learned that that will not be. Will they have 10 years of construction, as the bridges are built sequentially, one after the other?

Part of my constituents' problem, in addition to this great burden on their environment, is that the construction will interfere with a tip that has had asbestos dumped on it for years. Nobody will give them any scientific evidence that it is safe to interfere with it. I warn my right hon. Friend that they require some scientific reassurance about the effects of moving the tip, and construction on and around it. I do so in respect of a recent finding in a court on compensation for people who are suffering because, as children, they played near a source of asbestos. People are naturally worried. We also had the same situation in the dockyard. Although proximity to the source of asbestos was many years ago, men have died 30 years later.

I take it that hidden in this instruction are the detailed instructions to the Select Committee about its next work. I know that the Chairman of the Select Committee is a very independent character and that he and the Committee will do it their way, but I seek assurances on the fate of the M2 and its consequential co-ordinated building; the factory farm site and its asbestos; and the noise mitigation barriers across all two or three of the bridges, whichever it finishes.

6.17 pm

Mr. Paul Tyler (North Cornwall): Some six hours ago I, too, emerged from the channel tunnel on Eurostar, coming back from meetings in Brussels, and I have to say that my experience was identical to that of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms Short) rather than that of the hon. Member for Castle Point (Dr. Spink). Indeed, other passengers in the carriage clearly thought that there was something wrong with the train. Those coming from Brussels who had not used it before, having had the smooth ride through Belgium and France, when suddenly faced with a remarkable reduction in speed, and much more rattle and swerve as they came through the Kent countryside, clearly did not relish the prospect of reaching London, as they feared, some hours late because the train obviously had something wrong with it.

We know that there is nothing wrong with the train; it is a great institution, but the link is clearly totally inadequate. That is why I believe that hon. Members on both sides of the House will congratulate the Select Committee and express relief that it has made such progress so far. We are grateful to the right hon. and hon. Members who have undertaken this task, but it has to be said that already the likely cost of the link has risen by another £170 million as a result of the amendments. We are now looking at a bill of something in excess of £2.7 billion. The cost of delay is clearly the most difficult cost of all to face. How can we justify that to our constituents, who are already well aware of the considerable time that it has taken to get thus far?

The instructions clearly are helpful in a number of ways, and I shall concentrate on one or two of them and their broad purpose rather than go into great detail, because I know that many hon. Members with local concerns wish to speak. The most important implications are for the provision of freight travel through the tunnel. I have always believed that to be the major justification for a rail-based fixed link across the channel. Indeed, I believe that that is already considered to be fully justified, and that its potential is extremely exciting.

Last year, for the first time, freight shipments on the United Kingdom's rail network fell below 100 million tonnes. That has serious implications for the whole British economy, let alone for the balance between road and rail. I hope that both these instructions and the speed with which the Committee is able to make progress will result in increasing opportunities for the economic transport of freight by rail.

A few weeks ago, it was suggested in the *Financial Times* that that would be the most critical issue in regard to future funding of the tunnel, and also that it would be critically important to our entire rail network. Given that few freight journeys of less than 300 miles are possible because of the loading and unloading costs at each end, the access given by the tunnel to the continental rail network is clearly of remarkable importance. We shall not have that opportunity again. More than 75 freight trains a week are making regular return journeys to a number of European countries; surely we should encourage that trend.

Given that the inadequacies of the trans-European network from Britain's point of view are of our own making, we are clearly presented with another opportunity. According to a *Railnews* bulletin sent to hon. Members by Eurotunnel,

> "taking the road to rail ratio and comparing to other countries, Britain could have got 750km of high speed rail but instead only got 80km, for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. Sources in Brussels have said that Britain could have got very much more if it had applied; one wonders if there is a real government intention to spend a significant amount of money on improving the West Coast Main Line. Could not some of it have come from this TEN scheme? Even the modest £70 million required for the line upgrading between Glasgow and Folkestone for piggyback services could have been covered under the combined transport priority list.
>
> The Whitehall excuse is that projects, other than the CTRL, were not sufficiently advanced—who can we blame for this but the same people!"

The CTRL is incredibly important in itself, but it should also be the pioneering project that leads to effective new investment—particularly in freight travel—on our rail network in other parts of the country. It is feared that the return that Railtrack will demand for access charges—not just for the CTRL, but elsewhere in the country—could hold that back.

Of course noise insulation—to which the hon. Member for Medway (Dame P. Fenner) referred—and blight involve important considerations. Many hon. Members will wish to express their constituents' views on those subjects, but those are transitional problems, and I hope that the improvements that have already been hinted at will be seen as the Committee continues its work.

I believe—as, I think, do many members of the public, as well as Members of Parliament—that the function of this link to the continental network to extend opportunities for the freight industry to convey more loads by rail will really make the difference. It will be able to remove from the hard-pressed roads of Kent, and southern England generally, a proportion of the heavy loads that they are currently carrying, and at the same time enable the road improvement programme to be seen in a different light.

Finally, let me comment on future funding for not just the CTRL but similar projects. The French Government may not be perfect in other respects, but over many years, under different political leadership, they have seen opportunities for partnership between local authorities and national Government, and between public and private enterprise, as critical to such projects as high-speed rail links. The DATTAR scheme is by no means perfect in its consideration of environmental implications—we in this country would probably consider ourselves better at such things—but in other respects it leaves us standing.

Today, not for the first time, I passed through the amazing station at Lille where the three mayors of the Lille conurbations—all of different political persuasions—worked together to create a magnificent focus for a TGV station, as well as for Eurostar and for an integrated nodal transport system. That project is already a great success: it has generated new business and retail involvement.

I believe that we are missing an opportunity. I hope very much that the Committee's work will be successful, but I fear that we are still treating the project as a "one-off"—a project that can be attempted only in special circumstances—when it should be showing how we can bring private investment into the public-sector rail network as a whole.

That is the Liberal Democrat recipe for the success of a 21st-century rail system. It is working successfully in other parts of Europe, and we should model the future of Railtrack on it rather than allow the cranks of the right to abscond with an important national asset.

The House will wish to congratulate the Committee on the work that it has done so far. I believe, however, that delay could prove extremely expensive, not just to the individuals who are blighted by it but to the whole British economy. With heartfelt emphasis, we add to our previous plea: the Committee has all our best wishes, and godspeed.

6.25 pm

Sir John Stanley (Tonbridge and Malling): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Reading, West (Sir A. Durant) and his Committee. I do not know whether they are volunteers or pressed men—I do not think that there are any women on the Committee—but, in any event, they are devoting a vast amount of their time, and showing the utmost diligence, in dealing with a highly complicated matter.

I want to make three points. The first relates to the old and continuing issue of blight, and the adequacy or otherwise of the discretionary powers of acquisition that are now applied by Union Railways. I welcome the fact that Union Railways is having a further stab at this, and has come up with a new voluntary acquisition package; but I am extremely doubtful about whether that package will be generous enough to meet the needs of people who, without any doubt, have experienced catastrophic blight. They cannot sell their main asset other than at sacrificial prices.

It simply is not reasonable to put home owners in such a position. The limited number of my constituents who are in that position are making fresh applications under the new arrangements announced by Union Railways, and I earnestly hope that those applications will be successful. If they are not, I shall ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to change the rules and make them that much more generous, so that no one is asked to take a large knock on personal capital for a scheme pursued in the public interest. That financial burden should be borne by the public; it is not for individuals to accept a major financial sacrifice and not to obtain fair value for their homes.

My second point relates to two of the detailed provisions of the second motion, (q) and (r). They appear to widen the Committee's instruction to enable it to consider open-ended changes for what will be approved planning permissions—and, indeed, extensions to compulsory purchase. We want to be assured that those wide new provisions will not be used to the detriment of the rights of individual land owners, and rights pertaining to easements. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will assure us of the limited and responsible use of what are wide extensions of both deemed planning permission and compulsory purchase powers.

My third point concerns freight. I hope that my hon. Friend can assure us that nothing in the second motion will be used to constrain the freight use of the rail link; indeed, I hope that he will be able to tell us that freight use will be enhanced to the maximum extent. At present, freight users will be able to use the rail link to a considerable extent. They are also able to use existing lines to the channel tunnel. Given that two freight options are available, I earnestly hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will treat with the utmost scepticism the planned third option that is apparently being constructed by a company called the Central Railway Group.

In a letter that my right hon. Friend sent to me in the last week or so, he tells me that Central Railway Group is planning to apply to him for the construction of a third rail freight line from the midlands, going along existing lines and through Tonbridge in my constituency, to the channel tunnel. On the proposals that I have seen so far, that work would have a serious impact on the centre of Tonbridge and on other regions up and down the proposed route of the Central Railway Group's new freight link.

Given that hon. Members are planning to create a new railway line that will carry freight, and that existing lines already carry freight, it is superfluous to create a third freight route, with all the potential blighting effects under the Central Railway Group's proposals. I hope therefore that my right hon. Friend will be mindful of those points if, in the next few weeks, an order is put to him under the Transport and Works Act 1992 procedure.

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): Will my right hon. Friend give way before he sits down?

Hon. Members: He has sat down.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Janet Fookes): Order. I believe that the right hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley) had already resumed his seat.

6.30 pm

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): In this debate, the starting point for all of us must be that we want the channel tunnel high-speed rail link to be built not only as quickly as possible but in the right way. For those of us who represent constituencies along the route of the line, building it in the right way is terribly important. I do not, therefore, want either of the motions before us tonight to be opposed or defeated, but I do want to flag up one concern.

The most intricate part of the proposed route is the approach to St. Pancras, which comes through the borough of Islington, across the east coast main line and into the St. Pancras railway lands. The Select Committee considering the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill spent considerable time on that matter, and I pay great tribute to its work. I am delighted to see its Chairman, Vice-Chairman and my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) here. The Committee deserves great credit for the assiduity of its work.

In its initial conclusions just before the summer recess, the Select Committee recommended that, in the approach to St. Pancras, what has become known as "Alan Baxter's fully tunnelled option" should be adopted. There was rejoicing in my constituency at that recommendation because it was precisely what local people wanted. It removed the problems of blight, disturbance and noise that they had feared.

Work is continuing on the working up of Baxter's fully tunnelled option but, alongside it, we have a second option developed by Union Railways, which the Committee will consider together with Baxter's scheme. The alternative approach will not be completely fully tunnelled. It will, however, contain more tunnel than in the original reference case. Both options under consideration are better, therefore, than the reference case. Local residents are in the process of examining in detail both options to find out which one they would prefer.

[Mr. Chris Smith]

Those residents have gone through a rollercoaster of hope and despair on this exercise. Having been told that the Baxter's option was going to be adopted, suddenly they are faced with two potential options, one of which may not be as good as the Baxter's option. Blight has returned to the western part of Islington around Caledonian road as a direct result of the new uncertainty that has been created.

There is a problem. The plans for the two options will, as I understand it, be deposited on 5 December. Local residents will then have only five weeks to prepare new petitions on the new proposals. Even worse, the people who have already petitioned must pay another £20 fee to submit their new petition, which, through no fault of their own, deals with new material.

I hope that the Government, the Select Committee and the House will recognise that the procedure of having to petition fast over the Christmas period and of petitioners having to pay an additional fee above what was originally deposited is putting a great difficulty in the way of the petitioners. I flag up that concern. Petitioners are being put at a severe disadvantage, blight has returned, and there is continuing concern about what will happen in relation to the final approach to St. Pancras.

I make two simple requests. The first is to Union Railways. It is that there will be a full and fair working up of both the options—the Baxter's fully tunnelled option and the Union Railways option. Local residents will be able to make a clear decision and put their representations to the Select Committee only with a full and fair assessment of the impact of the two alternatives.

The second plea is to the Select Committee members, and I am sure that they will readily accept this: listen carefully to what local residents say when they have had a real chance to examine in detail the two options on the table as we are talking here, not just about the value of property, although that is important, but about people's lives for many years to come. People locally want the line to be built in the right way, but they want their lives to be damaged as little as possible in the process. I am sure that the Committee will want to listen to what they have to say in putting their case forward.

6.37 pm

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): My constituency has been blighted since 1988. Every route that has been considered for a rail link has twisted and turned across my constituency and, therefore, we in Gravesham view with much concern the on-going considerations in relation to the rail link.

I should like to draw the attention of my hon. Friend the Minister to item (u) in the second motion, which refers to the

"A2 and M2 improvement works".

Those works take place in an especially sensitive area of the green belt, which is strong on the natural environment. It contains Ashenbank wood and, in relation to heritage, Cobham hall. That region must be treated with careful consideration by the Select Committee when it returns to it.

Encompassed within the M2-A2 works is a junction for the so-called Wainscott bypass. If my hon. Friend the Minister is looking for vast savings to be made on the road programme, the best thing he could do is to scrap that bypass, and to simplify the A2-M2 junction.

In those works, reference is made to stopping up various highways in the region. Select Committee members should pay careful attention to a number of accesses along there, especially to the Rochester and Cobham golf club. If that access is blocked, the golf club will be cut off and there will be major havoc to transport flows in the parish of Cobham.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms Short) referred to work being started on the rail link in 1997. One of the first works to be done would be the initial work for the construction of the tunnel underneath the River Thames and the construction of the Ebbsfleet railway station. These works will be on either side of the ancient town of Northfleet. Heavy goods vehicles already thunder through that old town. If works start on both these massive projects under the rail link proposals, life for the residents of Northfleet will be made totally intolerable.

I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to nag the highways authority—Kent county council—to ensure that, in its programme for 1996-97, it gives the Northfleet bypass the highest priority. I know that my hon. Friend has referred to it as a high priority, but our highways authority must make that its top priority. If my hon. Friend is worried about the finance for the Northfleet bypass, which is known as the south Thamesside development route phase 4, I point out that he can certainly finance it out of the considerable savings to be made on the Wainscott bypass.

I disagree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley). The House has authorised expenditure of £1.2 billion for improving the existing railroads across Kent to cope with the increased traffic coming from the channel tunnel; passengers and freight now go along the southern routes. The argument in favour of the rail link is saturation of rail capacity across Kent. The construction of the channel tunnel rail link is to bring additional capacity across Kent. As it is new, the logical thing to do is to build it to high-speed qualities so that we do not have one or two problems that were referred to earlier.

If one builds a brand new channel tunnel rail link for high-speed operation, the last thing one does is to put across it heavy carriages with heavy goods. The high-speed rail link should not have freight running along it, not least because residents along the high-speed rail link will not have had railways running past their properties before, and they should not have that added imposition.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling about compensation. We remain to be convinced that there are proposals adequately to compensate people whose houses are their principal investment and saving in this life. It is not fair to say, "We need the project, we cannot really afford it, so we will finance it partly out of the capital value of your house." That would be a shameful way in which to treat my constituents and those of hon. Members in Kent and in central London. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to give a lot of encouragement tonight, and that the Select Committee will also bear these points in mind.

6.42 pm

Ms Margaret Hodge (Barking): I join everyone in thanking those members of the Select Committee who did something that is rather unusual—at least for Conservative Members—and very welcome, which is that they listened. Those who attended the Select Committee sitting that I attended with my constituents were astounded to see Members of Parliament applauded by members of the public for their courtesy in listening. We very much welcome that.

The original proposals were ill conceived and wrong; we have to say that today. They were led by engineers who had no proper concern for ordinary people. The original proposals were dominated by the view that short-term penny-pinching rather than the long-term interests of all the people along the route must be the essence of what was being considered.

The original proposals brought enormous hardship to hundreds if not thousands of my constituents. There was one gentleman whose life was dominated by the issue and who suffered from terrible emphysema because of his proximity to the existing rail track. He died worried about his future.

One family cared at home for a son who was severely handicapped. They wished to emigrate to Canada so that their other children could care for their son in the long term. They were unable to do so and have remained unable to do so because they cannot sell their property; it remains blighted.

Another constituent was unemployed for a long time. He managed to secure a job elsewhere, but he could not take it because he could not sell his house and move to Chelmsford. Those are the real stories—not transitional problems—of the impact of ill-thought-out proposals on my constituents and on thousands of people along the line.

I have three points for the Minister. First, we need some indication of the timetable for bringing in the new safeguarding directions to alleviate the blight. The blight has been there for many years and is still there. Secondly, I stress that the discretionary purchase scheme lies in the hands of the Minister and his Department. He cannot keep shifting the blame to other people, whether Union Railways or the Select Committee. If it turns out that people remain unable to sell their properties—if it turns out that people lose their freedom of movement, which is critical to them—the Government must take responsibility and must return to a more generous discretionary purchase scheme, along the lines of the French scheme.

Thirdly, there will be increased freight. What we must ensure and what is of particular concern to my constituents is that the freight does not shift to the roads. They would then have the impact of the rail link and increased road traffic.

My constituents are not well off. They will now have to make new representations to the Committee. Not only is there the £20 fee, but the fees incurred if legal advice is sought and the loss of earnings for the time that they have to take off work to make representations to the Committee. Those new costs should be met by the public purse because, if the Government's original proposals had been less incompetent, we would not have had the additional delay and further consideration by the Committee.

If the present Secretary of State had been in his position earlier, if the present Minister for Railways and Roads had had an influence earlier and if I had been able to make representations earlier, we should not have ended up with a compromise for Barking. I welcome the compromise, but it is not ideal. It does not tear the heart out of Barking as the original proposals would have done, but it leaves hundreds of people, both house owners and council tenants, with an uncertain future. They are unclear about whether they can move and whether the channel tunnel rail link will have a long-term impact on their lives.

I hope that the Select Committee and the House can come up with sensible proposals to deal with blight and with the discretionary purchase scheme, to alleviate some of the suffering that has been caused in my constituency.

6.48 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I congratulate the Committee on having worked so hard. I was a little disappointed to learn that a senior member of the Committee had said that the proposals from Kent had been well put by officers but not sufficiently supported by councillors. That is unjust, as all the representations made by Kent were made with the endorsement of the councillors. Indeed, in at least one case—and I think in several others—county councillors were not allowed to give evidence to the Select Committee on behalf of their parish councils. So if there is any sense that there is a lack of political will behind what the Kent people have been saying, it is misunderstood.

I am of course going to support the motions, because, as many hon. Members have said, they are the only way in which to relieve my constituents from blight. But I do so with a heavy heart. It has been a lamentable story. We were told at the beginning, when the channel tunnel was first being devised, that there was no need for a railway; we were told that there would be no question of any form of public subsidy for the line; we were told that there would be four routes on the table, although it quickly became apparent that three of them were a complete whitewash and not ever intended to be worked. A whole series of undertakings have been given and withdrawn.

My constituents are thoroughly cynical about whether they will even see what the Select Committee has recommended—and, indeed, has been accepted so far—happen in practice. It is perfectly clear, as many of my constituents who are much more numerate than I shall ever be have pointed out, that the economic viability of this line is very fragile. Ministers have made it clear in correspondence among themselves that they have anxieties on that score. Those anxieties are well founded.

The worst possible outcome for any of us would be that all the proceedings on this Bill in both Houses of Parliament were completed and the line was not built for a considerable length of time. That would be a scandal and I hope very much that my hon. Friend the Minister will give us an undertaking—even though I am sceptical about some of the undertakings that I have had so far—that the line really will work.

I thank my hon. Friend the Minister, however, for the letter that I have received this very evening saying that, on the authority of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration Committee, it has been agreed that the worst cases of hardship brought before that Committee will be looked at again. That is a welcome assurance.

[Mr. Andrew Rowe]

I say once again to my hon. Friend—he has heard me say it before, but it is essential to say it again—that the way in which we handle compensation on big public schemes is a scandal. It is not easy, but what happens is a scandal. For the permanent secretary to the Department of Transport to try to maintain that there are only two kinds of blight—statutory blight and the blight caused by uncertainty—is so far removed from reality as to be a disgrace. Member after Member in this short debate has pointed out that, although there is no uncertainty over large parts of the line, the blight persists and will probably persist for another decade.

I do not believe that the line will be built as quickly as we all hope that it will be. I heard today that a potential tenant of Union Railways was offered a 10-year tenancy. When the tenant said that the company had to be joking because the line was set to go through the cottage, Union Railways is alleged to have said that there was no chance of the line being built in the time scale provided. I have not had time to check the story, but if it is true, it is a disgrace.

I wonder what the real cost of the line will eventually turn out to be. There has never been a project on such a scale which has cost anything like the budget first projected. The only thing that would be worse than not having the line built after all the proceedings in both Houses would be to have half the line built and some future Government saying that they could not afford to finish it.

I should like to make one detailed point. I am disturbed and distressed to discover that the thoroughly sensible way suggested of improving the amenity of the Boxley valley—one of the causes célèbres before the Select Committee—by the road going over the line, under the project described as 3A, has been thrown out by Union Railways. I very much hope that in this debate the Minister will allow us to hope that at least that alternative could once again be properly considered.

I say to hon. Members on both sides of the House, that after the matter is resolved, the trauma of compensation and blight that we have all endured should not be forgotten. Could we not have a cross-party consensus that the present system of handling compensation is lamentably unfair and try to work out a better system for the future?

6.55 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I join other Members in paying a warm tribute to the Chairman of the Committee, the hon. Member for Reading, West (Sir A. Durant), and the members of that Committee—not because I am a creep, although I am prepared to do almost anything to get the Stratford international station located in my area, but because I have chaired many a Committee on a private Bill and I know precisely how much hard work goes into it and how little credit is given to the Members who carry out the work.

I also join with the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) and others who have referred to blight. I raise the matter in a slightly jokey fashion, but on the present alignment the tunnel would go immediately under my house in Forest Gate. I am quite happy for that to happen if we can get the international station located at Stratford. Indeed, I do not care if the tunnel goes right through my living room so long as we get that station.

Compensation and blight must be taken into account. One would always hope that Union Railways and the Government would be as generous as possible. Many people who want the project are living in properties which will be blighted, especially if, as has been suggested, the time scale for the project is way beyond 10 years.

When the Chairman reported the initial findings of the Committee, he said:

> "It is our view that a station at Stratford capable of handling international traffic is desirable both in the national interest and in the interest of regenerating eastern London."

In east London we say "Hear, hear" to that.

The long box recommendation, which safeguards the possibility of an international station at Stratford, has been accepted by the Government, who will require the nominated undertaker to build it, but they are resisting the Committee's proposal that it should be done under the Transport and Works Act 1992.

Mr. Stephen Timms (Newham, North-East): Given the Committee's strong endorsement of the Stratford station, which my hon. Friend has just relayed, given the support that the Government have given to the long box, given the fact that every local authority in London supports the choice of Stratford international, given that London First supports it, and given that everybody who advises the Government on regeneration in London supports it, does he agree that it is now time for the Government quickly to give firm support to the Stratford international proposal?

Mr. Banks: Of course I agree with my hon. Friend, and many Conservative Members would also agree with him.

I should like to ask the Minister a series of specific questions. Although the Government will require the long box to be constructed by the nominated undertaker, the nominated undertaker has not yet been chosen. When does the Minister expect to choose the nominated undertaker? Will the decision on Stratford be coupled with that choice, or will it be taken separately? If it is taken separately, when does he intend to take a decision on Stratford? That is the point that my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Timms) has just raised. Will it be a final decision with regard to Stratford?

Can the Minister confirm that the Stratford rail lands will not be sold off piecemeal prior to a decision? We have received some assurances from the Department of Transport, and a recent letter from the Department to the chief executive of Newham confirmed it, but a public statement from the Minister would be very useful at this point.

In my area, we are alarmed that Railfreight is talking actively about reopening Stratford as a major freight terminal—in fact, as a railhead for freight—contrary to all previous assurances that Ministers and officials have given us that there will no freight railhead in east London. What is going on? Can the Minister tell us? Who is calling the shots? We need to know.

The proposals that Railfreight is now talking about appear to be in conflict with the proposals for developments on the rail land, including the international station at Stratford. As my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East said, there is enormous cross-party and cross-London support for Stratford as the location of the second international London station. I hope that the Minister will find time to answer the very specific questions that I have asked.

6.59 pm

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): I was interested to read in a biographical note about the Secretary of State that he once wrote a book called "Blessing or Blight?" It was on the tourist industry, but in his leisure years the right hon. Gentleman may be able to follow it up by writing about the channel tunnel link and rail privatisation.

We have had a good debate. I add my congratulations to the members of the Select Committee who did the drudgery and, as has been said, listened to the many objections and concerns. I pay tribute, too, to my colleagues who have made such effective representations on behalf of their constituents.

Perhaps the most interesting comments in the debate were made by the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe), who asked when and whether the link would be built. He said that the worst thing would be if "some future Government" said that they would not complete it. However, as the hon. Gentleman and everybody else here should know, under the present scheme it will not be within the gift of the Government to say that they will or will not complete the link. The intention is to hand over the works to a private company, which will decide whether to complete the link.

Let us look at the scenario that Ministers are creating, and the trail of past Secretaries of State for Transport. It seems that an announcement will soon be made that the assets of European Passenger Services—almost £1 billion worth of public assets, every penny of which was paid for by the taxpayer, every brick and pane of glass in the Waterloo international terminal, and every coach and piece of livery on the Eurostar trains—will be handed over to a private company.

From that day the revenue stream, the most lucrative in the history of the British railway network, will go to the private operators. If the Secretary of State wants to contradict me, he is welcome to do so. When the traffic reaches its expected peak, 15 million people a year will travel on the service and every penny of the money will go to the private operator.

The trade-off for that is incredible; if the Mafia had suggested it, it would be regarded as beyond the dreams of avarice. At some future unspecified date, the private consortium will start building a channel tunnel link along a route not yet defined, within a time scale which, as the hon. Member for Mid-Kent rightly said, is undefinable.

If one of the consortia were unscrupulous enough it would go round east London funding the objectors, saying, "Keep this going as long as possible. The last thing we want to do is to build a channel tunnel link. Why should we, because our revenue stream is guaranteed ad infinitum?"

Will the Secretary of State contradict any of that? When the announcement is made will he tell us why the operator would have a vested interest in speeding up the process of building a channel tunnel link? More important, will the Minister who replies to the debate give me one reason why the assets of European Passenger Services should be handed to a private operator before the Bill has completed its passage, and before a sod has been turned on the route that is finally decided?

Why is it essential for the private operator to have the revenue stream before there is agreement on either the route or the financing of the rail link? Will the Minister answer that simple question, because it has never been answered? What precedent is there for giving an operator the money in return for an unspecified, and I believe ultimately unsustainable, expectation that the link will be built according to criteria laid down by the Government and the Select Committee?

What is the rush to give away the assets, other than that which underlies all the activities of the Tory party? It is the desire to shovel as much wealth and as many public assets towards its friends in the private sector before the day of judgment when the Tories are finally turfed out. Why is it a matter of public urgency to give away the assets of European Passenger Services?

Let us look back at the timetable for the process. Government is about more than rhetoric; it is about record. The Government should be judged harshly on what they have done to the constituents of many hon. Members on both sides of the House, and for what they have done to British prestige, leaving us with the poor relation, the national embarrassment of the slow line to the channel tunnel, where the French take over with a high-speed railway line.

Let us look at the record of disaster and fiasco. The Channel Tunnel Act 1987 ruled out public funding to support passenger services. Not a penny of public funds was to go to support rail passenger services to or from the channel tunnel. In those days Parkinson's law ruled, under section 42(3) of the Channel Tunnel Act.

In 1988 British Rail launched a competition for a public-private partnership. In those days the Tories hated even public-private partnerships because the word "public" was mentioned. In 1989 Cecil Parkinson reaffirmed:

> "It remains the policy of the Government that no subsidy will be given to channel tunnel rail services".

In June 1990 the public-private idea was killed off. British Rail had done a deal on it and then it was killed off, throwing the whole thing into disarray—the ideological hammer blow. I shall return later to the figures involved at that time.

In October 1991 a proud announcement was made at the Tory party conference. By that time it was the present Foreign Secretary, then Secretary of State for Transport, who made the announcement. The route had been definitively finalised and would go through Stratford, terminating at King's Cross.

In 1993 it was the turn of the right hon. Member for Norfolk, South (Mr. MacGregor), who has now gone off to his merchant bank, where he belongs. He said that the decision was not final at all. Stratford was called into question and Ebbsfleet mysteriously appeared—the Rumbold memorial terminal. Stratford was no longer on the agenda.

In 1994 the Bill finally got going—and here we are carrying it on into 1995-96. Thank heaven that, while the Tories blundered around and went to every conceivable length to take the project away from the public sector, the public sector was getting on and doing the job. That is

[Mr. Brian Wilson]

why we have that wonderful Waterloo international terminal, and the trains built and designed in the public sector. The whole job has been done by the public sector, and the public sector is proud of it.

What were the costs? In 1990 when Cecil Parkinson killed the joint public-private sector venture, British Rail was requesting a grant of £500 million and a low-interest loan of £1 billion. For that, the job could have been started and the Committee would have been under way in 1990. The work on the link would have been well in progress by now; perhaps it would even have been completed.

However, that was ruled out—it was far too much money. But look what the Government have done with taxpayers' money now. According to the British Rail annual report and accounts for 1994-95, the assets of European Passenger Services, now being transferred to the private sector, are worth £800 million. For Union Railways the figure is already £42.6 million, and cumulative expenditure on the railway project to date is £492 million.

In other words, without a sod having been turned on the project, as much money has been spent as would earlier have been spent to have had the whole thing finished, with a link built and the national embarrassment avoided.

Of course the expenditure continues. Will the Minister tell us how many hundreds of millions of pounds the Government now intend to hand over to the purchasers of European Passenger Services—or rather, "purchasers" is the wrong word, because they will be getting it for nothing? How much cash will they get, on top of the assets? What will be the total bill to the taxpayer for handing the enterprise over to the private sector? The Minister should give us some answers, because that is a fraud on the nation and on the taxpayer.

7.8 pm

The Minister for Railways and Roads (Mr. John Watts): I am tempted to follow the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) into his fantasy world, but the limited time available to me is better spent in trying to reply to some of the serious points made by right hon. and hon. Members. I remind the hon. Gentleman, however, that the previous Labour Government cancelled the project to build the channel tunnel, so some of his blusterings lack conviction.

There is impatience in the House for the railway to be built and opened as soon as possible, and that impatience was shared by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms Short). The project has taken a number of years to develop, and the House is now rightly considering it in fine detail. Everyone directly affected has had the opportunity to petition and to be heard by the Select Committee.

Justifiable tributes were paid by hon. Members on both sides of the House to the way in which the Select Committee—under the able chairmanship of my hon. Friend the Member for Reading, West (Sir A. Durant)—listened carefully to the petitions and responded in a practical and sympathetic way. The Committee has proposed many important changes. Where it has not done so, the matter must be regarded as settled as far as this House is concerned.

Sir Michael Neubert (Romford): I am sorry to intrude on my hon. Friend when he is short of time, but I do so on behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire), who is away on ministerial duties. The Committee recommended that the route should be varied and should deviate 20 m south of the line proposed in the Bill as it passes through Rainham. That is not specifically mentioned now. Has there been an omission?

Mr. Watts: All the matters on which the Committee made a recommendation have been covered by our response. The instructions before the House relate to matters that the Committee does not already have adequate powers to consider and take forward. I appreciate that a number of hon. Members would like more changes, but the suggestions have all had a fair run before the Select Committee.

The Committee is quasi-judicial, which means that its decisions and recommendations carry special weight, but the promoters' approach to the Committee's announcements on 20 July was—as far as possible—to deliver what the Committee sought. In undertaking the further development work, new problems and opportunities invariably arise. It was therefore important to look not only at the letter of what the Committee sought but at the underlying explicit and implicit objectives. We were loth to reject decisions, and where problems arose we sought other ways of achieving what the Committee wanted. At the end of September, the Government published their detailed response to the Select Committee; it is now for the Committee to decide whether it is content.

The hon. Member for Ladywood accused the Government of seeking to "nobble" the Committee. I commend to her the transcript of the proceedings of the Select Committee on 24 October—day 57 of the proceedings—in which the Chairman of the Committee quoted the Secretary of State's letter of 23 October to him. The letter reaffirms the Government's recognition of the quasi-judicial role of the Select Committee, of the chairman's independence and of not constraining the Committee's work. The Chairman said that he had no more to say on the subject; nor do I.

The hon. Lady also raised the report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has written to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration Select Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey), to give the Government's response to the Committee's report, which was published on 25 July. Copies of the letter were sent to hon. Members concerned and placed in the Library.

The Government are prepared to consider afresh how a scheme might operate to implement the Committee's recommendation that redress could be granted to those affected to an extreme and exceptional degree by generalised blight from the CTRL between June 1990 and April 1994. We must look at the costs, which cannot yet be established. The response is out of respect for the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration Select Committee and for the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner, and without any admission of fault or liability.

The hon. Lady asked me about Eurostar services beyond London. European Passenger Services expects to begin these services in the first half of 1996.

My hon. Friend the Member for Medway (Dame P. Fenner) mentioned the M2 proposals and their concurrency with the construction of the CTRL. I can tell her that there is no foundation to the report relating to the M2 in today's edition of the *Daily Mail*.

Mr. Andrew Mackinlay (Thurrock): I understand that, if preliminary work has not been carried out on the Wennington-Mardyke section of the A13 before the channel tunnel rail link has been constructed, the Government will have to pay heavy compensation. Can the Minister clarify that? Will he write to me on the matter, as it is not clear whether the section will go ahead or what the consequences would be if it did not?

Mr. Watts: I assure the hon. Gentleman that we are well seized of the significance of the A13 scheme to the CTRL project, and I shall write to him in due course on that matter.

We recognise the advantages of a co-ordinated approach to the M2 schemes, to the construction of the CTRL and to construction of the projects within the same time scale. That is why the M2-A2 scheme was originally included in the CTRL legislation. I can assure the House that the Government will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that the M2-A2 widening works are completed within the same period as the CTRL, and that the construction arrangements for the two projects are co-ordinated.

My hon. Friend the Member for Medway also raised the generic issues that are to be addressed by the Committee, including those related to blight compensation. There is no instruction to the Committee on this matter because it needs no new instruction. The Committee already has the power to look at such matters and make recommendations. I understand that the Committee has heard a great deal of evidence on the matter already, and it is not ready to make recommendations. When it does, we shall consider them, but it would be premature for me to prejudge what the Committee might recommend.

The hon. Member for North Cornwall (Mr. Tyler) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley) mentioned freight and the CTRL. The Committee asked for the freight loops at Charing and Singlewell and for the connection to the Dollands Moor freight yard to be constructed according to the same time scale as the main project to allow the rail link to carry as much freight as possible. We have accepted that recommendation, and given the Committee an undertaking that will be binding on the nominated undertaker.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling also raised—he has done so assiduously on many occasions—the problems of blight, and he referred to the new voluntary purchase arrangements introduced in July. For the first time, we are to bring the arrangements for new rail projects into line with those for roads. In fact, before these proposals were made, there was no provision for dealing with new rail projects in terms of voluntary purchase arrangements. Other matters concerning blight compensation are for the Committee to consider and to make recommendations. We will respond to the Committee, but I should not prejudge its recommendations.

My right hon. Friend also raised the proposals of Central Rail Group to construct the new freight line, but that would have to be brought forward under the provisions of the Transport and Works Act 1992. If that happens, the House will have the opportunity to reach a decision on the principal project before it proceeds to any inquiry.

Mr. Wilson: The Minister is coming towards the end of his remarks. Will he answer my questions about the value of cash and assets to be handed over to the private sector?

Mr. Watts: No. I am happy to write to the hon. Gentleman, as I shall write to any hon Member to whom I have not had time to respond in the debate. The hon. Gentleman's queries do not relate to the order, and I think that I should continue to spend my time on that.

The hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) mentioned the approach to St. Pancras. The Select Committee asked for a different arrangement for the approach to St. Pancras from that originally proposed in the Bill. It has now agreed to consider both the modified Baxter scheme, as it is called, and the promoter's developed scheme in the new year. We welcome that decision and we expect to introduce the additional provisions for both schemes in early December.

I can assure the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury that both schemes will be dealt with in an even-handed way, so that both the Committee and those who may wish to petition it have the fullest possible opportunity to appraise their relative merits. I will also seek to make available as much information as possible as early as possible to assist the petitioners.

The cost of petitioning was raised by the hon. Members for Barking (Ms Hodge), for Islington, South and Finsbury and others. It is not a matter that we can control, because the cost of it is standard and is set by the House.

We believe that the Baxter scheme had some significant defects in operational terms, as well as it presenting some major difficulties in the construction phase. That is why Union Railways developed an alternative that we now believe to be better environmentally and superior in both its operations and construction. It also meets the key objectives of the Baxter scheme and, in particular, reduces the impact on Caledonian road and the traders and others who live there. It is also significantly cheaper than the modified Baxter scheme, although that is not an overwhelming consideration.

It will be for the Select Committee to take a view as to which of the options should finally be chosen. I can assure the House that there will be no attempt at ministerial interference in the Committee's deliberations. I gave that assurance on Second Reading, and I am happy to repeat it.

When the Baxter scheme was worked on sufficiently to prepare an additional provision, its construction and operational difficulties became more apparent than they had been during the Select Committee's deliberations. That was the driving force behind the production of the promoters' developed scheme.

The hon. Member for Barking paid a well-deserved tribute to the Select Committee and its work.

[Mr. Watts]

My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) raised the question of Boxley valley. We have promised to continue consultation on the landscaping and mitigation for the route of the rail link through the Boxley valley, in line with the Select Committee's recommendation. I understand that Union Railways has had a series of discussions in the past few months with the local authorities and parish councils directly concerned—

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Order [27 October].*

Question agreed to.

Resolved,

That further proceedings on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill shall be suspended until the next Session of Parliament;

That if a Bill is presented in the next Session in the same terms as those in which the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill stood when proceedings on it were suspended in this Session—

(a) the Bill shall be ordered to be printed and shall be deemed to have been read the first and second time;

(b) the Bill shall stand committed to a Select Committee of the same Members as the Members of the Committee in this Session;

(c) all Petitions presented in this Session which stand referred to the Committee and which have not been withdrawn shall stand referred to the Committee in the next Session;

(d) any Minutes of Evidence taken and any papers laid before the Committee in this Session which have been reported to the House shall stand referred to the Committee in the next Session;

(e) only those Petitions mentioned in paragraph (c) above, and any Petition which may be presented by being deposited in the Private Bill Office and in which the Petitioners complain of any proposed additional provision or of any matter which has arisen during the progress of the Bill before the Committee in the next Session, shall stand referred to the Committee;

(f) any Petitioner whose Petition stands referred to the Committee in the next Session shall, subject to the Rules and Orders of the House and to the Prayer of his Petition, be entitled to be heard by himself, his Counsel or Agents upon his Petition provided that it is prepared and signed in conformity with the Rules and Orders of the House, and the Member in charge of the Bill shall be entitled to be heard by his Counsel or Agents in favour of the Bill against that Petition;

(g) the Committee shall have power to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House, to adjourn from place to place, and to report from day to day the Minutes of Evidence taken before it;

(h) three shall be the Quorum of the Committee;

(i) any person registered in this Session as a parliamentary agent entitled to practise as such in opposing Bills only who, at the time when proceedings on the Bill were suspended in this Session, was employed in opposing the Bill shall be deemed to have been registered as such a parliamentary agent in the next Session;

(j) the Standing Orders and practice of the House applicable to the Bill, so far as complied with in this Session, shall be deemed to have been complied with in the next Session; and

(k) if the Bill is reported from a Select Committee in the next Session, it shall thereupon stand re-committed to a Standing Committee.

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to Order [27 October], to put the Question on the second motion.*

Question agreed to.

Resolved,

That it be an instruction to the Select Committee to which the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill is committed in the next Session—

(1) that it have power to consider—

(a) alternatives to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding the approach of the rail link to St. Pancras station from the west of Highbury Corner;

(b) the provision of rail sidings on the Midland Main Line on the western edge of the King's Cross Railway Lands;

(c) the relocation of Tarmac plc's existing concrete-batching facilities to a site in the north-west corner of the King's Cross Railway Lands;

(d) alterations to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding railways in the throat of St. Pancras station in the vicinity of the Regent's Canal;

(e) alterations to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding diversion of the Camden sewer;

(f) the provision of an additional road into the King's Cross Railway Lands from York Way, in the London Borough of Camden;

(g) alterations to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding ticket halls and subways of the London Underground Railways;

(h) the provision of a sewer forming a diversion of the St. Pancras sewer;

(i) alterations to the table in paragraph 1 of Schedule 7 to the Bill (buildings authorised to be demolished), so far as relating to the London Borough of Camden;

(j) the running through a tunnel of so much of the rail link as lies between Barrington Road, in the London Borough of Newham, and Dagenham Dock, in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham;

(k) works required in connection with the accommodation of the easterly portal of the main London tunnel;

(l) the undertaking of additional overhead line diversions in the vicinity of the A13 in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and the London Borough of Havering;

(m) realignment overground of the rail link and Tilbury Loop Railway in the vicinity of the Mardyke Park housing estate at Thurrock, in the county of Essex, and associated works;

(n) the provision of additional roads in the vicinity of Crowbridge Road, Ashford, in the county of Kent;

(o) the provision of sidings on the Ashford to Canterbury Railway to the east of the River Stour at Ashford, in the county of Kent;

(p) alterations to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding the junction of the rail link and the Eurotunnel Railway at Folkestone, in the county of Kent;

(q) alterations to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding planning permission for development authorised by Part I;

(r) alterations and additions to the provision which is now made in the Bill regarding the compulsory acquisition of easements and other rights over land by the grant of new rights;

(s) the disposal of land acquired for the purposes of or in connection with the works authorised by Part I;

(t) the inclusion of additional land within the limits of land to be acquired or used; and

(u) additional power to stop up highways in connection with the construction of the A2 and M2 improvement works;

and, if it thinks fit, to make Amendments to the Bill with respect to any of the matters mentioned above, and for connected purposes;

(2) that any Petition against Amendments to the Bill which the Select Committee mentioned in paragraph (1) above is empowered by that paragraph to make shall be referred to that Select Committee if—

(a) it is presented by being deposited in the Private Bill Office not later than the end of the period of four weeks beginning with the day on which the first newspaper notice of the Amendments was published or, if that period includes any time during which the House is adjourned for more than four days, not later than five weeks beginning with that day, and

(b) it is one in which the Petitioners pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel or Agents;

That it be an instruction to the Clerk of Private Bills that, on receiving an original copy of the first newspaper notice of any Amendments to the Bill which the Select Committee to which the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill is committed in the next Session is empowered by paragraph (1) of the above instruction to make, he shall publish the date of the notice in the Private Business paper.

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES (NORTHERN IRELAND)

That the draft Parliamentary Constituencies (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, which was laid before this House on 16th October, be approved.—*[Mr. Willetts.]*

Question agreed to.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(9) (European Standing Committees).

TELEVISION

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 7942/95, relating to television; and supports the Government's approach to the negotiations on the proposed amendment.—*[Mr. Willetts.]*

Question agreed to.

PETITION

Ambulance Cover (Kyle of Lochalsh)

7.21 pm

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): I wish to present a constituency petition to the House on behalf of constituents and residents in the area of Lochalsh in Ross-shire. They have collected nearly 700 signatures requesting that local ambulance cover should be maintained in the Kyle of Lochalsh with the establishment of a permanent base.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons instruct the Scottish Ambulance Service trust accordingly.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, etc.

To lie upon the Table.

Mrs. Brenda Price

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Willetts.]*

7.22 pm

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to raise what I consider to be probably the worst miscarriage of justice I have ever encountered in my 12 years in the House.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): Since you were dropped from "The James Whale Show".

Mr. Hayes: I hear the hon. Gentleman's jocular aside, but this is a serious matter, concerning my constituent, Mrs. Brenda Price.

In 1991, Mrs. Price was accused by the Spanish authorities of being involved in drug smuggling. Some 18 months later, a warrant was executed, but the evidence, as far as we know what it is—the crux of the case—is flimsy.

In 1993, the Spanish authorities wanted Mrs. Price to be extradited on the basis of the charges against her. The Spanish authorities acted rightly and properly, and within their rights—that is what the relevant treaty says. She was taken to Holloway prison and imprisoned without bail for several weeks. Eventually, because of the efforts of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Home Office, she was eventually granted bail. The trouble is that the Spanish authorities could not or would not get their act together.

The charges were dropped, and Mrs. Price thought, understandably, that that was the end of the matter. She had been imprisoned in Holloway without bail, and accused of a serious offence, but the charges had been dropped by the Spanish authorities, and the warrant was cancelled.

A few weeks ago, Mrs. Price and her husband went on a day trip to Calais. They crossed over to Belgium, but, on doing so, she was arrested under the old warrant issued by the Spanish authorities, which wanted her to be extradited.

I find Mrs. Price's treatment extremely worrying, not least because of a letter from the then Minister of State, Home Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack). Incidentally, I am delighted to note that my right hon. Friend the Minister of State is to reply to the debate, because he is one of the most conscientious and able Ministers in the House.

My right hon. Friend's predecessor wrote to me:

> "As you know Mrs. Price was discharged by the Metropolitan magistrate at Bow Street as the Spanish authorities had decided not to pursue Mrs. Price's extradition at this time. We share her Solicitor's concern that Mrs. Price was detained for so long in respect of an extradition request that was not pursued—although I must stress that in acting as they did the Spanish authorities did nothing that they were not entitled to do—and we will be registering this concern with them."

Mrs. Price, as a free British citizen, quite properly felt she could go to France. She was subsequently arrested, however, and is now in gaol there. Her husband, Sam Price, has not been allowed to see her recently, and, as far as one can understand, will not be allowed to see her for the next three months.

[Mr. Hayes]

It is not for any of us to determine whether someone is guilty or innocent. What the case is about is getting authorities, such as the Spanish Ministry of Justice, to get their act together. Why should a British citizen be languishing in a French gaol—she may stay there for a number of months to come—unless those authorities have the evidence to keep her there?

I am not criticising the Foreign and Commonwealth Office or the Home Office, which have been extremely helpful. I urge my right hon. Friend, however, to say to the Spanish authorities, "If you have evidence against this woman, bring it to us now." Mrs. Price's lawyer in France has told me that she cannot make a bail application on her behalf until that evidence is furnished by the Spanish Ministry of Justice. That is as gross an affront to justice as any occurring anywhere in the world.

I know that my right hon. Friend will do his utmost to get the Spanish authorities to act. He will remember the case of the British lorry driver, Roy Clarke, who spent 20 months in custody only to be acquitted. The case of Brenda Price is far worse, because no evidence has been brought against my constituent.

Mrs. Price is not alone. It has been estimated by that splendid organisation, Fair Trials Abroad, which has compiled a fascinating report which I am sure that my right hon. Friend has read, that there are probably 15,000 Mrs. Prices throughout Europe.

Why is that? It is because there is no concept of Euro-bail. People are languishing in foreign gaols simply because the authorities are unable or unwilling—or too incompetent—to get their act together, and they will not furnish the necessary evidence. That is a gross miscarriage of justice, and such cases happen all the time. I ask my right hon. Friend to raise the matter at the Council of Ministers. I know that the Home Office has been reluctant to do that in the past, but Euro-bail should be discussed.

I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to a report by Fair Trials Abroad which says that the number of foreigners in serious trouble outside their own countries is surprising. In 1993, the figure was over 45,000, with over 15,000 on remand. A high proportion are EU citizens. The numbers will continue to grow rapidly as the full effects of freedom of movement and other factors come into play.

Almost all the cases that Fair Trials Abroad knows of in which some sort of miscarriage of justice is likely to have occurred contain an element of discrimination. It is satisfied that the discrimination involved in provisional liberty, foreign evidence and lack of proper interpretation constitute the major current threats to the pursuit suit of justice for EU citizens.

Bail discrimination is an affront to justice, because it involves prejudice. Council of Europe statistics suggest that there are thousands of EU citizens on remand in Europe's prisons at any one time who are affected. A foreign accused is invariably dependent on some form of foreign evidence during investigation and trial. For such evidence, he will be dependent on the procedures of European co-operation. Those procedures are ineffective. Up to 1,000 miscarriages of justice will occur annually in any one year from this cause alone.

Before my right hon. Friend moves too far towards to my hon. Friend the Member for Havant (Mr. Willetts), I should say that I am about to conclude. I should not like to catch my right hon. Friend the Minister unawares, because I know that he has been listening most carefully. I ask him to do everything he can, in co-operation with the Foreign Office, to get the evidence from the Spanish justice department. If they cannot, this woman should be released.

It is interesting that the Spanish representative, the President of the Council of Justice Ministers, has stated that the problem of Euro-bail needs to be dealt with as a priority. Even the Spanish are saying that. It is important that every channel is used to persuade these people to either put up or shut up.

This is a grave miscarriage of justice. I urge my right hon. Friend to do everything he possibly can, not just for Mrs. Brenda Price but for the 15,000 or so others like her in the European Union, and for people like Roy Clarke who have languished in gaol. I ask my right hon. Friend to do what he can.

7.33 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Maclean): I have listened carefully to what my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) said. He raised a number of concerns about the extradition request made by Spain to France in relation to one of his constituents, Mrs. Brenda Price, who was arrested near Dunkirk on 5 October when travelling through France with her husband and son. I hope that my hon. Friend will understand if I reply in detail to the points he has made.

Mrs. Price is at present being held at the Maison d'Arrêt in Loos. Before I turn to particular concerns, it may be helpful if I explain the general background to the case.

Extradition is the mechanism for returning fugitives to the country where an alleged offence has been committed, for the fugitive to be tried in a court of law. Extradition among all European Union countries apart from Belgium is covered by the Council of Europe convention on extradition. The convention lays down a common standard and common procedures for handling extradition requests between European countries which have signed and ratified it.

Under the convention, there is no requirement for a requesting state to make a prima facie case in support of an extradition request. All that the requesting country has to provide is an authenticated copy of an arrest warrant, a statement of the offences for which extradition has been requested, a copy of the relevant laws in the requesting country, and identification evidence. This material is usually considered by a court, in England and Wales a magistrates court, before a decision is made to issue an arrest warrant.

Under the Extradition Act 1989, which implements the UK's obligations under the European convention, there is an alternative procedure which may be used in emergencies—for example, where a fugitive offender is likely to leave the country.

Under the emergency procedure, the requesting country can, through Interpol channels, request the provisional arrest of a fugitive. The requesting country must provide evidence that a case exists which is sufficient for a Bow street magistrate to issue a provisional arrest warrant. It should be noted that a decision by a court to issue a provisional arrest warrant is not a final decision. The requesting state has to back up the request with full supporting documents. If it does not, the arrest warrant will be discharged.

Once the fugitive is arrested, the requesting country has to provide documents in support of its extradition request within statutory deadlines. In the case of European convention countries, the documents must be provided within 40 days.

A country can issue an Interpol red notice, which alerts other countries that a person is wanted in that country to face charges, and should be arrested if located. The UK often receives such requests from other countries for British and other nationals. Indeed, the majority of requests we receive—around 70 per cent. of all cases—are initiated by an Interpol red notice and a provisional arrest.

As my hon. Friend will appreciate, extradition requests, by their very nature, involve individuals who have already crossed international boundaries. It is an essential element in the success of the fight against crime internationally that those individuals wanted in connection with criminal offences in one country can be arrested before they have a chance to escape to yet another country.

In this connection, my hon. Friend has questioned why he was not notified if the Spanish authorities had renewed their extradition request for Mrs. Price. He will appreciate that, by their very nature, extradition requests involve alleged offences against a person who has crossed international boundaries. Great care is therefore taken that the person is not alerted, in order to preclude any risk that he or she will flee the country. I make those general points by way of background, because they are pertinent to the case of Mrs. Price.

Mrs. Price was the subject of an extradition request from Spain to the UK in 1993. The request from Spain was made through the emergency procedure for Mrs. Price's provisional arrest to face charges relating to the trafficking of 940 kg of cannabis. The Spanish provided information about the drug trafficking operation, and stated that an arrest warrant for Mrs. Price and others had been issued in Spain on 8 October 1992. That information was put before the magistrate at Bow street magistrates court, and he was invited to issue a provisional arrest warrant. He issued the warrant on 7 January 1993, and Mrs. Price was arrested on 13 January.

As is usual in such cases, the Spanish authorities were notified of Mrs. Price's arrest, and were informed that they had 40 days in which to provide documents in accordance with the European convention on extradition in support of their extradition request. However, the Spanish authorities failed to send the necessary supporting documents within the 40 days, as required under the international convention, and Mrs. Price was discharged.

I pause at this stage to make two points in answer to the concerns raised by my hon. Friend. As he is aware, the United Kingdom Government were concerned that what I have called the emergency procedure was used when there was, as it turned out, no evidence that Mrs. Price was an emergency case—that is, that she was about to flee the country—and when the Spanish authorities had not finished preparing the paperwork.

The then Home Office Minister, my hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack), informed my hon. Friend by letter of those concerns in the following terms:

> "We share her solicitor's concern that Mrs. Price was detained for so long in respect of an extradition request which was not pursued—although I must stress that in acting as they did the Spanish authorities did nothing that they were not entitled to do—and we will be registering this concern with them."

We wrote to the Spanish authorities about that aspect of the case in May 1993, and received confirmation from Spain that our concerns had been noted, together with an explanation as to why the Spanish authorities had not followed up the extradition request. They decided to await the outcome of the trial of Mrs. Price's co-defendants, which took place in May 1993. Had they been found not guilty, no doubt the request for Mrs. Price would have been dropped. In fact, the four defendants were convicted and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment and fined 65 million pesetas—or £336,000 in real money.

My second point is to stress that Mrs. Price was released from custody, and the provisional arrest warrant discharged, solely because Spain did not produce the necessary documents within the time limits. At no time was the Spanish request refused, and it was open to Spain to make a second request to the United Kingdom or to any other country where Mrs. Price was found. Those points were explained to my hon. Friend at the time.

In his second reply of 22 April 1993 to letters from my hon. Friend, my hon. Friend the Member for Fylde stated:

> "As you know Mrs. Price was discharged by the Metropolitan magistrate at Bow Street as the Spanish authorities decided not to pursue Mrs. Price's extradition at this time".

I repeat and emphasise that the Spanish authorities did not drop Mrs. Price's case: they simply decided not to pursue it further at that time. I emphasise that point, because it appears from correspondence sent on behalf of Mrs. Price to the Home Office that Mrs. Price was under the misapprehension that the discharge of the provisional arrest warrant in 1993 was the end of the matter, and that the Spanish authorities had given up their intention to seek her extradition. That was and is not the case. If Mrs. Price was advised differently, I am sorry to say that she was badly advised. We, for our part, stated the matter clearly in the letter to my hon. Friend.

The Interpol red notice for Mrs. Price's arrest continued to be in force, and it was on that notice that Mrs. Price was arrested in France on 5 October this year. As her extradition was not rejected by the United Kingdom, there was no reason why that should not have occurred. The United Kingdom police were not acting on that notice, because, as is usual practice in such cases, once a provisional arrest warrant has been discharged by the authorities of a state, the requesting authority must make a request with full supporting documents the next time it seeks extradition from that state.

The French authorities were perfectly entitled to act on the Interpol red notice. Had the United Kingdom authorities been put in a similar position, they would have acted in the same way—and rightly so. It is in the nature of the emergency procedure that action must be taken on Interpol information. No consideration can, or indeed should, be expected to be given to detailed facts, such as whether a person is only on a day trip. All sorts of false stories could be given by those fleeing justice.

[Mr. David Maclean]

The procedure provides opportunities in court and, by way of representations to Ministers at a later stage, for deciding such issues. I put it to my hon. Friend that, if we were to change the procedures to accommodate those views, we would fundamentally undermine the workings of Interpol.

In Mrs. Price's case, the next stage under the convention is for the requesting state, Spain, to submit all the necessary documents to the French authorities within 40 days, and for the French authorities to consider the request. I understand that the French authorities have received some papers from Spain, and are now in the process of considering them. If, for any reason, the Spanish request cannot be complied with, no doubt Mrs. Price will be free to return to the United Kingdom.

However, I must emphasise that those matters are for the Spanish and French authorities. It is not for the United Kingdom to intervene, any more than a foreign country would attempt to intervene in or influence a request from a second country to the United Kingdom about a national of that country.

My hon. Friend the Member for Harlow has raised a number of other concerns in the past, and he did so again this evening. He is concerned that 18 months had elapsed since the date of the alleged offence to the date of the request from Spain to the United Kingdom in 1993. My hon. Friend may be aware that undue delay in making a request is a factor to which Ministers and the courts must have regard when considering whether to make an extradition order in any particular case.

However, undue delay must take into account, among other factors, the time required for the police and prosecuting authorities to pursue their inquiries and go through the proper procedures. When the crime is serious or when, as in this case, a number of individuals are involved, the time for completing those procedures may be quite lengthy. In this case, Ministers and the courts never addressed the issue, because the warrant was discharged after 40 days.

My hon. Friend has also expressed concern that Mrs. Price is being held in custody in France, and, if returned to Spain, may be held for some time in prison on remand there. The question of bail is, of course, a matter for the courts in those countries, in the same way that the decision whether to bail a French or Spanish national charged with offences in the United Kingdom or wanted for extradition would be a matter for our courts. A key issue, of course, is whether the offender will answer to that bail at the relevant time, but that is not the only issue. Courts will also have regard to the seriousness of the offence and any likely sentence if found guilty.

What is called "Euro-bail" would be a benefit only in cases where the only reason for not granting bail is the likelihood of absconding. As such, it is of limited application, and raises more problems in relation to the harmonisation of judicial decisions across Europe than any remedy it might provide. Bail is at present a question for the French courts, and I do not believe that we should seek to interfere in their decision. We would resent it if they tried to interfere in any decision that we might make.

What the United Kingdom can do in this case—and what we are doing—is provide consular support to Mrs. Price and her family. I am pleased that my hon. Friend paid a generous tribute to the Foreign Office, which is often maligned in the House—at times, by this Minister. British consular officials became aware of Mrs. Price's arrest when her husband sought help from the honorary consul in Dunkirk. He was then referred to the British consulate-general in Lille.

Mr. Price went to the consulate-general on 6 October where he was helped with the formalities of applying for a permit to visit his wife. On the same day, Mrs. Linda Trigot, the pro-consul, applied to the court for a permit to visit Mrs. Price. Later on 6 October, Mrs. Trigot was told by the social worker at the prison that Mrs. Price was very upset, and wanted to see a consular officer. On Monday 9 October, Mrs. Trigot contacted the Substitut General, Mlle Woyal, at the Court of Appeal, and asked for authority to make an early visit to Mrs. Price. That was exceptionally granted by telephone, and the visit took place later that day. During the visit, Mrs. Trigot handed over clothing for Mrs. Price that had been left by her husband.

Mrs. Trigot delivered a second parcel of clothing on 17 October, and a third was delivered to Mrs. Price on 27 October.

Mr. Price has contacted the consulate-general on numerous occasions since his wife's arrest. He has been given information on the French legal and prison systems. He was also told how he could send money to his wife for prison comforts, either through the FCO or direct through the French post office.

On 20 October, consular staff checked with the Court of Appeal on whether Mr. Price's visit permit had been issued. Mlle Woyal said that she was not in a position to make a decision as she had not yet completed her study of the documents that she had received from Spain. She did, however, call back later that same day to say that she would allow the visit, which was arranged for 26 October. Mr. Price called the consulate-general on 26 October to say that he had seen his wife, who was well.

I understand that Mr. Price is now anxious to obtain a permanent visit permit. As he has been advised by the consulate-general, that is a matter for Mr. Price's private French lawyer, Maitre Robert Thompson, to pursue. I understand that Maitre Thompson is in contact with Mrs. Price, and visited her on 20 October.

I can assure my hon. Friend, as he will be aware from the catalogue of concern that has been displayed by the Foreign Office in its contacts with Mr. and Mrs. Price, that consular staff will continue to help where appropriate.

I hope that my hon. Friend will be satisfied, from the full and detailed explanation that I have given him, that all the proper procedures have been carried out in the United Kingdom; that we believe that Spain and France are following the procedures in the European convention; and that the British Government, through our consulate-general's office, are giving every assistance to Mrs. Price.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at nine minutes to Eight o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 2 November 1995

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair]*

PRIVATE BUSINESS

CITY OF WESTMINSTER BILL *[Lords]* (*By Order*)

Amendment proposed [26 June]: No. 1, in the preamble, page 2, line 10, at the end, to insert the words

'but not of their duty to use the land for educational purposes'.—[*Mr. Cohen.*]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question, That the amendment be made.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 9 November.

Oral Answers to Questions

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Fishing

1. **Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he next intends to meet the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations to discuss the state of British fishing. [38921]

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Douglas Hogg): My hon. Friend the Minister of State, who has direct responsibility for fishing policy, holds regular meetings with the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations and I look forward to doing so as well.

Mr. Mitchell: When he has finished expressing his gibbering gratitude to the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations for saving him from the iniquities of the days at sea limitation regime, will the Minister discuss whether it is right or reasonable that the country that contributes the majority of fishing waters and fishing stocks to the so-called European Community pool should be forced to make the biggest reduction in its fleet? Will he consider not simply decommissioning to make space for Spanish vessels but adopting a scrap and build policy to modernise the fleet so that we can catch our own fish?

Mr. Hogg: The essential problem that the House must face is that there is excess fishing capacity measured against the available stocks. Judged according to that criterion, a policy of scrap and build is not manifestly sensible. We must reduce capacity, and the Government's policy of decommissioning is directed at achieving that objective.

Mr. Harris: In the opinion of some fishermen—although they do not shout it from the wheelhouses—our hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for fisheries has not made a bad start in his new post. The fishermen and the NFFO particularly welcome the abandonment of the wretched days at sea legislation. Will my right hon. and learned Friend build on that start by accepting the offer from the chief executive of the NFFO, Mr. Barrie Deas, to open talks with the Government on the future of the industry?

Mr. Hogg: I am sure that my hon. Friend is correct when he says that the actions of my hon. Friend the Minister of State are widely admired in the House and in the fishing industry. I suspect that that is why 134 Labour Members of Parliament declined to vote against the Government position when the matter was debated about 10 days ago. As to a specific meeting to discuss the way forward, my hon. Friend the Minister of State has frequent meetings that are designed to achieve that objective.

Forests, Berkshire

2. **Mr. Rendel:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what will be the percentage increase in forested land in Berkshire resulting from the Government's rural White Paper. [38922]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Madam Deputy Speaker—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh".] Madam Speaker, forgive me. I apologise profusely and I shall continue to do so if that will make hon. Members happy.

The Government would like to see a doubling of the area of woodland in England over the next half century. However, as the rural White Paper explains, that will depend on securing necessary changes to the common agricultural policy. There are no targets for individual counties.

Mr. Rendel: What plans does the Minister have to try to encourage the reforestation of Britain and to increase payments under the farm woodland premium scheme to encourage farmers to plant their own land?

Mr. Hogg: As the House knows, we already have a very generous grant system in place. Last year, we paid about £30 million in grants to woodland owners. We have led the way within the European Union in greening the common agricultural policy in that respect. The 1992 regulations reflected our own woodlands scheme which was introduced in 1988. As a result of a United Kingdom initiative, land that is used for forestry can now count against set-aside. They are major steps forward and I commend them to the hon. Gentleman.

British Fruit and Vegetables

3. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action is being taken by his Department to promote sales of British fruit and vegetables to British consumers. [38923]

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Mr. Tim Boswell): My colleagues and I take every opportunity to promote British fruit and vegetables.

Mr. Pawsey: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that very full reply. Is he aware, however, that the National Farmers Union is increasingly concerned about certain

European Commission proposals relating to the promotion and marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables? Does he agree that such proposals will seriously disadvantage the British grower and will he, therefore, assure the House that he will do all within his considerable power to ensure that there is a level playing field so that our growers are not disadvantaged?

Mr. Boswell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his trenchant comments. I share his concern and that of the National Farmers Union that the proposals being initiated in Europe for the reform of the common agricultural policy on horticulture should be fair to Britain. We have already expressed concern about their definition of producer groups—that is our main concern. We are determined to secure a level playing field for our growers and, as far as possible, to end wasteful intervention. Those matters will all be taken forward in the negotiations.

Mr. Pickthall: How far have we got in our defence of British lettuce growers against the unreasonable regulations proposed on nitrates in lettuce? When can we expect that preposterous idea to be knocked on the head?

Mr. Boswell: I share the hon. Gentleman's concern. We take the matter seriously and believe that the proposals are not well founded scientifically. If they were implemented, they would certainly have serious effects on our lettuce growers; they would not contribute to health, as they would discourage the consumption of vegetables and fruit. We shall therefore pursue the matter vigorously in Europe. It has only just come back to us as a result of the report of the EC Scientific Committee for Food, which corroborated our view, and we shall pursue the matter vigorously over the coming weeks and months.

Mr. James Hill: My hon. Friend will realise that some supermarkets—I shall name Tesco as their leader—have advocated the eating of Cox's orange pippins and other varieties such as Granny Smiths. That practice should be encouraged. Perhaps there should be an encouraging word from the Department to the supermarkets to increase public relations on the eating of English fruit and vegetables.

Mr. Boswell: The House will appreciate that we have to be a little careful in merely advocating the buying of British produce. At every possible opportunity, I shall be photographed eating an English apple—whether Cox's or otherwise. At every possible opportunity, I shall encourage British supermarkets to stock those varieties and I shall encourage everyone in the House and outside to proclaim their virtue to the customer, who will be well satisfied with them.

Mrs. Golding: When will the Government stand up for British fruit growers? Not only do the Government support French nuclear testing in the Pacific but they stand by while the French dump their apple mountains in Britain. How many more of our apple orchards does the Minister want ripped out by desperate farmers? When will he do something to prevent that, or are the Government too afraid of offending the French?

Mr. Boswell: I congratulate the hon. Lady on her first appearance at the Dispatch Box. It is a matter of regret that I have to dissent from almost everything she said—possibly, on reflection, she might do so herself. We have supported the interests of British growers. The grubbing-up scheme was introduced—in the United Kingdom and elsewhere—with the support of our growers. It has helped to remove some of the tail end of the industry and we now have a modern, productive and efficient fruit production industry which is well marketed and receives a great deal of support from growers and retailers. We have every confidence that, through technology, marketing and the involvement of growers, together with the encouragement of our Department, we shall wipe the floor with our competitors.

Mr. Pickles: Further to the question of the hon. Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Pickthall), when he visited my constituency without notice, he was told by growers there that, had it not been for the British Government's intervention, they would now be faced with the nitrates directive. Will my hon. Friend accept the congratulations of growers in my constituency? Thank God somebody stuck up for Britain, and it has benefited the rest of Europe.

Mr. Boswell: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's remarks. As it happens, he represents my birthplace, and it is nice to receive compliments. We take the matter seriously, and use every opportunity to protect the interests of British growers. We will ensure that butterhead lettuce grown in Britain, whether in the constituency of my hon. Friend or in Lancashire, West, is available for the benefit of our consumers.

Common Agricultural Policy

4. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what further steps he proposes to take to combat fraud in the common agricultural policy. [38924]

The Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Tony Baldry): We are seeking further reforms of the CAP to reduce the scope for fraud—in particular, to reduce dependence on export refunds and intervention. We also fully support Commission initiatives to apply financial penalties to member states where controls are found to be inadequate.

Mr. Prentice: I welcome that answer as far as it goes, but what on earth have the Government been doing since 1979, given that the CAP has ballooned by 43 per cent. and that fraud accounts for £6 billion out of a budget of £33 billion? Is it not the case that the CAP is infested with fraudsters and cheats ripping off the rest of us, and that the Government have done far too little, too late?

Mr. Baldry: The hon. Gentleman's comments are uncomplimentary and unfair, because the United Kingdom has very much taken the lead in the European Union in tackling fraud. I invite him to cast his mind back to the Essen summit, where my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister ensured far greater use of the European Court of Auditors and of the European Parliament in scrutinising financial management and bearing down on fraud.

The hon. Gentleman's figure for the extent of fraud is without any foundation. The only basis on which one can estimate fraud is the reported number of incidents, and they bear absolutely no relationship to the hon. Gentleman's figure. In 1994, member states reported irregularities of just over 1 per cent. of the CAP budget—

hardly the kind of excesses that the hon. Gentleman suggested. Of course all fraud is serious, and of course we are determined to continue to bear down on it in the European Union.

Sir Donald Thompson: Will my hon. Friend accept the congratulations of Conservative Members on the Government's action against fraud? Does he agree that, if the CAP is to be reformed, it is essential to continue to attack fraud?

Mr. Baldry: I absolutely agree. Of course it is imperative that fraud is eliminated from the CAP or any other policy. The fight against fraud remains a high priority for us. We will continue to keep pressuring the Commission for action further to reform the CAP and to reduce instances of CAP fraud. The Council is negotiating reforms in the fruit and vegetable sector, and we fully support initiatives such as the black list, which is aimed at penalising those who perpetrate fraud.

5. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what will be the total cost of the common agricultural policy in 1995. [38925]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: EC budget expenditure on the common agricultural policy in 1995 will be about £28 billion. That is some £2.6 billion below the agricultural guideline.

Mr. Darling: Given that the CAP costs families between £15 and £20 a week, is it not time to embark on a radical reform of the CAP? Can the Minister make a commitment that the Government will raise the matter at next year's intergovernmental conference with a view to amending, if necessary, those parts of the treaty of Rome that affect the CAP, so that the system is fairer, more efficient and less likely to lead to fraud, but leads instead to a reduction in expenditure for most people throughout Europe, including in this country?

Mr. Hogg: The Government's position in support of their policy of reforming the common agricultural policy is extremely well known, and we take every opportunity to impress on the Council, the Parliament and the Commission the need for substantial reform—especially in the context of enlargement and also because of the ceilings of the general agreement on tariffs and trade. The hon. Gentleman's advocacy of that policy would be more plausible if the Labour party manifesto of 1992 had touched on the subject at all, and if the party had dealt with the question at its party conference in September.

Mr. Wilkinson: Is it not a remarkable state of affairs that the policy should so totally lack credibility as to require satellite imagery to counteract fraud? Would not the best course of action for the Government be to tear up the CAP and to replace it with national efficiency payments for British farmers?

Mr. Hogg: I regret having to disagree with my hon. Friend but I do so strongly in respect of his conclusions. Nor do I agree that the policy lacks credibility. The problem with the common agricultural policy is that, although the United Kingdom has serious criticisms to make of the policy, that position is not universally shared by member states. There is no consensus at the moment within the Council or the Community for substantial change.

Mr. Tyler: Can the Minister estimate the proportion of the £28 billion that actually reaches farm incomes in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Hogg: The figures are available; I would not want to give the hon. Gentleman a specific figure off the cuff, but I would be happy to do so in writing. One particular figure sticks in my mind, however. A study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 1993 measured the total transfers by the taxpayer and the consumer in the context of agriculture, and found that only 50 per cent. of them went to farmers. If the hon. Gentleman wants me to be more precise, I would prefer to write to him, to preclude the possibility of error.

Mr. Nicholls: Does my right hon. and learned Friend detect an certain irony in the fact that the most federalist policy in the Community is now being attacked by the most federalist parties among the Opposition? Does he agree that the real problem with fraud is that so many of our European partners seem to think it is perfectly all right to pass legislation without obeying it, whereas our party resists such legislation but then obeys it to the hilt? Surely that is the problem that is endemic in the whole European structure; ultimately, it is the problem with which we will have to grapple.

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend is right on both counts, and his first point deserves reinforcing. The House will remember that the Leader of the Opposition said on 4 October 1994:

> "Under my leadership, I will never allow this country to be isolated or left behind in Europe."

As I have already said in reply to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling), there is no general agreement in the European Union on the need for change. We will bring about change only by pressing for it vigorously all the while. It is quite plain from what the Leader of the Opposition has said that he will be in no position to do that.

Dr. Strang: Does the Minister recall that, while his predecessors were telling the House that the MacSharry CAP reforms gave Britain all it wanted, the Labour party not only argued that they were inadequate but called for an end to state intervention buying of agricultural produce and an end to export subsidies on agricultural commodities? Will the Minister confirm that that is now the position of the British Government?

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman flatters himself. I have the 1992 Labour manifesto in front of me. It contained three paragraphs on the desirability of a ministry for women, and two sentences on the common agricultural policy—neither pointing in the direction to which the hon. Gentleman has just pointed.

Black Market Milk

6. **Mrs. Ann Winterton:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he has taken to end the trade in black market milk. [38926]

Mr. Baldry: Following investigations by MAFF and the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce, three producers have been successfully prosecuted for offences associated with illegal trading in milk. Cases against seven other producers are before the courts and further investigations are in progress. These cases demonstrate the Government's determination to stamp out black market trading in milk.

Mrs. Winterton: Cheshire farmers will be pleased that the matter of black market milk is being dealt with as it is, but is not the real problem the fact that the United Kingdom was dealt a bad hand in 1984 when quota allocations were made by the European Community and the fact that we are restricted to producing only about 85 per cent. of our liquid milk requirement? Is not only one of the ways forward the matter of being able to transfer quota across national boundaries? Will my hon. Friend assure the House that he and the Government will put the matter before the European Commission to ensure that Cheshire farmers and other milk producers in Britain are not further disadvantaged in the future?

Mr. Baldry: I hope that my hon. Friend will take back to Cheshire farmers the clear message that black market traders in milk will not get away with it. They will be detected, prosecuted and punished. Not only do they face the risk of penalty imposed by the courts, but the intervention board will impose a super-levy of 30p a litre on all undeclared deliveries of milk. I suspect that that will greatly exceed any fine imposed by the courts. The court fine and the super-levy will represent substantial penalties on any farmer tempted to indulge in trading in black market milk.

Britain has never been self-sufficient in milk. When the quota was set in 1981, it in large part reflected the fact that the Labour Government in the mid-1970s did not adjust the green pound in a way that encouraged dairy farmers. I hope that my hon. Friend will remind her dairy farmers of that fact. Of course, we continue to press in Brussels for intra-Community trade in milk quotas as a means of allowing quota to go to those parts of the Community—

Madam Speaker: Order. These answers are inordinately long. Back Benchers must be given an opportunity to ask questions. Such long answers from Ministers restrict Back Benchers' opportunities.

Mr. Connarty: Is not one of the problems the fact that 70 per cent. of milk quotas in the United Kingdom both for sale and for lease are held by non-producers? The idea of quotas to help the producers and farmers has become so distorted now that quotas are just a commodity to be traded for cash. They are not about farm incomes and preserving the farms of this country.

Mr. Baldry: That does not offer any excuse for trade in black market milk. We have always felt that we would wish to get rid of milk quotas altogether, but, so long as internal support prices in the Community encourage the production of dairy products for which there is no market, it will be difficult to do away with quotas altogether.

Farms (Recycling)

8. **Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to encourage the farming industry to increase its level of recycling. [38929]

Mr. Boswell: The Ministry has produced guidance for farmers on recycling of waste through its codes of good agricultural practice. Farmers can also take part in an industry-led recovery scheme for farm plastics.

Mr. Sheerman: Surely the Minister is being complacent. There is a real problem with plastic packaging waste which is a by-product of modern farming methods. When will the Minister talk to colleagues in the Department of the Environment about measures to dissuade farmers from using so much plastic waste or to persuade them to recycle it? Or is the Minister going to wait until the whole country is knee-deep in plastic waste?

Mr. Boswell: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman is not aware of the farm films recovery service, which has a hotline and has been established to develop a service for farmers. I share the hon. Gentleman's enthusiasm for recycling. The opportunities are already available. I assure him that we already talk regularly, frequently and positively with our colleagues in the Department of the Environment and the Department of Trade and Industry, which take the lead in waste disposal matters.

Mr. Bellingham: Will the Minister of State and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food introduce a comprehensive programme of recycling to recycle the garbage and claptrap spoken by Opposition Members? If they do that, every farmer will vote Conservative.

Mr. Boswell: It is interesting that, during the development of the common agricultural policy, most of the traditional mountains have been removed, including butter, milk and cereals, but the mountain of unrecycled Labour waste and abandoned policies which are then reintroduced in a different form continues to no purpose.

Mr. Foulkes: Is the Minister aware that, when I met the Ayrshire branch of the Scottish National Farmers Union, along with Sandra Osborne, the prospective Labour candidate and the next Member of Parliament for Ayr, the union said that it was keen to see farmers recycled? It is important to introduce an early retirement scheme, because the average age of farmers in Ayrshire is over 55. Why are early retirement schemes in place in other parts of the Community but not in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Boswell: In formulating our agricultural policies and selecting the European opportunities available to us, we clearly have to set our own priorities. Clearly, the early retirement of some of the more unwelcome Labour policies such as the minimum wage might be beneficial.

Food Industry Deregulation

9. **Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans are in place to enable further deregulation in the food industry. [38932]

12. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what further plans he has to deregulate the food industry. [38935]

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mrs. Angela Browning): In addition to the very substantial progress already made by my Department in food law deregulation, we shall be proposing simplification of a large number of composition, labelling and additives regulations from 1 January 1996. In looking for further ways to simplify the law and reduce burdens on business, we shall also be making every effort to persuade our European Community partners of the benefits of deregulation.

Mr. Jenkin: Does my hon. Friend agree that the worst sort of regulation is that which regulates against imagined evils and dangers that hardly exist? I welcome the Government's moves on the deregulation of cheese. Will the Government start reviews of poultrymeat hygiene and meat hygiene to balance the costs of regulation with the injuries, illnesses or deaths from poison? We need a proper balance within the regulation of those industries.

Mrs. Browning: The food law deregulation plan acknowledges that essential standards of food safety and consumer protection must be maintained—but I take my hon. Friend's point about getting the balance right, which we are certainly seeking to do.

I am sure that the House will welcome the announcement by my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister on Tuesday that we have consulted the industry on the deregulation of compositional standards in British territorial cheeses and they are all safe in our hands.

Mr. Nicholson: The Minister is a doughty fighter and, in the spirit of the supplementary question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Colchester, North (Mr. Jenkin), I hope that she will convey some of her combativeness to her officials. Is she aware that, unless the numerous allegations made by Mr. Christopher Booker are either disproved or resolved—there is much more resolving to be done—considerable damage will be done to popular regard both for the European Community and for Her Majesty's Government?

Mrs. Browning: We scrutinise carefully all reports in the press, wherever they come from, to see whether they are accurate and need further investigation or are simply examples of opportunistic journalism. It is a matter of great disappointment to me that, when I write in my capacity as a Minister to the editors of national newspapers seeking to correct scientific facts, those editors frequently fail to publish my letters.

Mr. William O'Brien: When considering further deregulation in the agricultural industry, will the Minister take action to safeguard the doorstep delivery of milk which many people wish to see safeguarded?

Mrs. Browning: Those of us who benefit from doorstep deliveries welcome and value that service. But it is not for Ministers to frogmarch milkmen up garden paths to deliver milk unless an order is placed.

Mr. Tony Banks: The Minister is surely wrong. There is no balance in the food industry. Does the Minister accept that, with regard to safety, we need more regulation, not deregulation? For example, over the years, Ministers from her Department have said from the Dispatch Box that bovine spongiform encephalopathy cannot enter the food chain; mad cow disease is not communicable to human beings. It clearly is. That calls for more regulation of the meat industry, not deregulation.

Mrs. Browning: We take seriously BSE and all the scientific findings and investigations in that regard, and science does not support what the hon. Gentleman has just said. He is right to say that there is a need for balance, but the House must judge which is the party of over-regulation and which is the party of deregulation, based on what he has said this afternoon.

Dairying

10. **Sir David Knox:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he will next meet the president of the National Farmers Union to discuss the dairy sector. [38933]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I regularly meet representatives of the agriculture industry, including the president of the National Farmers Union, to discuss issues of importance to them. I have also had the pleasure of meeting in the last couple of weeks representatives of the Dairy Industry Federation and Milk Marque. Earlier this week, I attended the Dairy Industry Federation's annual lunch.

Sir David Knox: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the concern of the Cheshire dairy farmers about black market trading in milk, referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton), is shared by the overwhelming majority of Staffordshire dairy farmers? Only a few cases have reached the courts so far. Does my right hon. and learned Friend expect many more cases to reach the courts, and has he discussed that with the president of the NFU?

Mr. Hogg: That is an important issue, on which my hon. Friend the Minister of State has just spoken. There have been three prosecutions in the recent past, and the impact of the super-levy should act as a substantial deterrent. I very much hope that there will be further prosecutions if the evidence supports them. It is a serious matter against which we must strike.

Mr. Stevenson: In his discussions with the NFU on the dairy sector, did the Minister discuss the fact that the cost of the dairy sector and the CAP is due to increase substantially in the next few years? Did he further discuss the fact that the Paymaster General attended a meeting in Brussels in July and accepted a 10.9 per cent. increase in common agricultural policy expenditure? Does that not mean that the Government's assurance that they intend to control the cost of the bloated CAP regime is not worth the paper on which it is written?

Mr. Hogg: That is simply not right and, coming from the Labour party, it is not attractive, because between 1974 and 1979, when Labour had some responsibility for CAP expenditure, it quadrupled. The 1992 reforms are an important step in constraining expenditure. We have set guidelines within which CAP expenditure should stay, but we must go on pressing for reform, and we will do that. The dairy farmers that I have met recently have expressed themselves satisfied with the return from their sector.

Mr. Nigel Evans: Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that we are the largest consumers of liquid milk in the European Union and that Lancashire housewives resent the fact that, while Lancashire farmers can produce the milk that they would wish to drink, because of the quota system, we have to import that milk?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend is right. We are not self-sufficient in milk. The principal reason for that, as my hon. Friend the Minister of State said in answer to a previous question, is that the agri-monetary policy pursued by the Labour party in the 1970s prevented the development of the British dairy industry to the extent that would otherwise have been the case. Hence, the 1981 base year was less favourable than otherwise one would wish. As to the future, in the long term we should like to secure market circumstances leading to a phasing out of quotas and, in the interim, we should like to secure, although it will be a difficult negotiation, inter-European Union tradeability in milk quotas.

Dr. Strang: May I remind the Minister that, under the common agricultural policy, we spend more than £3,000 million a year on support for the dairy industry? Although much of that money is spent wastefully, just 3 per cent. is spent on subsidies for school milk. Would it not be a disgrace if, as part of the public expenditure review, the Government cut that spending?

Mr. Hogg: I am bound to say that, applied in such a context, the word "disgrace" is simply absurd.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: May I seek a firm commitment from my right hon. and learned Friend? Does he agree that the United Kingdom has some of the finest grassland in the European Community, and that that grassland is ideal for dairy farming and milk production? Will he give an assurance that it is Government policy to increase the milk quota for United Kingdom dairy farmers for as long as quotas exist in the European Community—bearing in mind that we are not self-sufficient in milk?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend is right: we are not self-sufficient in milk, for the reasons that my hon. Friend the Minister of State and I have already given.

I had the pleasure of visiting Cheshire last Friday, and of meeting many dairy farmers there. I entirely agree with what my hon. Friend has said about the productivity and skills of dairy workers in his county. As for quotas, if it were possible, we would indeed wish to secure a larger quota, but when I ask myself whether we are likely to achieve it, the answer is "Probably not"—hence the importance that we attach to persuading the European Union to allow the leasing of quotas across EU national frontiers.

Industrial Crops

11. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proposals he has to ensure that the United Kingdom obtains its share of acreage agreed for industrial crops within the framework of the Blair House agreement. [38934]

Mr. Baldry: We have made it clear that adjustments to area payments rather than quantitative limits are the better approach.

Mr. Jones: Have we not missed the boat, because France and Germany have already increased their production up to the limits set in the Blair House agreement? Is that not a disgusting state of affairs for the European Community?

Mr. Baldry: The hon. Gentleman misunderstands the position. The European Commission is taking, or considering, action against states such as France that have taken a number of steps to encourage biodiesels by, for instance, allowing pilot plant status for commercial plants, illegal tax breaks and illegal subsidies to farmers. I think that ours is a far better approach.

Countryside Policies

13. **Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans the Government have to stimulate prosperity in the countryside, with special reference to small farmers in south Leicestershire. [38936]

Mr. Boswell: The White Paper on rural England was launched jointly with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment on 17 October. It contains a number of initiatives aimed at stimulating prosperity in the countryside generally.

Mr. Robathan: My hon. Friend will know that there are many small and medium-sized farmers in the attractive countryside of south Leicestershire in my constituency of Blaby. He will also know that, over the past three years, they have benefited from a real increase of approximately 60 per cent. in average farming income. Will he go further, and explain how those farmers will benefit from the provisions of the White Paper?

Mr. Boswell: I know my hon. Friend's constituency well. Some 12 years ago, I represented the farmers there on behalf of the National Farmers Union; they are splendid people.

The purpose of our policies is to benefit all farmers, large and small. Our policies take them all into account. The purpose of the White Paper, along with the documents that we have already published—for example, those on farm tourism and on diversification—is to stimulate the rural economy; the policy is based on agriculture, but involves all other kinds of commercial activity. It is also intended to sustain employment for the benefit of the nation generally.

Mr. Morley: In what way does it help the rural economy for the recent White Paper to give clear encouragement to county councils to sell smallholdings? Does the Minister not recognise the importance of such smallholdings in enabling many young farmers to reach the first rung of the agricultural ladder? If they are sold, they will simply be bought by larger neighbouring farms, increasing the loss of farmers from the land.

Mr. Boswell: I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman wishes to take away the autonomy of county councils, many of which are presently under Labour control. Things have moved on, although the Labour party may not have noticed it. We have new farm tenancy legislation which provides many more opportunities for entrants to the industry. It will be for county councils to decide how best to use or reuse the resources that are currently locked up in farm smallholdings.

Sir Teddy Taylor: Before the Minister seeks to stimulate further agriculture in Leicestershire or anywhere else, will he say whether he agrees with the EU budget that has just been published, which states that expenditure on agriculture for 1996 will be 34 per cent. more than last year? That is an increase of 34 per cent. on £9,000 million. Is it not sad that, on a day when Ministers are considering cuts in spending, the EU proposes to spend a third more on agriculture next year than it did last year?

Mr. Boswell: My hon. Friend takes a particular view of the evolution of the common agricultural policy within the European budget, and I would not necessarily share all his views on that. My right hon. and learned Friend the Minister has encouraged the publication of the document on CAP reform which we recently presented and which proposes to set up the most radical agenda possible for long-term reform of the common agricultural policy. We shall vigorously advocate that among our colleagues in Europe.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Ms Eagle:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Thursday 2 November. [38951]

The Prime Minister (Mr. John Major): This morning, I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Ms Eagle: If the disclosure of the amounts that are earned in parliamentary consultancies is such an unimportant detail, can the Prime Minister say why up to 100 Conservative Members are threatening to resign if the House forces them to share that information with their constituents? Is that why he will vote for secrecy? What do Conservative Members have to hide?

The Prime Minister: With great respect to the hon. Lady, I say to her that she should not believe all the nonsense that she reads in some newspapers about the proposed actions of my hon. Friends or, indeed, about anything else. The Nolan report is extremely important. I set up the committee because I believed that there was a problem that needed to be looked at dispassionately. It has produced its report and the Select Committee has examined it. In a number of ways, the Select Committee has gone beyond the Nolan report. It has done so with my support, and I look forward to Parliament approving its recommendations.

Mr. Lord: Thanks to the national lottery and the millennium fund, there is now a great deal of money available for good works. Does my right hon. Friend agree that we could set ourselves two very worthwhile targets to achieve by the year 2000? They are, first, by that time every inner city ought to be a decent place for people to live in and secondly, every secondary school ought to have access to a good, proper cricket square.

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend plays to my instincts, as I think he knows, in this case. There is no doubt that the national lottery has exceeded the success that even we had forecast for it. It has already raised in excess of £1 billion for good causes and a very large number of organisations are now able to put in place facilities that millions of ordinary people will enjoy and would not have been able to enjoy but for the lottery. The point about the lottery is that, because of it, some areas of importance to our national life that are never likely to receive total priority in any public expenditure round will now have a guaranteed stream of future income for many years ahead, and millions of people will benefit from that.

Mr. Blair: Having set up Nolan and having agreed to implement it, what possible justification will the Prime Minister give when he comes to the House on Monday, along with the Cabinet and Government, and votes down its key recommendation—the simple honest requirement that Members of Parliament who have outside financial interests that are connected with their being Members of Parliament should disclose the amounts that they earn from them? Just what do he and his party have to hide?

The Prime Minister: I made it clear, when I established Nolan, that I thought that there was a matter that needed independent investigation. Lord Nolan did that. He said, when he replied, that he thought that there were matters that needed some further clarification. The Select Committee has done that. I have made it clear throughout that I support the broad thrust of what the Nolan committee recommended and I have said so on more than one occasion. I still hold to that.

Nolan made 55 recommendations, 45 to the Government, almost all of which are already being implemented, and I thoroughly agree with that, and 10 recommendations addressed to the House. The Select Committee has accepted nine of those, and has gone further than the Nolan committee in respect of the 10th, and I agree with that.

What is most important in the midst of this is the Select Committee's proposal to ban paid advocacy. That is entirely right, I support it, but if we do that, the income that hon. Members earn from other activities explicitly approved by Parliament seems to me to be a matter between them and the Inland Revenue tax inspectors.

Mr. Blair: This has nothing to do with some detailed consideration of Nolan. It is to do with the squalid monetary interest of the Conservative party. That was Nolan's key recommendation. If now, in weakness, the Prime Minister goes back on his word to implement the report that he commissioned, it will leave a stain on his prime ministership and on his Government that will not be removed until this rotten Administration is swept from office.

The Prime Minister: I think that, one day, the right hon. Gentleman will realise that there are serious matters about Nolan that deserve serious consideration, not the sort of short-term party political wrangling that we have just heard from him. On the substantive point, this is a serious matter for Parliament, with long-term implications, and it is a shame that he cannot understand that. I do not favour a wholly professional House staffed entirely by hon. Members who are professional politicians and nothing else. That is the route that the right hon. Gentleman and the Labour party would wish to lead us down. He would then, no doubt, have his party thought police telling Labour Members what to do and issuing statements on their behalf, as he did last week. That is not the route for this House. He may find some short-term advantage in the line that he takes, but what he is proposing is bad for the future of the House of Commons.

Mr. Blair: Madam Speaker—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Speaker: Order. The House must come to order.

Mr. Blair: The Nolan committee is not stopping people from having outside interests. It simply says that we should be open and honest about them. The Prime Minister is a man saying today what he knows to be wrong, and the question for him is this: when is he going to have the courage to stand up to his party and tell it what is right?

The Prime Minister: We have gone further than Lord Nolan had on the matters that are undesirable. Rather than say simply, "Disclose income," we have banned the things that we believe to be wrong. That is what I propose to do. The Select Committee is right in banning paid advocacy. If it is wrong, it should not be done. If it is right, it should not be impeded for party political reasons, as the right hon. Gentleman wishes to do.

Lord Nolan considered whether hon. Members' assets and income should be disclosed and that would, of course, include not only matters such as directors' fees—*[Interruption.]* This is an important matter to the future of the House of Commons and it deserves to be seriously considered by the House, not just treated as Opposition Members are treating it.

Lord Nolan considered the matter. He concluded, and I quote from the Nolan report:

> "No-one has put a convincing case to us as to why that"—

that is, disclosure—

> "might be necessary."

Parliamentary rules already require all outside interests to be entered in the Register. That will continue. It will be published more regularly. The substantive point is clear. If it is wrong, it should not be done and the Select Committee proposes to ban the things that are wrong. If it is right, it should not be impeded, as the right hon. Gentleman seeks to do.

Mr. King: May I correct my right hon. Friend in one respect, in that it was not Lord Nolan on his own but 10 members under his chairmanship who considered these matters and described in the report whether we should recommend a ban on paid advocacy? We said specifically at that time that we doubted whether it was practicable or whether it would be acceptable to the House. Is my right hon. Friend aware that the unanimous recommendation of the Select Committee that there should be an immediate ban on paid advocacy goes significantly further than Lord Nolan and his committee recommended? It goes to the heart of the issue of public concern, and should therefore be strongly supported.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend is entirely right about that, and I sought to make that point a moment ago. The Leader of the Opposition knows that that is the case, but for his own party reasons, he and his colleagues are deliberately distorting the central aspect to be determined.

Q2. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Thursday 2 November. [38952]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Banks: No one would accuse the Prime Minister of being a professional politician. If hon. Members have outside consultancies, what is the Prime Minister's personal objection to them declaring how much they get? Why does he object to that transparency?

The Prime Minister: I have told the hon. Gentleman why. I believe that it is right for the House to know what interests Members of Parliament have. It is right that they should register the nature of those activities, as is proposed, so that the House knows about them. It is right that things which are wrong should be banned. Beyond that, hon. Members are entitled to the same tax privacy as others.

Mr. Faber: Will my right hon. Friend pass on the grateful thanks of those of my constituents who have written to me in recent days to describe the misery and torment that they and their families have suffered because of the activities of the Rev. Moon? Does my right hon. Friend agree that yesterday's extraordinary court decision is yet another example of the contempt with which some members of the judiciary seem to treat the views of the House and of the general public?

The Prime Minister: I believe that my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary was right to refuse the Rev. Moon entry into the country. I do not believe that his presence here would be conducive to the public good. If the Rev. Moon decides to make representations, of course they will be considered.

Q3. **Mr. William O'Brien:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Thursday 2 November. [38953]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave some moments ago.

Mr. O'Brien: As recently as 23 May, the Prime Minister assured my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition that he favoured greater transparency in the affairs of Members of Parliament. He is now saying that he will vote for more secrecy. When will the Prime Minister, with all the dignity and authority of his office, lead the Tory party from the front rather than the rear?

The Prime Minister: We all know the lines that the Opposition Front Bench have given to the hon. Gentleman. The reality is that we are making much tougher and much more transparent the interests of Members of Parliament and we are banning the things that are wrong. That is the key point. If it is wrong, it should not be done, and the Select Committee is right to suggest a ban. The hon. Gentleman referred to 23 May. My activities and views have not changed. I foreshadowed them clearly and at some length in a letter to the Leader of the Opposition on 22 May, to which he has not yet replied.

Mr. Mark Robinson: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is excellent news that no one in Somerset need wait more than 12 months for non-urgent treatment? Does that not show the success of the Government's health reforms? Will my right hon. Friend take time today to persuade the Leader of the Opposition to drop his objection to fundholding?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. I believe that the partisan proposals of the Opposition to turn back the clock on the NHS reforms are to be regretted, given the clear evidence of the success of those reforms. More patients are being treated, they have greater opportunities for treatment and they are treated more speedily. The Opposition's plans to scrap GP fundholding in the face both of the overwhelming evidence of its success and the opposition of GPs who are providing a better service because of it will be unacceptable to people up and down the country.

Q4. **Mr. Sutcliffe:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Thursday 2 November. [38954]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Sutcliffe: As Tory Members of Parliament fight to save their second and third jobs, many people in my constituency want their first jobs. Is it not true that if Members of Parliament act as consultants, the public have the right to know whether they earn £50 or £5,000?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman is right to touch upon the important issue of unemployment. However, he might more usefully have mentioned that unemployment in his constituency has fallen by 21 per cent. from its peak—*[Interruption.]* it is interesting to note that Labour Members do not like hearing about the fall in unemployment—yet two years ago the then Leader of the Opposition raised the matter week after week. It is months since Labour Members have raised it, because they do not like the fact that it is going down in this country because of our policies, yet it is going up in other countries that follow socialist policies.

Business of the House

3.30 pm

Mrs. Ann Taylor (Dewsbury): Will the Leader of the House state the business for next week?—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Speaker: Order. We need to get on with the business question.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Tony Newton): The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER—Debate on the second report from the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Motion relating to the appointment of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

Consideration of Lords amendments to the Medical (Professional Performance) Bill.

TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER—Consideration of any Lords amendments which may be received to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Bill.

Motion relating to Select Committees.

The House may be asked to consider any Lords messages which may be received.

WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER—Subject to the progress of business, the House is expected to be prorogued.

Mrs. Taylor: I thank the Leader of the House for the statement. First, I want to ask him about the motion on Select Committees that we shall be debating on Tuesday. Will he provide us with relevant information so that we can consider in advance what will happen with the Select Committee that will have the responsibility for monitoring the new Department of the Office of Public Service? Will he make it clear that the Committee will be able to monitor all the activities of the Deputy Prime Minister?

Secondly, is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill, introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall) and supported by hon. Members on both sides of the House—including the hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale), who is nodding—has passed all its stages in the other place, that there is no opposition to it and that there is co-operation among all those involved in the issue? As the House is not short of parliamentary time over the next few days, will the right hon. Gentleman try to find time to allow the House to reach a final decision on the Bill which, as I said, has widespread support? He would not be creating a precedent by doing so and I am sure that the Bill would be welcomed on both sides of the House and outside it.

Finally, what has happened to the Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill, and why? Surely the House should have a full statement about the Bill, especially bearing in mind the amount of time spent on it in both Houses. Does the right hon. Gentleman recall, that on every occasion during the past parliamentary year that an hon. Member has raised the issue of domestic violence and the women and children who are victims of it, the Minister responding has said that we should wait for the Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill? What will Ministers say now? Will the Bill come back to this House?

Mr. Newton: On the Select Committee proposals, which I said that I hope that we can discuss on Tuesday, I hope to be tabling the relevant motion later today. It will make clear the terms of reference that we propose for the Select Committee with which the hon. Lady's question was especially concerned.

As for the Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill, I refer the hon. Lady—as I recently referred the hon. Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall)—to what I said last week:

> "It has been established over many years that the time available for private Members' Bills is set at the beginning of the parliamentary Session by a decision of the House."—[*Official Report*, 26 October 1995; Vol. 264, c. 1154.]

That remains the case. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not mind my saying that I have met him, as requested, but had to explain that I saw no basis on which the Government could make special arrangements favouring one private Member's Bill over others. I should say, however, that I am extremely sympathetic to the Bill. I hope that it will prove possible for it to be passed speedily in the next Session of Parliament, given the extent of the agreement that is said to exist and which I hope does exist.

As for the Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill, I understand that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department has just answered a parliamentary question saying that the Lord Chancellor has listened to the concerns expressed about the Bill and is considering them. He goes on to say that the timetable is such, however, that it is now impossible to make further progress this Session and that my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor will continue to work on the Bill with a view to bringing it back before Parliament as soon as possible.

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): When my right hon. Friend introduces Monday's debate on the Select Committee's report, will he explain how he reconciles the terms of the first resolution, which appears to preclude parliamentary advisers from speaking in the House on matters of which they have knowledge, with paragraph 22 of the report, which states that the Committee is not proposing such a ban?

Mr. Newton: I shall of course seek to cover that point in my speech on Monday. I can certainly confirm that the purpose of the Committee and the intention of the resolution is as described in the paragraph of the report to which my hon. Friend refers. The Committee specifically made it clear that it did not wish to deprive the House of informed contributions to debates initiated by others under those circumstances.

Mrs. Diana Maddock (Christchurch): Does the Leader of the House realise that women suffering domestic violence will be very disappointed by the answer that they have heard this afternoon and that, in fact, they will be very angry? Why should they have to wait when the matter has been before both Houses and there is time for us to discuss it this Session? Is not the Leader of the House aware that a majority of hon. Members wish the Bill to proceed?

Mr. Newton: I cannot add to what I have already said on the matter but, as this is an important part of the background to it, I will say that the Bill was introduced as an uncontentious Bill. It proceeded through most of its stages, thus appearing to confirm that it was uncontentious. It then manifestly became contentious, which changed the basis on which it had originally been introduced.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that John Sweetman, Companion of the Order of the Bath, has retired after 41 years' service of great distinction to the House, as set out partially in early-day motion 1557?

[*That this House notes the retirement on 31st October of Mr. John Sweetman, CB, TD, formerly Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees; recognises his unique contribution over 41 years of service to the House in facilitating the parliamentary process at Westminster and in fostering the development of parliamentary government abroad; and expresses its appreciation of his pragmatic advice and good humour which will be missed by honourable Members and colleagues alike.*]

Irrespective of the early-day motion, will my right hon. Friend consider finding a short time, perhaps at the start of public business in the near future, to enable the House to pay tribute to John Sweetman's work?

Mr. Newton: I shall give some thought to my right hon. Friend's latter point, but I shall no doubt be advised about setting precedents. Leaving aside the question of whether it is possible, I can tell my right hon. Friend, although it is probably indiscreet of me to do so, that I sought to find a way to add my name to that early-day motion, only to be advised that it was unheard of for Ministers to add their names to early-day motions. I therefore refrained from doing so. The reason why I wanted to add my name is that I would wish wholeheartedly to endorse the tribute that my right hon. Friend has paid to Mr. Sweetman.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): May I associate myself with the request made by the right hon. Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery)? I am pleased that the Leader of the House is going to consider whether the House can pay tribute to Mr. Sweetman. Opposition Members remember him not only for his ability—he was very helpful to many Labour Members—but for his good humour. He not only assisted many of us in the House but gave valuable advice to many Parliaments overseas. We shall certainly miss him after his 41 years' service to the House.

Mr. Newton: I am sure that you, Madam Speaker, would also want to associate yourself with those words. Even if I am unable to produce a positive outcome of my consideration, I very much hope that Mr. Sweetman will take what has been said by my right hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery), by the hon. Gentleman and, indeed, by myself, and the warm way in which it has been received in the House, as a tribute in itself.

Lady Olga Maitland (Sutton and Cheam): Will my right hon. Friend consider a debate on the role of the family in British society? He would probably agree that we have reached a watershed: should the role of the family be enhanced, or should it be undermined, which certainly seems to be happening in public debate? Does he not agree that it would be helpful to all parties concerned if the House met to debate that important issue so that we knew exactly where we stood?

Mr. Newton: Obviously, I shall give consideration, as always, to what my hon. Friend says, but I certainly cannot hold out hopes of such a debate before prorogation.

Mrs. Anne Campbell (Cambridge): Will the Leader of the House advise me on the best way of raising the procurement of military ambulances for the United Kingdom armed forces as a matter of urgency? He will be aware that there is a good deal of concern among the management and work forces of the Rover Group and Marshall SP in my constituency about the rumours that that very important purchase is to go to Steyer of Austria.

Mr. Newton: I am not in a position to comment on the outcome of any particular procurement exercise. The hon. Lady will know that such exercises take place within national and international rules, as I think I observed last week. However, I shall bring her question to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Sir Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Will my right hon. Friend find an opportunity to congratulate the BBC on 50 years of "Today in Parliament", as well as the editor, Mr. Geoffrey Sumner, and all the members of the team who produce it day after day? Does my right hon. Friend agree that it would be absolutely splendid if the broadsheets started to carry proper parliamentary reports, as they used to?

Mr. Newton: I very much hope that those responsible will look very carefully at the last part of my hon. Friend's remarks. As to the first part, I am sure that his words will be welcomed by those who work so hard to produce the programme, although not necessarily by all those who attend on it.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Given the fact that on Monday we have the Tory snouts in the trough debate, and as the Prime Minister has now changed what was going to be a free vote into a test of his credibility, since every member of the Government will be expected to go into the Lobby behind him, is the Leader of the House prepared to comment on whether it would be a resigning matter should the Prime Minister be defeated?

Mr. Newton: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has indicated the view that he takes of the Select Committee's recommendations, which, as it happens—it will not surprise the hon. Gentleman—is exactly the same view that I take. It is especially important to note that the recommendations go so far beyond the recommendations of the Nolan committee itself, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King), a member of the Nolan committee, said. That is a very important factor. As for myself, I obviously very much hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends of all kinds will support motions which I have tabled on behalf of the Select Committee and which I believe are right.

Mr. Piers Merchant (Beckenham): In view of today's Court of Appeal decision in the case of Mr. Newbery, the 82-year-old man who shot at a persistent burglar in self-defence, will my right hon. Friend consider finding parliamentary time to debate the apparent conflict that has arisen between criminal and civil law in matters of self-defence?

Mr. Newton: I shall of course bring that point to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary, who will no doubt wish to study the judgment to which my hon. Friend refers. I recall, however, that my right hon. and learned Friend made some observations on that general point some weeks ago.

Mr. Keith Hill (Streatham): May I refer the Leader of the House to early-day motion 1556?

[Mr. Keith Hill]

[*That this House condemns unreservedly the show trials and death sentences passed upon Ken Saro-Wiwa and his co-accused; calls upon the British Government to use all practical means at its disposal both directly and through the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting to reverse these sentences; and calls upon Nigeria's military rulers to commute the death penalty.*]

Is the Leader of the House aware of the sense of outrage felt on both sides of the House at the death sentences passed on Ken Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues following a mockery of a trial in Nigeria? Is he further aware of the wide perception that the Government's verbal condemnation of the Nigerian military Government is quite inadequate and that a new and tougher Commonwealth sanctions initiative is necessary? Therefore, will he ensure that the Foreign Secretary attends the House to listen to hon. Members' views in advance of the Commonwealth summit at the end of next week?

Mr. Newton: I shall bring my right hon. and learned Friend's attention to the hon. Gentleman's latter request. As to the principal issue, I repeat in quite strong terms that we deplore the death sentences passed on Ken Saro-Wiwa and his co-defendants following what we regard as a flawed judicial process. We understand that the sentences are subject to review by the provisional ruling council, and we urge that council to commute them.

Mr. Peter Luff (Worcester): Will my right hon. Friend find time for an early debate on the roads programme? Does he realise the concern that exists in Worcestershire about rumours that Her Majesty's Government are thinking of adopting the Labour party's policy and abandoning the roads programme in total? That would have very serious implications for the Worcester western bypass and the Wyre Piddle bypass in my constituency, and the Broadway bypass in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer).

Mr. Newton: If I understand my hon. Friend aright, he is inviting me to speculate on the outcome of the public expenditure round. I hope that he will understand that I do not feel able to do so.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 1539?

[*That this House urges the Home Secretary to transfer Patrick Kelly and Michael O'Brien from Whitemoor Prison to prisons in either Northern Ireland or the Irish Republic in view of their compelling compassionate circumstances.*]

Will the Leader of the House suggest to the Home Secretary that he should make a statement, I hope early next week, announcing the transfer of both men to prisons in either the north of Ireland or the Republic of Ireland? Not only is that in the interests of humanitarian justice and compassion, but it would help to redeem the somewhat tattered reputation of the Home Secretary.

Mr. Newton: I shall bring those remarks to my right hon. and learned Friend's attention. The hon. Gentleman will be aware that it is the Government's long-established policy not to agree to prisoners transferring to another jurisdiction, except in very exceptional circumstances, if the result will be a substantial reduction in the time served. That general policy applies to the hon. Gentleman's request.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): May I warmly associate myself with the remarks made on both sides of the House about my near constituent and Ealing resident Mr. John Sweetman? I ask my right hon. Friend: could the House debate the work of the Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow health agency next week in order to investigate the suggestion by some bureaucrat that the breast diseases unit at Ealing hospital should be transferred to hospitals nearer to central London many miles away, which would be inaccessible to my constituents? We cannot allow that to happen: the unit must remain at Ealing hospital.

Mr. Newton: I note, and I am sure that everyone will agree with, my hon. Friend's earlier remarks about John Sweetman. As to his latter comments, the obvious and proper course is for me to draw them to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Health Secretary.

Mr. John Heppell (Nottingham, East): Will the Leader of the House find time for a debate about the monopolies that are being created within the brewing industry? As a result of recent mergers, two companies—Scottish Courage and Bass—control more than 50 per cent. of sales. That has caused anxiety and concern among local breweries, such as the Home Brewery, which is the only brewery still operating in Greater Nottingham.

Mr. Newton: The hon. Gentleman will be well aware that there are established procedures for considering the kind of complaint that he makes at the Office of Fair Trading and, where appropriate, at the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade will want to consider the hon. Gentleman's remarks.

Mr. Roy Thomason (Bromsgrove): Has my right hon. Friend noticed an article that appeared in *The Times* of 1 November under the heading "High Streets doomed"? Does he agree that the allegations in the article are serious? Does he consider it appropriate that time should be allowed for a debate on the future of the high streets in order to highlight both the action that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is taking and what further action might be appropriate in order to encourage retail sales in our high streets?

Mr. Newton: I will certainly give consideration to that request.

Mr. Alan Simpson (Nottingham, South): Will the Leader of the House arrange for a statement on security arrangements at 10 Downing street? On the assumption that the statement would be something more than, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, we are the softest touch of all," will he explain how people without passes will be restricted from wandering round 10 Downing street, and will he comment on the rumour that the intruder was not noticed because the place was simply full of people who did not know why they were there anyway?

Mr. Newton: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's question as, according to the accounts that I have seen, the intruder must have passed by the side of my office.

I can say only that the incident to which he refers is being investigated, and I am sure that the investigation will be thorough.

Mr. Bernard Jenkin (Colchester, North): As it has been acknowledged since Adam Smith that capital taxation drives capital abroad, attacks enterprise and destroys jobs, and now that it is increasingly acknowledged that lower capital taxation could produce rises in tax yield and that the abolition of capital taxation could increase the yield of other taxes by more than the cut would seem to cost, can we have a debate on the effects of capital taxation? Would not it expose the truth about the Labour party—that Labour simply does not know what policies will make Britain fit to compete in the global economy?

Mr. Newton: I would have thought that the Budget debate, which is now less than a month away, might provide such an opportunity for my hon. Friend. As for the rest, however, he appears to be inviting me to pass from speculation on the public expenditure round to the other half of the Budget, and I will not do that.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Does the Leader of the House recognise that, although there is supposed to be a free vote on Monday, clearly it is a three-line Whip for the Government, which makes a mockery of the so-called free vote? Are we right to conclude that, when we look through the Division list on Tuesday we shall find that not a single Minister, however junior, voted against the line put forward today by the Prime Minister?

Mr. Newton: I do not think that I can add to what I said earlier. I certainly hope that everyone will feel able to support the motions that I have tabled on behalf of the Select Committee.

Mr. Harold Elletson (Blackpool, North): Will my right hon. Friend find time for an urgent debate on social services on Lancashire, where the county council is currently destroying care in the community by completely mismanaging its social services budget? Is he aware that many elderly patients are being driven into county residential homes while the private nursing sector is being driven out of business by the county council?

Mr. Newton: I well understand why my hon. Friend raised those points. Similar concerns are being raised in many places, including my own county. I shall certainly bring his comments to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health.

Mr. Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh, Leith): As we are not allowed a debate on the Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill next week, may we have a debate on the protection of families against domestic violence and child sexual abuse? As the so-called controversial clauses are already enacted in the law of Scotland, why do not the Government for once stand up to a handful of extremist Back Benchers?

Mr. Newton: The hon. Gentleman will understand that I cannot add to what I said before, but I must underline the fact that the Government sought to advance the Bill on the original understanding that it was uncontentious. Clearly, having become contentious, it requires different parliamentary handling.

Mr. Nigel Evans (Ribble Valley): Will my right hon. Friend find time as soon as possible to discuss waste in local government? It would give me the opportunity to discuss two yawning examples in Lancashire. The first involves the Labour-controlled county council, where the director of education has sent out a letter trying to frighten governors and parents about next year's education settlement when he does not know any of the figures. Also, the leader of Labour-controlled Preston council, Valerie Wise, ousted the town clerk, which is costing more than £1,000 per week. Even though Valerie Wise was this week deselected in her own ward, the town clerk remains out of office.

Mr. Newton: It is clear that my hon. Friends believe that there is a good deal to be investigated in Lancashire. Apart from the point that I have already undertaken to bring to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health, I will bring the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Evans) to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Mr. Michael Connarty (Falkirk, East): Will the Leader of the House intercede with Scottish members of the Front Bench to arrange a debate on the state of the funding of the court system in Scotland? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this morning, Falkirk court had to abandon its business because the procurator fiscal could not supply a member of staff to prosecute? At least 10 cases were abandoned, and people on criminal charges walked free from court because there were not enough staff. Obviously there is a serious problem in Scottish courts with rising crime and the underfunding of the court system.

Mr. Newton: I was unaware of the circumstances that the hon. Gentleman described, but I have no doubt that they and the hon. Gentleman's remarks will be examined by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr. Anthony Coombs (Wyre Forest): May I too ask for a debate on the Government's road-building programme, which would give the opportunity to discuss a dispute concerning the M5 between the Highways Agency and its agents and Tilbury Douglas, which has indirectly affected the jobs of about 100 people from P. J. Burkes, a building contractor in my constituency? I understand that the problem can be resolved easily and quickly, and I would be grateful if my right hon. Friend asked the appropriate Transport Minister to ensure that that is done as soon as possible.

Mr. Newton: I shall certainly do that.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Will the Leader of the House have a word with the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary concerning the safety of people who are returned to Nigeria? Will the right hon. Gentleman ask them to make a statement to the House, particularly in respect of Abdul Onibiyo, who was deported from this country last week by immigration officials? His family have been left here, but are subject to deportation orders.

Mr. Onibiyo was taken to Lagos airport and handed over to local security officials, but he has not been heard of or seen since. That situation is causing great distress to the trade union that supported Mr. Onibiyo in his campaign against deportation and, obviously, to his

[Mr. Jeremy Corbyn]

family. Will the Leader of the House ensure that the high commission in Lagos is contacted immediately to ensure that Abdul Onibiyo is in a place of safety in Lagos?

Mr. Newton: I cannot promise an immediate statement, but I undertake to ensure that my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary is aware of the important situation in Nigeria.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): The right hon. Gentleman will know that the House adjourned at 8.31 pm last night after a one and a half hour debate on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill in which a large number of hon. Members wanted to speak, to make constituency points. When so much time is available, what is the point of truncating the business of the House? If time is available, could the House debate the location of the next English national stadium, about which concern is felt on both sides of the House? The idea that it should be in Wembley, organised by a company that could not run a whelk stall, seems scandalous. Hon. Members in all parts of the House should have an input.

Mr. Newton: On the latter point, I might say gently to the hon. Gentleman that there were recent debates on sport and on the national lottery, in either of which he could have raised those points. As to the first part of his question, arrangements for last night's debate were made through the usual channels for the convenience of the House. I note the hon. Gentleman's comments, but part of the problem was that the preceding business was of unpredictable duration.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): As it seems that the Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill will be reintroduced in some form in the next Session—although some believe that it should have been fully dealt with in this Session—could not the same be done for the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill or for another Bill that would alter the Disability Discrimination Bill to embody the principles of the former Bill? As with the Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill, the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill secured overwhelming support on Second Reading in all parts of the House, and there is massive support outside the House for its introduction.

Mr. Newton: Personally, I certainly share the hope that, if the Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill has the general agreement that it is said to have, it will be possible for it to make rapid progress in the next Session. That is not something that I can determine as a member of the Government. On the latter point, the hon. Gentleman has every reason to be aware that, even if the Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill has become non-controversial, his Bill certainly has not and the same considerations do not apply.

Mr. Elliot Morley (Glanford and Scunthorpe): May I welcome the Leader of the House's comments about the Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall)? I do not know whether he is aware that I was one of the people who drafted the compromise that went to the House of Lords, with help from Home Office officials, which I and my hon. Friend appreciated.

Despite agreements and assurances from all parties involved at that stage, when the Bill went to the other place, those agreements were reneged upon. It is clear that there are buffers and duffers in the other place who will never pass that measure unless the Government give it some time and support, which they have the power to do.

Mr. Newton: I cannot comment further on the question of providing Government time, which has repeatedly come up in this Session. On the first part of the hon. Gentleman's remarks, I was not a party to those discussions so I am not in a position to comment, except to say that I think that the way in which he put them was aggressive, to put it mildly. On my reading of the proceedings in the other place, some points were raised that even the proponents of the Bill acknowledged needed to be considered.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): With regard to next Monday's debate, is the Leader of the House aware that I heard him on the radio saying that he chaired the Select Committee as a Member of Parliament, not as a member of the Government? Will he therefore tell us what discussions he had with the Prime Minister or any other member of the Cabinet before producing his final Chairman's report to the Select Committee?

Mr. Newton: I received representations from many colleagues in their capacity as Members of Parliament, and I do not think that it would be appropriate for me to give details at the Dispatch Box of conversations that I have had in the corridors of this place.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: We shall return to that issue on Monday.

In view of the reply that the Leader of the House gave me about the Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill, may I press him further? I am not sure that it is right for a reply about the future of the Bill to be given by written answer in the possibly unprecedented situation of a Government Bill completing all its stages and then being withdrawn at the last minute.

I have two specific questions. What happened to make the Bill contentious? Will the Leader of the House confirm that the Bill did not change, but that what changed was the pressure from some of the extremists in his party? Secondly, what will happen to the victims of domestic violence in the interim before a new Bill is introduced? Is he aware that dropping the Bill at this stage is not in the interests of children who may be suffering from abuse? The Bill made new provision for the removal from a home of a suspected abuser, rather than requiring social services to remove a child who is being abused. It also made it easier to arrest those in breach of a court injunction.

As more damage will be done before the Bill can be brought back, can the Leader of the House say what the Government intend to do and tell us the time scale for the reintroduction of the Bill?

Mr. Newton: Not at present. I cannot add to what has been said this afternoon, which is that my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor will continue to work on the Bill with a view to bringing it back before Parliament as soon as possible.

Points of Order

4.3 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I realise that what Ministers say is not a matter for you. You have made that clear, as have your predecessors, on a number of occasions. If a Minister, be it the Prime Minister as in this case, or any other Minister, has made a remark about a Member that does not happen to be true, one would have thought that, once that had been brought to his attention, he would come to the House and say so.

On Tuesday, in reply to my question about French nuclear tests, the Prime Minister said:

> "the hon. Gentleman is consistent in his views. He has been a member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and he is".—[*Official Report*, 31 October 1995; Vol. 265, c. 96.].

I make no reflection whatever on CND. I have a great deal of time for the organisation, certainly when it sticks to the particular business for which it came into existence. However, the fact is that I was never a member. I checked with CND in case I was on its membership list. Not surprisingly, the answer was no. I then telephoned No. 10 on two occasions. I spoke to a private secretary, who was very courteous and said that he would look into the matter.

On further occasions yesterday when I tried to speak to the private secretary, he was always out. So I went across to No. 10. I was allowed through on my Member's pass and I delivered a note to the door at 5.10 pm. I have not heard since from No. 10. It may not be a matter of great importance to you, for all I know, Madam Speaker, but the Prime Minister must know by now that what he said on Tuesday was not the position.

Surely, just because the right hon. Gentleman is Prime Minister does not mean that he should not come and correct a falsehood that he said to the House, I am sure inadvertently. What he said does not happen to be true and I see no reason why the Prime Minister should not come here and say so.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has corrected the mistaken impression himself. I am glad that he has taken the opportunity of so doing. I have often cautioned the House and all Members in it, whether they are Ministers or Back Benchers, that we have tremendous privileges here in freedom of speech and in speaking out, but those privileges have to be tempered with responsibility. Before we make accusations about each other across the Floor of the House, we all ought to get our facts right. It would enhance our debates here if we did that, and had more respect for the individual than I find has been shown generally in our debates in recent times.

Mr. John Gunnell (Morley and Leeds, South): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. On 19 July I put a series of questions to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment on the issue of the headlamp scheme. At the end of the Session I received replies that said that I would receive answers on 16 October. On 16 and 17 October I received some answers. Eight of the answers said that the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire), had asked the chairman of the Teacher Training Agency to write to me. I still have not had answers to those questions.

Do we have a right to answers to our questions, or can they simply be lost in an executive agency? Or is the Education Minister so uncertain about whether the Prime Minister will announce education policy himself that he is unable to give me answers?

Madam Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is quite right. Questions must be answered within the rules of the House. Now that the hon. Gentleman has raised the matter with me, I shall be pleased to take it up on his behalf and see what I can do to be helpful.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. My hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) asked you yesterday whether the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) had yet written to you to substantiate the allegations that he made earlier in the week. Are you able to tell us yet whether you have received any such letter?

Madam Speaker: I have not received anything from the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw), but I am informed by him that a letter is on its way.

BILLS PRESENTED

WASTE PREVENTION

Mr. Elliot Morley, supported by Ms Joan Ruddock, Mrs. Diana Maddock, Sir John Hannam, Mr. Cynog Dafis, Mr. Gary Waller and Mrs. Margaret Ewing, presented a Bill to enable certain local authorities to investigate what measures are needed to reduce, prevent or avoid waste in their area; to take such steps as they consider appropriate in order to achieve that end; and for related purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon 7 November and to be printed. [Bill 188.]

CHILD LABOUR

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, supported by Mr. Terry Lewis, Mr. Andrew Mackinlay, Mr. Alan Simpson, Mr. Ken Livingstone, Ms Diane Abbott, Mr. Tony Banks, Mr. Harry Cohen, Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mr. Robert Parry, Mr. Neil Gerrard and Mr. John Austin-Walker, presented a Bill to give effect to Articles 1 and 2 of the 1973 International Labour Convention No. 138 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment by making it unlawful to employ children under the age of sixteen in a way that is inconsistent with their fullest physical and mental development; to require the Secretary of State to establish a system of regulation to ensure that the law concerning child labour is complied with; and to require the Secretary of State to report to Parliament progress towards the elimination of child labour in the United Kingdom: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon 7 November and to be printed. [Bill 189.]

Parliamentary Procedure

[Relevant document: The Eighth Report from the Procedure Committee, Session 1994-95, on 'Sitting Hours Reform' (HC491).]

4.8 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Tony Newton): I beg to move,

That—

(1) Standing Order (Consolidation bills) below shall have effect from the beginning of the next Session:

"(1) In this order 'a consolidation bill' means a public bill which falls to be considered by the select committee appointed under Standing Order No. 123 (Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills).

(2) Notices of amendments, new clauses and new schedules to be moved in committee in respect of a consolidation bill may be received by the Clerks at the Table before the bill has been read a second time.

(3) When a motion shall have been made for the second reading, or for the third reading, of a consolidation bill, the question thereon shall be put forthwith.

(4) If a motion that a consolidation bill be not committed is made by a Minister of the Crown immediately after the bill has been read a second time, the motion shall not require notice and the question thereon shall be put forthwith and may be decided at any hour, though opposed."

(2) Standing Order (Law Commission bills) below shall have effect from the beginning of the next Session:

"(1) Any public bill, the main purpose of which is to give effect to proposals contained in a report by either of the Law Commissions, other than a private Member's bill or a bill to which Standing Order (Consolidation bills) applies, shall, when it is set down for second reading, stand referred to a second reading committee, unless—

(a) the House otherwise orders, or

(b) the bill is referred to the Scottish Grand Committee.

(2) If a motion that a bill such as is referred to in paragraph (1) above shall no longer stand referred to a second reading committee is made by a Minister of the Crown at the commencement of public business, the question thereon shall be put forthwith.

(3) The provisions of paragraphs (3) to (6) of Standing Order No. 90 (Second reading committees) shall apply to any bill referred to a second reading committee under paragraph (1) above."

Madam Speaker: I understand that with this, it will be convenient to discuss the following motions:

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session—

(1) Standing Order (Money resolutions and ways and means resolutions in connection with bills) below shall have effect:

"(1) The Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on motions authorising expenditure in connection with a bill and on ways and means motions in connection with a bill—

(a) forthwith, if such a motion is made at the same sitting as that at which the bill has been read a second time; or

(b) not later than three-quarters of an hour after the commencement of those proceedings, if the motion is made otherwise.

(2) Business to which this order applies may be proceeded with at any hour, though opposed."

(2) In Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) paragraph (1)(d) and the proviso thereto shall be omitted.

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session—

(1) Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.) shall be repealed and Standing Order (Standing Committees on Delegated Legislation) below shall have effect:

"(1) There shall be one or more standing committees, to be called Standing Committees on Delegated Legislation, for the consideration of such instruments (whether or not in draft) as may be referred to them.

(2) Any Member, not being a member of such a standing committee, may take part in the deliberations of the Committee, but shall not vote or make any motion or move any amendment or be counted in the quorum.

(3) Where a Minister of the Crown has given notice of a motion to the effect that an instrument (whether or not in draft) upon which proceedings may be taken in pursuance of an Act of Parliament (other than a draft deregulation order) be approved, the instrument shall stand referred to a Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, unless—

(a) notice has been given by a Minister of the Crown of a motion that the instrument shall not so stand referred, or

(b) the instrument is referred to the Scottish Grand Committee.

(4) Where a Member has given notice of—

(a) a motion for an humble address to Her Majesty praying that a statutory instrument be annulled, or a motion of a similar character relating to a statutory instrument, or to any other instrument (whether or not in draft) which may be subject to proceedings in the House in pursuance of a statute, or a motion that the House takes note of a statutory instrument, or

(b) a motion that a measure under the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919 be presented to Her Majesty for her Royal Assent, or a motion relating to an instrument made under such a measure,

a motion may be made by a Minister of the Crown at the commencement of public business, that the instrument be referred to such a committee, and the question thereon shall be put forthwith; and if, on the question being put, not fewer than twenty Members rise in their places and signify their objection thereto, the Speaker shall declare that the noes have it.

(5) Each committee shall consider each instrument referred to it on a motion, 'That the committee has considered the instrument'; and the chairman shall put any question necessary to dispose of the proceedings on such a motion, if not previously concluded, when the committee shall have sat for one and a half hours (or, in the case of an instrument relating exclusively to Northern Ireland, two and a half hours) after the commencement of those proceedings; and the committee shall thereupon report the instrument to the House without any further question being put.

(6) If any motion is made in the House of the kind specified in paragraphs (3) or (4) of this order, in relation to any instrument reported to the House in accordance with paragraph (5) of this order, the Speaker shall put forthwith the question thereon and such question may be decided at any hour, though opposed."

(2) In paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 84 (Constitution of standing committees) and in paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 86 (Nomination of standing committees) for the words "statutory instruments or draft statutory instruments or measures under the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919 and instruments made under such measures" there shall be substituted the words "instruments (whether or not in draft)".

(3) Standing Order No. 15 (Prayers against statutory instruments, &c. (negative procedure)) shall be entitled "Delegated legislation (negative procedure)"; and at the end of the said Standing Order there shall be added the words "or be disapproved, or words to that effect".

(4) Standing Order (Proceedings under an Act or on European Community documents) below shall have effect:

"(1) The Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings under any Act of Parliament or on European Community documents not later than one and a half hours after the commencement of such proceedings, subject to the provisions of Standing Order No. 15 (Delegated legislation (negative procedure)).

(2) Business to which this order applies may be proceeded with at any hour, though opposed."

(5) In Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) paragraph (1)(b) and the proviso thereto shall be omitted.

(6) Standing Order No. 94F (Scottish Grand Committee (statutory instruments)) shall be entitled "Scottish Grand Committee (delegated legislation)"; in paragraph (1)(a) of the said Standing Order for lines 5 to 7 there shall be substituted the words "of a similar character relating to a statutory instrument or to any other instrument (whether or not in draft) which may be subject to proceedings in the House in pursuance of a statute, or of a motion that the"; in paragraph (1)(b) of the said Standing Order for the words "a statutory instrument or draft statutory instrument" there shall be substituted the words "an instrument (whether or not in draft) upon which proceedings may be taken in pursuance of an Act of Parliament (other than a draft deregulation order)"; and the words "or draft instrument" shall be omitted wherever in the said Standing Order they occur.

(7) For paragraph (2)(e) of Standing Order No. 94A (Scottish Grand Committee (composition and business)) there shall be substituted the following paragraph:

"(e) motions relating to instruments (whether or not in draft) referred to it in accordance with Standing Order No. 94F (Scottish Grand Committee (delegated legislation));".

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session—

(1) Standing Order (House not to sit on certain Fridays) below shall have effect:

"(1) The House shall not sit on ten Fridays in each Session to be appointed by the House.

(2) If a motion to appoint such Fridays is made by a Minister of the Crown the question thereon shall be put forthwith and may be decided at any hour, though opposed.

(3) At its rising on the Thursday before each of the Fridays so appointed the House shall stand adjourned till the following Monday without any question being put, unless it shall have resolved otherwise.

(4) Unless the House shall have resolved to adjourn otherwise than from the previous Thursday to the following Monday, the Fridays so appointed shall be treated as sitting days for the purpose of calculating any period under any order of the House and for the purposes of paragraph (8) of Standing Order No. 18 (Notices of questions, motions and amendments) and of Standing Order No. 62 (Notices of amendments, &c., to bills); and on such Fridays—

(a) notices of questions may be given by Members to the Table Office, and

(b) notices of amendments to bills, new clauses and new schedules and of amendments to Lords amendments may be received by the Public Bill Office,

between eleven o'clock and three o'clock."

(2) Standing Order (Wednesday sittings) below shall have effect:

"(1) The House shall meet on Wednesdays at half-past nine o'clock and shall between that hour and two o'clock proceed with a motion for the adjournment of the House made by a Minister of the Crown.

(2) Save as provided in paragraphs (3) and (4) below, the subjects for debate on the said motion shall be chosen by ballot under arrangements made by the Speaker; and no subject shall be raised without notice.

(3) On the last Wednesday before any adjournment of the House for more than four days, the subject for debate on the said motion until half-past twelve o'clock shall be "matters to be considered before the forthcoming adjournment".

(4) On not more than three Wednesdays in each Session to be appointed by the Speaker, the subject or subjects for debate on the said motion until half-past twelve o'clock shall be select committee reports chosen by the Liaison Committee.

(5) Not more than two subjects shall be raised before half-past twelve o'clock, and not more than three between that hour and two o'clock.

(6) A motion for the adjournment of the House not disposed of at two o'clock shall lapse and the sitting shall be suspended until half-past two o'clock; the House will then proceed with private business, motions for unopposed returns and questions; no subsequent motion for the adjournment of the House shall be made until all the questions asked at the commencement of public business have been disposed of; and, save as provided in paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration), no Member other than a Minister of the Crown may make such a motion before the orders of the day or notices of motions shall have been entered upon."

(3) In paragraphs (1) and (2) of Standing Order No. 9 (Sittings of the House) the words "Wednesdays " and "Wednesday" respectively shall be omitted; and in the proviso to paragraph (7) of the said Standing Order, after the word "o'clock" in line 57, there shall be inserted the words "in the evening".

(4) Standing Order No. 10 (Sittings of the House (suspended sittings)) shall be repealed; the reference to the said Standing Order in paragraph (7) of Standing Order No. 9 (Sittings of the House) shall be omitted; and in paragraph (1)(a) of Standing Order No. 133 (Time and manner of presenting petitions) the words from "conclusion" in line 10 to "and" in line 14 shall be omitted.

(5) In Standing Order No. 13 (Arrangement of public business) paragraphs (7), (8) and (9) shall be omitted; in paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 9 (Sittings of the House) for the words from "returns" in line 4 to the end of the paragraph there shall be substituted the words "and questions"; in Standing Order No. 15A (New writs) the words "or notices of motion" shall be omitted; in paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 90 (Second reading committees) the words "or notices of motions" in line 15 shall be omitted; and in paragraph (1)(b) of Standing Order No. 133 (Time and manner of presenting petitions) the words "or motions" in line 18 shall be omitted.

(6) In paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 131 (Liaison Committee) the word "and" in line 4 shall be omitted and after the word "Commission" in line 7 there shall be inserted the words "and

(c) to report to the House its choice of select committee reports to be debated on such Wednesdays as may be appointed by the Speaker in pursuance of paragraph (4) of Standing Order (Wednesday sittings)".

(7) Standing Order No. 22 (Periodic adjournments) shall be repealed and Standing Order (Periodic adjournments) below shall have effect:

"When a motion shall have been made by a Minister of the Crown for the adjournment of the House for a specified period or periods, the question thereon shall be put forthwith, and may be decided at any hour, though opposed."

(8) Standing Order No. 54 (Consolidated Fund Bills) shall be repealed and Standing Order (Consolidated Fund Bills) below shall have effect:

"When a motion shall have been made for the second reading of a Consolidated Fund or an Appropriation Bill, the question thereon shall be put forthwith, no order shall be made for the committal of the bill and the question for third reading shall be put forthwith; and the said questions may be decided at any hour, though opposed."

(9) In paragraph (1)(a) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) the words "or any Consolidated Fund Bill or Appropriation Bill" shall be omitted.

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session Standing Order No. 45A (Short speeches) shall be repealed and the following Standing Order (Short speeches) shall have effect:

"The Speaker may announce at the commencement of proceedings on any motion or order of the day relating to public business that she intends to call Members to speak for not more than ten minutes in the debate thereon, or between certain hours during that debate, and whenever the Speaker

> has made such an announcement she may direct any Member (other than a Minister of the Crown, a Member speaking on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, or not more than one Member nominated by the leader of the second largest opposition party) who has spoken for ten minutes to resume his seat forthwith."

May I inform the House that I have selected for debate amendments (a), (b) and (c) to motion No. 4. At the conclusion of the joint debate on the motions and the amendments, I will put successively the Questions on motions Nos. 1 to 3. When we come to motion No. 4, I will invite the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) to move amendment (a). If it is not agreed to, amendment (b) will fall. If amendment (a) is agreed to, I will invite the hon. Gentleman to move amendment (b). Once the House has taken a decision on the principle underlying amendments (a) and (b), amendment (c) will fall. Once the amendments have been disposed of, I will put the Question on motions Nos. 4 and 5.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I am grateful for your explanation of the sequence of events. But am I not right in thinking that amendment (a) and amendment (b), which is a consequential amendment, and amendment (c) are not necessarily mutually exclusive? All three amendments have in common the principle of additional time, or retaining time, for private Members' motions, but if (a) and (b) are carried, there will be four hours for such motions on Wednesdays and if (c) is carried there will be additional time on Mondays. Surely amendment (c) should taken as well, even if (a) and (b) are not carried?

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Further to that point of order, Madam Speaker. This is rather more than a procedural motion. Of course, I understand that your view is prescribed by the rules of the House, but it is a matter of great import and I do not believe that the amendments are interchangeable. I hope that you will seriously reconsider the matter, because many of us believe that decisions affecting the House are being taken without proper consultation.

Madam Speaker: In the light of what hon. Members have said, I am prepared to look again at the amendments. We shall proceed with the debate, I shall reconsider the matter and give my decision as soon as I can.

Mr. Newton: It may be for the convenience of the House if I refer to the other four motions on related topics while you, Madam Speaker, are considering the other matters that have just been mentioned.

Last December, the House approved a far-reaching package of reforms of the procedures of the House—some elements were expressed in Sessional Orders and others in understandings reached between the Government and the Opposition through the usual channels and recorded in a written answer—which gave effect to recommendations made by the Select Committee on Sittings of the House in 1992. I pay my tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Jopling) who chaired that Committee. Unfortunately, he is unable to be here today due to ill health.

I also pay tribute to the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) and the hon. Members for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) and for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), with whom the agreement was negotiated. I should also like to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery), who is present this afternoon and is the Chairman of the Procedure Committee, which has reported in such positive terms on the experiment that we conducted this Session.

Our debate last December showed that there were reservations in several parts of the House—eloquently expressed by the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) in a rare but memorable contribution—about the substance of the proposals. I believe—at least, I hope—that many of those reservations have now been overcome, and that the experiment is generally considered to have been a substantial success.

I shall deal first with those elements of the reforms that depend on "best endeavours" and agreements through the usual channels rather than on Standing Orders. Voluntary timetabling of Bills, which is of fundamental importance to the success of the reforms as a whole, has worked well in practice. My perception, which I hope the hon. Member for Dewsbury will confirm, is that the Opposition have had the time they felt appropriate to debate the issues to which they attached importance—at least in general terms.

At the same time, the Government's legislative programme has made progress without the House being kept up late and without the use of measures such as the guillotine. We are not proposing to put those arrangements in Standing Orders. This year's experience has confirmed the view that I formed in the course of our discussions last year: there is no sustainable halfway house between a voluntary agreement reached through the usual channels and something which, to all intents and purposes, is a guillotine.

We have achieved a substantial reduction in late sittings. The average time of rising during the experiment has been significantly earlier—hon. Members who want the details will find them in the Procedure Committee's report—and the occasions on which the House has sat late into the night have been very few: only nine of the 131 sittings during the relevant period lasted beyond midnight. An evening which ends with a vote at 11.30 pm is now regarded as a late night; for the first two Parliaments in which I was present, that would have been regarded as an early night.

We have also succeeded in keeping Thursdays almost entirely free of contentious business after 7 pm, which has been of material assistance to hon. Members when planning their constituency business on Friday and over the weekend.

I have also been able to give the House much earlier notification of recess dates. The Easter and Whitsun recesses were announced just after Christmas and the dates for the summer recess were made known before the end of June. That was substantially better than in most previous years. I am not yet in a position to give the recess dates for the next Session of Parliament, but I hope that I shall be able to give some at a reasonably early stage when we resume.

The House has been generous enough to accept that what I have been able to say on a Thursday about the business for the second week, even though by no means always complete, has helped Members in planning their weekend engagements, particularly when, as in almost every week, I have been able to give a pretty clear indication of the nature of the business on the Thursday, which is the important day for people's planning.

I want to explain to the House as briefly as I can the main provisions in the five motions amending Standing Orders. To a large extent, they simply restate the Sessional Orders under which this Session's experiment has proceeded.

The first motion, on consolidation Bills and Law Commission Bills, restates the provisions of the Sessional Orders which provide expedited procedures for those law reform measures. The only new provision in the motion is that the question on Second Reading, as well as Third Reading, of a consolidation Bill will be disposed of without debate.

I should emphasise that a different procedure applies to Law Commission Bills that change rather than consolidate the law. That is particularly important in view of some of the exchanges that we had only a few moments ago.

Mr. Andrew Mackinlay (Thurrock): With regard to the question on Second Reading of a consolidation Bill being put forthwith so that there is no debate, if amendments were tabled there would be the absurd situation that the House would go into Committee. That is rather odd because it would probably result in longer proceedings. I had experience of that only a few days ago when I was able to speak on Second Reading and comment on amendments that I had tabled. Had I been denied that opportunity, I would inevitably have had to make longer speeches on each amendment. That seems rather odd.

In addition, on that occasion the Solicitor-General and the Opposition Front-Bench spokesman wanted to compliment the Law Commission on its work, but if there were no Second Reading such an opportunity would be denied them.

Mr. Newton: I shall consider the hon. Gentleman's point in relation to the resolution and comment on it later. But he is right that what I am proposing would deprive my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General of the opportunity to which the hon. Gentleman referred. Therefore, I take this opportunity on behalf of the hon. Gentleman and myself, and no doubt the whole House, to express my thanks to Mr. Justice Brooke, the Law Commission and the draftsmen who served them so well for the valuable work that they do in keeping the statute book in good running repair.

I emphasised that a different procedure applies to those Law Commission Bills that make some changes in the law rather than simply consolidate it. Those Bills will be referred automatically to a Second Reading Committee, but—this is an important point—the Government would expect, as at present, to respond to any request from the Opposition for a Second Reading debate on the Floor of the House. The opportunities for hon. Members to scrutinise the details of those Bills in Committee—this may be of particular importance to the hon. Member for Thurrock (Mr. Mackinlay)—and on Report will be exactly the same as for any other Bill.

The second motion on money resolutions and Ways and Means resolutions follows the Sessional Orders in providing that they will not be debatable if taken immediately after Second Reading of the Bill to which they relate. I think that it has been generally accepted that that was a sensible change made for the present Session.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that there have been occasions in the past when Second Reading debates have been extended, either to 11 o'clock or to midnight, so that all hon. Members who wished to speak could do so? That is a fairly cumbersome procedure. The big advantage of the money resolution was that an hon. Member who might be cut out of the debate could put pressure on others to shorten their speeches. There was always that safety valve. Why is it necessary to get rid of it?

Mr. Newton: I note the hon. Gentleman's point. It is a matter of judgment, but the former arrangements led, in my view, to some highly artificial debating in respect of the relatively narrow terms of money and, especially, ways and means motions. I will not disguise my personal feeling that the change that was made was for the general convenience of the House, and that a greater application of arrangements for the Chair to limit the length of speeches has proved the right way in which to tackle the problem to which the hon. Gentleman refers.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Is the Leader of the House aware that discussion of the monetary aspect of a Bill often allows hon. Members to make points that they would not normally make on Second Reading? With great respect to the right hon. Gentleman, his description of such debate as "highly artificial" reflects more his wish for his legislation to be passed speedily than the true interests of the Back Bencher who may have been squeezed out of an important Second Reading debate.

Mr. Newton: I believe that the view that I have expressed is by no means confined to the Leader of the House. There was a general feeling that it was more convenient for the House to know when a Second Reading debate would end and when the votes would take place. I understand what the hon. Lady has said—and I respect her judgment, even if I do not agree with it—but I feel that the way in which to tackle this is to apply the so-called 10-minute rule to speeches, rather than extending debates into the night.

Mr. Spearing: Does the Leader of the House agree that some Bills involve important financial issues? The Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill, for instance, was virtually predicated on finance, which may not have been a major feature of the specific Second Reading debate. The same applies to the Mental Health (Patients in the Community) Bill. Surely to make such a change because the majority view in the Government favours it is to reduce the opportunities for Back Benchers who wish to make specifically financial and sometimes crucial points.

Mr. Newton: I note the hon. Gentleman's point, according him my usual respect. I feel, however, that a proper Second Reading debate—especially if the speaking rule that I mentioned is applied by the Chair—provides a perfectly adequate opportunity for hon. Members to make the points that they wish to make.

I entirely accept that, in the end, the House must make a judgment, and decide whether it prefers my view and the view reflected in the Sessional Orders—which I am seeking to carry into the Standing Orders—or the view expressed by the hon. Members who have intervened during the past few minutes.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow) *rose—*

Mr. Newton: I sense, however, that we are about to hear from another hon. Member.

Mr. Dalyell: Does the Leader of the House accept that some of us hold the considered view, rightly or wrongly, that had Michael Foot and the late Jack Mendelson been confined to 10-minute speeches, this country would almost certainly have sent troops to Vietnam—rightly or, as some of us might think, wrongly? In the 1960s it was Michael Foot, Jack Mendelson and others who dissuaded the House of Commons from what might have been the wishes of the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. In 10-minute speeches, neither Michael Foot nor Jack Mendelson, nor anyone else, would have had a chance.

Mr. Newton: I often say at the Dispatch Box—and it is more than just empty words—how much I respect the contribution that the hon. Gentleman makes to our proceedings, although, again, I do not always agree with him. I acknowledge the judgment that he has made. I believe, however, that the changed arrangements—those involving the 10-minute rule, for instance, go back much further than any proposals for last year's Sessional Orders or the current Standing Orders—have been widely welcomed in the House as enabling more hon. Members to take part in many debates. I certainly would not think it right to propose a departure from those arrangements in response to what the hon. Gentleman has said.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): It has just crossed my mind that when Labour get into government in a short time, Tory Members will not be able to make as much money on the side as they make now because of the Nolan restrictions. Even if we lose the vote on Monday, we shall bring in those restrictions in a fortified form. As they will not be able to make so much money, they will want to be in here kicking the ball about. Tory Back Benchers and members of the Government who will be Back Benchers—those who are not on the chicken run and are coming back—will come to this place at 8 o'clock at night and it will be shut.

I do not want to sound like an advocate of what will be the new Opposition in a couple of years' time, but the Conservatives will be in one hell of a mess. They will not be making money out of directorships because of Nolan, and they will not be able to come here because the right hon. Gentleman is closing down all the opportunities to get stuck into the Labour Government. For the life of me I cannot understand why the right hon. Gentleman is digging a trench for himself.

Mr. Newton: The hon. Gentleman may wish to pursue some of those points in a later debate. I await that with interest.

The third motion, which deals with delegated legislation, restates the Sessional Order provisions for the automatic referral to Standing Committees of affirmative statutory instruments and for a limit of one and a half hours on debates on statutory instruments and EC documents. The Government will continue to respond positively to any reasonable request by the Opposition, as I think we have demonstrated this year, for an instrument to be de-referred. We will, of course, consider making more than one and a half hours available for debates on particularly important instruments by agreement through the usual channels.

Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow) *rose—*

Mrs. Dunwoody *rose—*

Mr. Newton: I will take my hon. Friend's intervention first, if the hon. Lady will forgive me.

Mr. Gill: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the result of removing the powers of 20 hon. Members to object to affirmative instruments will be, technically, a diminution of the rights of Back Benchers to control the Executive?

Mr. Newton: I do not agree. Arrangements for orderly debate in which as many Members as possible can take part provide an effective check on the Executive. The arrangements that we have made for dealing with statutory instruments, and especially our willingness to respond to representations about more time being required, deal effectively with my hon. Friend's concern.

Mr. Gill: I understand that these powers have seldom, if ever, been used. What is the compelling reason to wipe them out of the Standing Order which will replace Standing Order No. 101?

Mr. Newton: I have already demonstrated by what I said last year about Sessional Orders and by what I am saying here on the proposed Standing Orders that I have in mind the convenience of the House in providing what I think are generally regarded as proper opportunities for debate on both primary and secondary legislation. Certainly, the recommendations are the result of widespread consultation in the House and reflect the Procedure Committee's recommendations on these matters. I know that all those who have been concerned are conscious of the rights of Back Benchers and of the importance of ensuring that matters are properly discussed.

Mrs. Dunwoody: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. He is being very indulgent, and I beg his pardon, but it is important to consider these matters seriously. I agree with the hon. Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill). Is it not true that statutory instruments taken in Committee are frequently considered at enormous speed? Therefore, far from expanding the amount of time that is available for these debates, we may curtail it, and it is clear that there is to be no flexibility in relation to tabling motions on EC matters. Such flexibility would have been welcomed by many people because of the importance of so much EC legislation.

Mr. Newton: I again note the views that are being expressed. On the question of instruments and sometimes other matters proceeding at a fair pace in Committees, may I say that that would normally be because those who are on the Committees—I think that it is well known that it is not always easy to find people who are keen to serve on such Committees—do not feel that they wish to take a great deal of time in discussions. It would certainly not be correct to draw the conclusion that somehow debate is being suppressed because some non-controversial orders go through a properly constituted Standing Committee with relatively little discussion. That would not be a right deduction.

The fourth motion deals with private Members' business. The new arrangements under which private Members' business, except private Members' Bills, is transferred to Wednesday mornings, have—it is important that I should emphasise this—given private Members more time on the Floor of the House than the previous arrangements ever did. Since the experiment started, even allowing for the fact that morning sittings did not begin until the third Wednesday after the Christmas recess, private Members made a net gain of eight hours' debating time. In a full Session, if we had had Wednesday morning sittings since November, that would have been a net gain of 19 hours. Just as important, the number of opportunities for Back Benchers to initiate a debate has doubled, and those opportunities occur more regularly and at a much more sensible hour.

Mr. Bennett: Does the Leader of the House accept that there may be more time for debate, but that there is far less time for any votes on issues that we have debated?

Mr. Newton: The hon. Gentleman raises that point in one of the amendments on the Order Paper. Evidently, he will wish to make a speech and, no doubt, elaborate on that point.

Mr. Dalyell: Will the Leader of the House satisfy my curiosity? Are the Wednesday morning motions chosen by ballot, by alchemy or by Speaker's choice?

Mr. Newton: As the decisions about Wednesday morning debates are taken under arrangements agreed by you, Madam Speaker, it would be inappropriate for me to attempt to describe them in detail, but I understand that a balloting arrangement is involved.

The motion provides for non-sitting Fridays each Session, which Members will be able to keep free for their constituency duties, and for the House to sit on Wednesday mornings for Adjournment debates initiated by private Members who have been successful in the Speaker's ballot. The Wednesday morning before each recess will be devoted to a general debate on

"matters to be considered before the forthcoming Adjournment",

to which, of course, I as Leader of the House would expect to reply on the Government's behalf. That change was introduced in response to widespread requests in the House after the original main Sessional Orders were debated and decided. I was glad to make it, and it has worked well.

The motion also takes up an idea that the Procedure Committee considered in its recent inquiry, but that it decided, in the event, not to pursue. I thought, however, that it was an extremely good idea and, with agreement through the usual channels, I have therefore included it in the motion. The idea is that the start of the sitting on Wednesdays should be brought forward to 9.30, with a clear-cut, half-hour suspension between 2 and 2.30.

The reasons why I proposed that are obvious and I sense that some hon. Members who disagree with me on other points agree with me on that one. It brings the start of the sitting on Wednesdays into line with our practice on Fridays. It reduces, at least to some extent, some of the pressures of more than 12 hours' continuous sitting on the staff of the House, and it avoids what was sometimes an untidy junction between the morning sittings and Question Time in the afternoon. I emphasise that exactly the same amount of time will be available for private Members as at present.

The motion also makes provision for up to three Wednesday mornings, between 9.30 and 12.30, to be devoted to debates on Select Committee reports chosen by the Liaison Committee. That reflects a recommendation made by the Procedure Committee, but varies from it, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) may wish to note. The Committee recommended that there should be six Select Committee Wednesday mornings, but some practical difficulties exist in ensuring that those days are properly spaced throughout the Session, so I suggest, without having a closed mind for ever on this matter, that we should start with three and see how that works out. We have had those morning sittings only since January and it would be reasonable to proceed a bit cautiously with proposals for changing their character to the extent that that could mean.

That argues in favour of starting with a relatively small number, although, of course, like everything else in these resolutions, it is a matter for the House to decide. It remains the case that, if hon. Members want to spend more time on Select Committee reports than the motion provides, there is the opportunity, even without changing the order further, the possibility of which will always be there, to apply for time to debate Select Committee reports separately from the three Wednesday mornings by entering the Speaker's ballot in the usual way.

Finally, the motion takes the opportunity to make a minor amendment to the Standing Order governing Consolidated Fund Bills. The Standing Order has to be amended to remove the now obsolete provision for an all-night debate on the Adjournment after the proceedings on the Bill. I am proposing that we should also drop the requirement that the Bill should be the first Order of the Day since it can be, and often is, the first Order of the Day without being the first item of business. The requirement serves no useful purpose.

The fifth motion—this re-enters the controversy raised a few moments ago—which allows the Speaker to make greater use of the power to impose a 10-minute limit on speeches by Back Benchers follows the provisions of the current Sessional Order. I should remind the House that Front-Bench spokesmen will not be governed by a formal limit. They have been asked to endeavour to keep their opening speeches to 30 minutes and their closing speeches to 20 minutes. As I have now been speaking for some 25 minutes, partly because of interventions, the right thing for me to do now would be to sit down.

Madam Speaker: I should tell the House that I have reflected on the amendments. As the House will know, amendment (a) is the paver for amendment (b). If amendment (a) is defeated, amendment (b) will automatically fall. If amendment (a) is successful, I will put the Question on amendment (b). Amendment (c) has virtually the same aim as amendments (a) and (b), but it deals with the Monday rather than the Wednesday option. I believe that the Question should be put on amendment (c) regardless of whether amendment (a) is defeated or amendments (a) and (b) are successful. I want to be helpful to the House so that there can be a Division on all of those.

4.36 pm

Mrs. Ann Taylor (Dewsbury): I am sure that the House—or at least my hon. Friends—will be grateful to you, Madam Speaker, for that reconsideration of the amendments.

This is one occasion on which I agree with the Leader of the House. That is not always the case, certainly not on all issues. I am one of those who believe that the experiment which has been conducted over the past year has been successful and I am willing to enable the experimental changes to be consolidated and put into the Standing Orders of the House.

[Mrs. Ann Taylor]

Many hon. Members have looked with a great deal of relief at what has been happening over the past year. As the Leader of the House pointed out, the past year has seen a reduction in the finishing time and a different system and atmosphere on Thursday evenings. Hon. Members, especially those with non-London constituencies, have found it extremely beneficial to be able to return to their constituencies on Thursday evenings. It has meant that hon. Members have been able to carry out their job more effectively and efficiently.

Mr. Gill: Clearly, the House is interested in the prospect of having more sociable hours. However, surely the main consideration for the House is the way in which it scrutinises legislation. Does the hon. Lady believe that the level of scrutiny of legislation is satisfactory, and does she consider that it has been improved or worsened by the changes proposed?

Mrs. Taylor: I shall come to that point. First, I want to say that I do not think that these changes should be judged by what has happened in the past year alone. I believe that I differ from the Leader of the House in my views on this matter, but I do not believe that the past year has been a typical parliamentary year. We have not had the amount of controversial legislation that we might expect, for example, in the first year of a new Government.

The amount of Government business and the number, complexity and controversial nature of that business have not been what it might have been in other years. Before we start judging the changes against the factors that I mentioned at the beginning, we should bear it in mind that the past year has not been typical. We must disentangle the benefits that the House has received as a result of the Jopling proposals from the incidental benefits that we have received because this has been a year of light business.

The hon. Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) asked the central question about whether the changes substantially affect the House's ability to scrutinise the Government and their legislation and to hold the Government to account. My view is that the changes make very little difference. There is a great need for reform of the way in which the House works. Many of us feel that we would do our jobs as Members of Parliament much more effectively and efficiently, and I do not believe that the one excludes the other.

The Jopling proposals are really about making us work more efficiently—not necessarily about making us work more effectively. Other changes are required to bring about better effectiveness—including, for example, a greater use of Second Reading Committees. Other changes would also help to keep the Executive more accountable.

Mr. Bennett: Does my hon. Friend accept that we should be considering some of the other changes to which she has just referred? Would it not have been logical to try further experiments before consolidating the current experiments into our Standing Orders? It seems that everyone is saying, "We have had enough. We have done a little bit and we should stop here." In fact, some of the other areas that could be covered by experiments might prove to be more rewarding and effective than some of those that we are discussing today.

Mrs. Taylor: The Jopling Committee reported on 18 February 1992, but we did not begin the experiment until December 1994. It would be foolish simply to continue with the experiment, because the House would never make a decision. I am optimistic that in future there might be more Members who would want to consider changes to our methods of working. However, in the meantime I would prefer to consolidate the changes that have been covered by our experiment, which I believe has been very successful, and then think about other changes. That would be better than continuing to have different sorts of experiments, one following on from the other.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Does my hon. Friend agree that some of the changes have deprived Back-Bench Members of an effective way of encouraging Governments, of all colours, to take on board what could be contentious legislation? Quite frankly, if the Abortion Act 1967 had not had time on a Friday and had not been able to go through the voting system, it would not be on the statute book today.

Mrs. Taylor: I respect the views of my hon. Friend, who has a great deal of experience in such matters. I accept what she says about the avenues open to Back Benchers having been diminished to a certain extent. However, I part company with her when she says that those were effective means by which Back Benchers could influence events. In response to her comments about pressure being put on Governments to provide time for votes on a private Member's Bill, she will realise that it has been made clear today that that is dependent on a Government's business managers. They make the decisions about providing such time.

I do not believe that any of the losses in Back Benchers' rights are significant. Many of the proposed changes, in particular—I stress this because it is important—the much better use of Back-Bench time on a Wednesday morning, compensate for any losses in other areas. We should bear in mind the lack of effectiveness of the mechanisms that we are losing.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): Is there not a distinction between the different Back Benchers in the House? Many more informal avenues are made available to Conservative Back Benchers than to Labour Back Benchers, who must make use of every available procedure to get their views across and to raise constituents' interests. Therefore, we should be careful about allowing some of those rights to disappear.

Mrs. Taylor: I am sure that Conservative Back Benchers, who will be in opposition after the next election, will take note of what my hon. Friend has said. Of course additional avenues are open to Government Back Benchers, but—I repeat what I said to my hon. Friend the Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody)—the mechanisms that have been lost to Back Benchers have not been used very often, and certainly have not been used effectively. I have looked at what has happened during recent years, but I cannot find any precedent for the effective use of the mechanisms that my hon. Friends complain we are losing.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): I had not intended to intervene, but rather to make this point in my speech, but I feel it important at this time to point out that the opportunities for Back-Bench Members to raise issues of any nature have risen from 80 to 160. The number of opportunities has doubled. It is wrong to suggest that hon. Members do not have the opportunity to hold the Government to account or, as the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody) said, to introduce private legislation. In fact, Back-Bench Members have double the number of opportunities.

Mrs. Taylor: No doubt my hon. Friends will wish to take up the right hon. Gentleman's point later. I understand my hon. Friends' case to be that although Back Benchers may have gained in the way suggested by the hon. Gentleman, they have lost the right to vote on certain motions. That forms the basis of the amendments tabled by some of my hon. Friends. I can remember when we had ballots for motions. I also remember that often there was an elongated debate simply to prevent the second debate taking place. It was using Back-Bench time to block another Back Bencher. I remind my hon. Friends that all was not sweetness and light with that system, nor were there many occasions on which a vote in those circumstances made a great deal of difference to any future decision.

Mr. Dalyell: I refer my hon. Friend to an occasion on which I was instrumental—together with one or two colleagues—in keeping the House up all night in a very elongated debate. We might think that we were eloquent, but that was neither here nor there. The subject of the debate was Iranian sanctions. Because we kept talking and because the Government had a problem with a closure motion, it was the first occasion on which the then Prime Minister, now Lady Thatcher, did a U-turn. On the criterion of effectiveness, that debate—which was about not our eloquence, but the use of parliamentary time—was extremely effective.

Mrs. Taylor: I think that my hon. Friend is referring to the unlimited time that used to be available for the Consolidated Fund debate. That is not a subject of the proposed changes; indeed, the procedure for that debate was changed a long time ago. We are not discussing it tonight and neither was it part of the experiment. We will not be voting on it tonight.

Mr. Spearing *rose—*

Mrs. Taylor: I shall give way for the last time. I do not want to abuse the time allocated to me under the informal arrangements.

Mr. Spearing: I was rather surprised by my hon. Friend's comments about motions. As the right hon. Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) said, we now have double the number of opportunities, so even if three quarters of the time used is not effective, surely opportunities must be made available for hon. Members to raise matters of great topical importance. Otherwise, debates on those matters would never happen.

Mrs. Taylor: My hon. Friend is too pessimistic about the events of the past year. The Wednesday morning debates have been used to good effect by Back Benchers to raise exactly the sort of issues that my hon. Friend mentioned—for example, animal welfare, opencast mining, the problem of drugs in Scotland—which was debated last Wednesday—and the future of rugby, which was debated a few months ago and which appears to have altered some of the decisions being made at that time.

The changes that have been implemented during the past year have proved to be extremely effective. A large number of hon. Members have participated in the Wednesday morning debates. There have been 110 Wednesday morning Adjournment debates, with 634 speeches and interventions. For those hon. Members who do not have London constituencies or who are not London based, the use of a Wednesday morning rather than a Friday or a Monday afternoon is extremely valuable.

Mr. Gill: Does the hon. Lady accept that the changes that she has been talking about have more to do with creating the opportunity for individual Back Benchers to ventilate their particular concerns than they have to do with controlling the Executive or scrutinising legislation? I am sorry that she seems to want to talk about the general convenience of the House and the sweeties available to individuals rather than about the serious purpose of the House, which is to control the Executive and scrutinise legislation.

Mrs. Taylor: That is why I said earlier that the Jopling reforms were not fundamental, which is how they are often described. I would be happy to consider other suggestions on how to achieve what the hon. Gentleman wishes, but I do not think there is anything in the proposed changes that will make it difficult to achieve what the hon. Gentleman intends.

I shall make a couple of other points about the changes. The informal agreements on future business and the fact that the Leader of the House has on occasion been able to provide us with information about that business has been helpful. We accept that he cannot always do that, and I think that he will agree that, when he has had to change the business or modify arrangements, having given us early warning, we have not complained.

I hope that that will continue, although I want to make a small special plea about recess dates and constituency Friday dates, the non-sitting dates. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will take proper account of the difficulties that face hon. Members when the arrangements do not coincide with school holidays. I do not see why we cannot be civilised when considering such dates and try to ensure that they are as convenient as possible for family life as well as for the arrangements of the House.

Reference was made to the length of speeches, and the Lord President made a joke about Front-Bench speeches. That is one matter on which we have not succeeded as we could or should have done. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) has been keeping a close watch on speeches and has produced a table showing the length of all Front-Bench speeches in the past year. *[Interruption.]* It is available, and if the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) wants to publish it, I am sure that my hon. Friend will not object.

Mr. Mackinlay: Can we all get it?

Mrs. Taylor: Yes, and representations can be made to any offenders, of whom there are probably more among the Conservatives than among Labour Members.

Mr. Bennett: Does my hon. Friend accept that the important thing is not the length of speeches themselves but the need to take account of interventions? Interventions are one of the most important parts of the proceedings of the House. The worst thing about the

[Mr. Bennett]

10-minute rule is that it discourages taking interventions. I do not think that Front-Bench Members should be criticised for taking a little longer if they give way several times. Of course, one or two put their heads down and do not give way at all.

Mrs. Taylor: My hon. Friend is right. My hon. Friend the Member for Perry Barr has also calculated the number of interventions. There was no correlation between the length of speeches and the number of interventions accepted. While I accept that we have to be flexible and encourage interventions, we should not allow Ministers in particular to hide behind pre-arranged interventions to make the debate go in a particular direction.

The changes have been beneficial. They are not dramatic or radical but they are helping to make Parliament work more efficiently. I agree that we have to do much more to make Parliament work more effectively but, in view of the experiment that we have undertaken and the responses that the Procedure Committee received from hon. Members showing that the changes are by and large popular, I commend the proposals to the House.

4.53 pm

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): In the 13 years that I have been Chairman of the Procedure Committee, many people will have heard me say that I have been struggling to drag the procedures of the House into the 20th century, let alone the 21st century. I believe that the Lord President of the Council and the resolutions that we are discussing are the instruments to achieve that end.

More people are coming to understand Parliament and respect the way in which we carry out our business. The House will know that the Procedure Committee agreed to monitor the working of the Jopling report, and the Leader of the House asked us to do a number of other things such as review setpiece debates. I remind hon. Members, and anyone outside who may be interested, of the responses that we received to our questionnaire.

The figures in paragraph 7 of the report show that we received 524 responses. That figure has now risen to 530, which is a response rate of 82 per cent. That is larger than anyone would have imagined. Public relations companies say that it is a remarkable return.

We divided the questionnaire into six sections, each examining a distinct aspect of the particular package of alterations to the Standing Orders. The vast majority of hon. Members—88 per cent.—expressed general support for the reforms. A similar number, just under 90 per cent., found the alteration to the House's sitting hours an improvement. Similar results were obtained to questions about changes to the pattern of business, the scope of short speech Sessional Orders and the early notification of business. More than three quarters, or 77 per cent., of hon. Members believed that the Sessional, or temporary, Orders should be turned into Standing Orders, which is what we are discussing today.

I shall for a moment analyse some of the responses, because it is important to get them into perspective. Of the replies received, 255 were from Conservatives, which is approximately 78 per cent. of all Conservative Members; 200 came from Labour Members, which is 74 or 75 per cent. of their total; 18 came from Liberal Democrats, which is 78 per cent. of Liberal Democrat Members; and 20 were from members of other parties, which is the equivalent of 87 per cent. of their number. As I said, 88.7 per cent. of those who replied believed that in general the reforms were to be welcomed and should be implemented.

We asked whether the introduction of Wednesday morning Adjournment debates were advantageous to the House. Eighty-four per cent. of Conservative Members, 88 per cent. of Labour Members and 83 per cent. of Liberal Democrats agreed that such debates were advantageous, and were to be welcomed. They accepted absolutely that they should become permanent.

It is perhaps important to note that, if the House prorogues on 8 November—I understand that is much more than a possibility—it will have sat for 156 days in the 1994-95 Session, not counting eight constituency Fridays. That compares with 154 days with no sitting Fridays in 1993-94, 167 days in 1988-89 and 172 days in 1985-86, which were the third years of their respective Parliaments. Therefore, the notion that the reforms have drastically reduced the number of days that the House sits is incorrect.

Mr. Mackinlay: In the survey circulated to hon. Members, there was no mention—was there?—of the change in the Sessional Orders now before us, meaning that both Law Commission Bills and consolidation Bills have been slipped on our agenda tonight very craftily, and that there will not be a Second Reading of consolidation Bills on the Floor of the House. Therefore, Bills coming from the Law Commission, such as the proposed Bill on divorce, will immediately be referred to a Second Reading Committee. That has been slipped on to the Order Paper today and has never been put to the House of Commons before.

Mr. Skinner: Sneaky and underhand.

Sir Peter Emery: Perhaps I may suggest to the hon. Members for Thurrock (Mr. Mackinlay) and for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) who sit below the Gangway, that they read our report, because what they say is not the case. Such matters were put in the questionnaire, and as I work through, I shall come to that, without any doubt.

The shift to Wednesday morning debates—doing away with the Consolidated Fund, the end-of-term Adjournment debates and private Members' motions—has, as I said in my intervention on the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), meant that Members of Parliament have double the opportunities for debates.

Much has been made about the claim that that change does not allow for a vote. I am informed that private Members' motions went to a Division on only about 12 per cent. of all occasions in the previous Session. The interesting fact is that at no time did the Government lose such a Division. So the concept—

Mrs. Dunwoody: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Peter Emery: Not for the moment. If the hon. Lady sits down I shall give way to her soon.

Therefore, the concept that having that vote is a great influence on the Government is just not the case.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Frankly, if 12 per cent. of occasions are sufficiently controversial to demand a vote, and if those votes are a clear sign of how the House is moving, the Government do not have to be defeated on a particular vote to take note of the fact that they must respond to especial concerns in the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman and I have been here long enough to know that all sensible Governments take very good note when sufficient numbers of Members vote on a particular private matter which happens to be contentious.

Sir Peter Emery: I have been here slightly longer than the hon. Lady and I believe that it is much more important that Members should be able to hold the Government to account on more and more subjects on more and more occasions. It is quite surprising to discover how many hon. Members have spoken in Wednesday morning debates, and, indeed, to see the Government responses to a number of those debates. Such occasions have been much more use in holding the Executive to account, as was suggested earlier, than previous opportunities.

Mr. Bennett: If the right hon. Gentleman is not very keen on votes, perhaps he should abolish the idea of having votes of confidence in the Government. I would have thought that, since 1945, there must have been a large number of votes of no confidence in the Government. I think that only one was carried. Surely the right hon. Gentleman is not proposing to abolish that idea? There may have been votes on only 12 per cent. of occasions, but some of them were useful.

Sir Peter Emery: I believe that the hon. Gentleman is slightly more intelligent than to think that votes of censure and votes on a private Members' motion are in any way comparable. He knows that they are not. He is not even making a debating point.

I come to the next aspect of analysis: the reduction in late sittings. It is not very surprising that 90 per cent. of all respondents approved of the reduction. To the question whether they approved of non-sitting Fridays for constituency business, 88.7 per cent. of hon. Members responded in a favourable manner. To those Members who believe that that is an unimportant aspect, I refer them to paragraph 26 of the report, in which the hon. Member for Dewsbury is quoted—it is well worth repeating—as saying:

> "I really think that we should not be shame-faced about the House not sitting on Fridays . . . The idea that Members of Parliament are only working when they are sitting in the Chamber is total nonsense. There is a need for some political education and we have a responsibility to provide some of that political education."

In other words, it is absolutely clear that there is work to be done in the constituency, and it should be carried out.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): This point is fundamental because the media consistently portray Members of Parliament scampering off as quickly as possible and voting for shorter hours. Anyone with a constituency outside London—if he is doing his job—knows that Fridays are essential because they are the only days of the week when a Member of Parliament has an opportunity of making contact with people who are also at work; in factories, schools and others places. If Members are restricted merely to visiting on Saturdays, proper contact cannot be made.

Sir Peter Emery: My hon. Friend's point is relevant and important.

The Select Committee report comes into conflict with the Government over the timetabling of Bills, although it does not necessarily suggest that the process has not been a success in the past Session. It is interesting that only 18 per cent. of respondents felt that the voluntary timetabling of Bills should not be carried on for ever, while 65 per cent. felt that it had been successful. However there was a considerable demand—65 per cent. of respondents—for the timetabling of Bills to become part of Standing Orders. Of those wanting such a development, 69 per cent. were Conservative Members, 58 per cent. Labour Members, and 89 per cent. Liberal Democrats.

So a majority of almost two thirds of Members were in favour of turning the voluntary agreement into a permanent arrangement. I think that the feeling behind that was that it was all very well last year, but the same position might not remain in future and ought to be made part of Standing Orders.

I shall deal now with money and Ways and Means resolutions, statutory instruments and prayers, and European Community documents, which were all included in the report. Indeed, the Law Commission factor was there as well. Approximately, 78 per cent., 88 per cent. and 81 per cent. of respondents respectively believed that the existing arrangements should continue and be made permanent.

The last two important aspects of the analysis were that 87.7 per cent. of respondents felt that the Speaker's ability to impose a 10-minute limit on speeches should be continued. I should point out that, when the speeches of hon. Members have been affected by major interruptions, the occupants of the Chair have been flexible in genuine cases, although they would not necessarily accept or admit it, but if hon. Members consider the question, they will see that there have been times when Members have spoken for much longer than the 10 minutes allowed.

Mr. Bennett *rose—*

Sir Peter Emery: I have given way a great deal.

The proposal that the Speaker should be given power to limit speeches to 10 minutes during 90-minute debates also met with massive approval. Indeed, there have been many excesses in 90-minute debates, when some hon. Members have spoken for 20 or 25 minutes and left no time for others.

I believe that, on the whole, Members have very positively responded in support of the action that has been taken. I am sorry that the Government have not seen fit to carry through the recommendation that debate on the Budget and on the Queen's Speech should be cut for a day to allow for a major economic debate in the spring. I believe that that is a sensible suggestion, which I hope will be adopted in time.

In conclusion, it is quite clear that reform can be attained only when the majority of hon. Members agree to it. There will always be one, two or a small handful of hon. Members who will object to any aspect of change.

Mr. Skinner: The awkward squad.

Sir Peter Emery: If ever there were a leader of that squad, it is the hon. Member for Bolsover, who is sitting opposite me now. I believe that a majority of hon. Members are in favour of the proposals on the Order Paper. I urge that they be carried, without amendment, into the Standing Orders of the House.

5.10 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I strongly support all the changes that appear on the Order Paper today. I believe that they are a first and a minimalist step toward what I hope will be a fundamental root-and-branch reform of the way in which we do business in this place. I understand perfectly the honourable, respectable and good tradition of the "awkward squad" in this place. I hope that that will always be the case. There will always be a role for hon. Members who have bona fide reasons for giving the Government of the day a hard time. That is one of the functions of debate in this place.

Having said that, I believe that people in the community find it difficult to understand the way in which the House does business currently. They find the procedures arcane, outmoded and inefficient. I pay credit to the Leader of the House for going the last mile in trying to ensure that the minimalist changes have a basis of consent. I hope that he will not give up on reform once he has banked the changes—because I hope that that is what will occur—this evening. I hope that it is just the beginning of a momentum for change that will ensure that the House of Commons is a modern Chamber that is fit to govern in the 21st century. Unfortunately, at present the public do not believe that that is the case.

5.12 pm

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): I wish to raise two points in the debate. I have already raised the issue of not sitting on certain Fridays with my right hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery), by way of intervention. One may align that with the fact that we often have less urgent business on Thursday evenings, which allows hon. Members to return to their constituencies to perform their constituency duties properly. It does not take too much imagination to realise that, if the time of hon. Members is too restricted, they will not be able to make essential contacts with their constituents—including industrialists, schools and local government organisations—on a non-political basis.

Consequently, the proposal is very welcome. I have been in this place for a long time and, like the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), I believe that the change should have occurred years ago. I only hope that the next reforms will not be so long in coming.

Mr. Dalyell: The people of Warwick and Leamington are not deprived of the hon. Gentleman's presence because of what occurs in the House of Commons on a Friday. If he wishes to return to his constituency, he is able to do so under the old system that we are abolishing. [HON. MEMBERS: "At 3 o'clock."] Exactly. Hon. Members are rarely prevented from returning to their constituencies on a Friday.

Sir Dudley Smith: The answer is that one cannot have it both ways. If hon. Members are able to return to their constituencies on a Thursday evening, they may make appointments there at 9 o'clock or 10.30 the next morning. Many of us have not attended the Chamber on a Friday for that reason and, consequently, our attendances on Fridays are extremely poor. Because of constituency commitments, we are often unable to participate in the important and interesting debates on Fridays. That factor must be taken into account.

I support the reforms almost unreservedly, but I must address the question of time limitations on speeches, to which the hon. Member for Stockport (Ms Coffey) referred. I hope that we shall not go too far in timetabling speeches. Despite what anyone says, that would discourage interventions from hon. Members on both sides of the House, which are the kernel of our debates. Many effective and important interventions have been made over the years and they have always been part and parcel of the procedures in this place.

Anyone who has had experience of parliamentary procedure on the continent will know that interventions are a fairly rare occurrence. Those who have had experience of parliamentary assemblies associated with international and European organisations will know that the practice of intervening in the speech of another is very much frowned upon, if not banned. Consequently, there is a set pattern of speech after speech without any of the variety and intensity of debate that occurs so often in this place.

Our Parliament is often criticised for being confrontational because the parties sit opposite each other; we do not adopt the same soft line as the Europeans. I believe that that makes our debates a darn sight more interesting: they have flavour and they are often very pertinent indeed. One only wishes that Parliament received better media coverage generally so that we could put our case to the people. That could only benefit the institution of Parliament.

By and large, I welcome the procedures that have been introduced by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House tonight.

5.16 pm

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), who said that the past parliamentary Session was not typical. I think it is very dangerous to measure procedural experiments in an untypical Session. I believe that it would have been better to allow the informal arrangements to continue for three or four years, perhaps trying a few more experiments and observing how they worked, and then include them in the Standing Orders. I realise that the Standing Orders may be changed in the future, but I believe that the House should be very cautious in accepting that all the reforms are beneficial.

I welcome the fact that hon. Members may be able to leave the House at 7 o'clock on a Thursday night. That is a very sensible proposal. However, we must be very careful that that does not change the nature of the whole of Thursday. I have been surprised by how difficult it is to persuade people to attend meetings within the House—not in the Chamber—on a Thursday because they assume that they may be able to return to their constituencies on a Wednesday night. Therefore, Thursday becomes a quieter day. If one compares Prime Minister's Question Time on a Thursday with Prime Minister's Question Time on a Tuesday, one sees that there are far fewer hon. Members in the Chamber on a Thursday.

Having business questions and then a statement on a Thursday leaves only two hours, or even less time, for debate. Therefore, there is a tendency not to have major debates on a Thursday—unless the Government are being particularly Machiavellian and want to squeeze the time allowed for debate. The business on Thursday is less likely to have a three-line Whip and, for that reason, I suggest that we are changing the nature of Thursdays.

Hon. Members who serve on Standing Committees may have noticed how reluctant Committees are to meet on Thursday evenings because other hon. Members are likely to have left the building. Committee members often find themselves wandering around empty corridors like ghosts. We must look carefully at the implications of the proposals for Thursdays. Perhaps business questions could be moved to Wednesdays to allow time for a guaranteed three-hour debate on Thursdays.

There are two strong arguments for retaining the possibility of debating money resolutions. One hopes that there would be agreement among hon. Members, and no one would need to use the time allocated for money resolutions. However, if many hon. Members were competing to get into a debate, one could always make it clear that, if one's speech could not be squeezed in, one would speak on the money resolution. It was amazing how often Front-Bench spokesmen were prepared to give up a little more of their time to make sure that everybody got in. Money resolutions represented an important opportunity to guarantee that people got into the main debate. They were also a useful muscle for the Opposition. If there was a disagreement, the Opposition could threaten to debate the money resolution, and everyone would be delayed a little longer.

The more those opportunities are reduced, the more hon. Members have to turn to more disruptive activities to get across the passions that they feel. It was a Conservative Member who picked up the Mace, but the more we remove the means of putting pressure on the Government, the more we encourage hon. Members in such activities as picking up the Mace. I urge the House not to remove all the ways for hon. Members to demonstrate rebellion and disagreement.

I now refer to the motion for shorter speeches. One of the most disappointing developments since I have been in the House is that the debate often deteriorates in the evening, and restricting speeches to 10 minutes makes it worse. We might as well have a room upstairs where people can deliver a speech to a mirror, as once the 10-minute rule is imposed there are no interventions. The right hon. Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) said that the Chair could use its discretion, but all too often there is no chance of that, because hon. Members do not give way if they have only 10 minutes, so there is no question of the Chair exercising discretion. Matters would be greatly improved if speeches were 10 minutes excluding interventions.

We have now removed all opportunities for Back Benchers to cause votes on motions. That is an amazing reduction in their powers. The Government have the right to table motions. The Opposition have Supply days and so do the minority parties, but Back Benchers will now have no opportunity to vote on a motion.

There was a time when, if hon. Members put their names to an early-day motion, there was a chance that it would be debated. One trick that could be played if one came first in the ballot was to pick up an early-day motion that had support from hon. Members on both sides of the House who had claimed to their constituents that they were in favour of it. One could then table a motion using exactly the same words, to find out whether they really supported the early-day motion to which they had put their name.

Now there will be no way for Back Benchers to test the opinion of the House. There will be cosy agreements between the Front Benches, but no rights for Back Benchers. I accept that it was unusual to come first in the ballot and that it was rare to have a vote, but the Government should consider finding some way of giving Back-Bench Members the right to table motions and have votes on them as a safeguard.

Mr. Mackinlay: I was interested to hear my hon. Friend say that only a few votes were taken on private Members' motions. However, on 1 July 1994, a majority in the Chamber supported the call for a Minister responsible for veterans' affairs, and the Government did not dare divide the House because they would have lost. Apart from the Opposition, a commanding majority of Conservatives supported the idea of a Minister responsible for veterans' affairs, so the Government did not divide the House. To say that only 12 per cent. of motions resulted in votes hides the fact that on many occasions the Executive get the message and dare not have a Division.

Mr. Bennett: I understand how the Government manoeuvred to avoid a vote, but real and direct pressure was put on the Executive by the possibility that there could have been one. The Leader of the House has to find a way of restoring that right to Back Benchers, either by accepting amendments (a) and (b) in my name or by considering the amendment in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) that we have ballots on Mondays. I do not mind whether it is Wednesday morning or Monday afternoon, but it is important to restore to Back Benchers the right to have votes.

Mr. Paul Tyler (North Cornwall): Before the hon. Gentleman leaves that point, I would like to express my concern and that of all Back Benchers. The issue is clearly of considerable importance with the present balance of arithmetic in the House, but in future, if we have a balance of parties with no overall majority for the Administration, it will be even more important that Back-Bench groups can find opportunities to vote on important issues of principle. Therefore, there will be widespread concern on both sides of the House that the Leader of the House should listen to that point this evening.

Mr. Bennett: We should also examine the ballot procedure. We were assured from the Chair that Madam Speaker has an arrangement for balloting for Wednesday morning debates. I make a plea that it should be more transparent.

The old way in which hon. Members went into the Lobby, signed their names in the ballot book, and the raffle was carried out by the Chair, was a transparent procedure. One got a slot before announcing what one wanted to debate. It was a way of putting pressure on the Government. I remember at least one occasion during the last Labour Government when someone allegedly from the awkward squad came first in the ballot and there were frantic negotiations and deals struck between the Whips as to what motion that individual would table. None of that exists in the present procedure. If the majority of Back-Bench time is to be controlled by ballots run by the Speaker, other Members should know which hon. Members have put in their names, what they have selected and who has been successful or otherwise.

[Mr. Bennett]

The Government should not stop the experiments; they should continue to have experiments, but they should not rush into making them permanent until we have had more time to see how they work in the long run. Particularly in respect of the rights of Back Benchers to cause votes, the Government should think again.

5.26 pm

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): It is important to remember that tonight's debate is the culmination of a number of occasions in the past 20 years when power has been taken from Back Benchers and handed to the two Front Benches. The practice has not been confined to the Tory party, as it is on this occasion—it happened under the Labour Government of 1974-79. Today we are removing a little more power from Back Benchers and handing it over to the Government of the day.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. Mackinlay) referred to the Consolidated Fund Bill. We could keep debate on it going ad nauseam through the following day, not because we wanted to be awkward but to stop some lousy Government business that would affect our constituents. On the occasion to which my hon. Friend referred, we were extremely successful. Not only did we have a vote on the Consolidated Fund, but we stretched out all three stages of the Bill. Gradually such opportunities were whittled down, until the debate finished at 9 o'clock without a Division.

Today's debate represents an extension of the exercise embarked on earlier this year when the Jopling proposals were introduced. Let us make no mistake about it. It is not about Labour versus Tory in terms of power. If Tory Back Benchers were worth their salt, there would be scores of them here today. They can see a Labour Government staring them in the face and they will not have the power that they had between 1974 and 1979 when they led the Labour Government a dance hour after hour through the night. I could recite all those occasions when Tory Back Benchers gave the Callaghan Government hell. That opportunity has been taken away. They are cutting off their nose to spite their face.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): I was in the House during those years. Perhaps my hon. Friend recalls the occasion in mid-1974 when Conservative Members, in opposition, kept the House going on a Consolidated Fund Bill so long that it was stopped only by the appearance of the Prime Minister at the Dispatch Box. That was over the slag heaps affair. A Tory Government is removing that right.

Mr. Skinner: That adds to my argument that Parliament is changing. Most members of the Government and many of our Front Benchers want that change, but it takes power from Back Benchers.

When I first entered the House, there could be a properly designated Adjournment debate before every recess—it was the real thing and could not be stopped. If 50 hon. Members wanted to speak, the Government had to invoke the closure procedure to stop them. That meant that the Government had to keep their troops here.

One weapon that Back Benchers have is the ability to occupy the Government's time and space. That applies to the Opposition in general, both Front Benchers and Back Benchers. The only real power that they have is to show that they are not prepared to take Government proposals lying down.

A good example of that involved Geoffrey Howe, when he was Leader of the House for a short spell. He did not like that job, which had been given to him by Margaret Thatcher. Many of us kept the Government up for several nights and Geoffrey Howe pulled up stumps. He was not having any more of that. That was another occasion when the Government decided to limit the power of Back Benchers.

We have lost the ability to keep Adjournment debates going more than three hours. Such debates have been slipped into Wednesdays.

Mr. Dalyell: In their reforms, Front Benchers are being dreadfully and pitifully naive. They are taking away not only the time of the House but the concentration of the civil service and of Whitehall on what occurs in the House. The Leader of the House should not be naive and simplistic. If Parliament matters less and less—some of us think that that is to the detriment of the country—that is one reason.

Mr. Skinner: I absolutely agree. Some of my hon. Friends have already referred to money resolutions. Again, power has been taken from Back Benchers who, if they had not managed to participate in the Second Reading debate, had 45 minutes to raise issues. Again, that change does not affect Front Benchers. They still have their say, but Back Benchers lost another opportunity to contribute.

As for Wednesday mornings, I applied for an Adjournment debate on French nuclear tests and the capture of the Rainbow Warrior. Many hon. Members were concerned about the events of that Sunday afternoon, and I raised them in the House on Monday. The Speaker more or less told me that if I made an application for an Adjournment debate, I would get one. I did—on a Wednesday morning.

Under the old-fashioned system of winning a place in the ballot for a Friday or Monday, there would have been a three-hour debate. I got a quarter of an hour and was able to offer a couple of minutes to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), and another hon. Member managed to utter a couple of sentences. If any 20 of us had been presented with the opportunity to ballot for a motion, there would have been a three-hour debate. In the old days, there could also have been a Division and the Government would have been even more embarrassed. Although it is argued that Wednesday mornings provide an opportunity for hon. Members to raise issues, it is not the same as before, when I was able to table a motion about imported coal to which many other hon. Members could contribute.

As for the four-day week, I understand the argument that there are things for an hon. Member to do in his constituency. My argument is that whatever gloss is put on it, the 4 million people who are unemployed will say, "Why can't Members of Parliament produce legislation for a four-day week, to mop up the unemployed and to give young men and women a chance to get a job?" That is one of the most important challenges that will face the next Labour Government.

Tory Members will have given away all that parliamentary power, and they are losing their directorships under Nolan. God knows what they will do with themselves at night. The Government will have got their legislation through at 8 pm and the House will not sit on Fridays—there may be another 10 Fridays off. Make no mistake: that will be the new Blair agenda.

All the Tory Members who are not in the Chamber will wish that they had been here to battle for the cause of Back Benchers. They have thrown it all away. I am standing up for the rights of a few of us. We will divide the House tonight, but we will have one big laugh when they put pink curtains up at No. 10 Downing street and the *Daily Mirror* reporter is able to go in there any day of the week. Then again, he may not. Those days will be different from 1974 and 1979.

Tory Back Benchers, with or without directorships, will rue the day that they shovelled away the power of Back Benchers. When a party is in opposition, it has loads of Back Benchers with loads of grievances. Labour Ministers will be arrayed on that Treasury Bench and they will be laughing all the way home. It will be left to me and my hon. Friends to carry the torch on behalf of Back Benchers, but we will not have the power that we used to have. Today, power is being taken from Back Benchers and handed to members of the two Front Benches, and there is no clear blue water between them.

5.38 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) put his finger on the point. There may be more time on Wednesdays and a more useful arrangement of time, but that time is for opinion rather than decision initiated by Back Benchers. My hon. Friend's example of a possible motion expressing an opinion about French nuclear tests will ring a bell in the minds of the public.

Our ability to raise such matters and to threaten a Division is not for our benefit but for those whom we represent. Without that power, the House will not have the respect that it would otherwise enjoy. That is one reason why public esteem for the House has reduced. More and more, matters are fixed between members of the two Front Benches. I will deal with that when I respond to the lack of enthusiasm shown by my hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) for my amendment on private Members' motions.

Delegated legislation going Upstairs automatically by a Standing Order is dangerous, because the time allowed for such legislation is usually attenuated by the Chair after a little talk and takes up perhaps 30 seconds of the time of the House. As the hon. Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) said, it takes 20 hon. Members to stand up and say no. Some years ago, it was not difficult for one hon. Member, knowing that he had 19 supporters, to make representations, after which the statutory instrument might be dealt with on the Floor of the House or there would be discussion of it. That power is being removed without adding one minute to the time of Back Benchers.

When the experiment was first suggested, many of us did not object to the Wednesdays. I am afraid that the speech by the Chairman of the Procedure Committee illustrated the problem with what is happening now. Doubling the time for Adjournment debates on Wednesdays is being used as an excuse for taking away private Members' power to speak and, more important, to divide. I hope that the media will not say that Members have endorsed the reforms. As far as Wednesdays go, I am not a member of the awkward squad. By all means give us double the time, but do not reduce our power under this camouflage.

Independent motions are part of the fabric of democracy and form part of our ancient parliamentary rights. A century ago, the time of the House was distributed fairly evenly between private Members' time, Government time and time for private legislation. The distribution varied from Session to Session, but since then private Members' time has been consistently whittled away with the connivance of Front Benchers on both sides, because it is in their interests to do that. Of course that prevents Members from representing the views of their constituents, often on non-party issues. The debates on private Members' motions will often bring out matters that have nothing to do with party opinion. Indeed, they can show the public that Members of Parliament are reasonable people of good sense, whose concerns mirror the public's concerns.

I hope tonight for some reassurance to the contrary from the Leader of the House, because Front Benchers on both sides are diminishing the status of Parliament and of private Members themselves. That in turn diminishes the legitimacy of those who speak from the Front Benches, and people will begin to doubt whether it is worth entering Parliament at all.

An important principle is at stake here. Until last year, on no fewer than 14 occasions in the year, Members successful in the ballot were able to debate a subject of their choice. The fact that that represented a tremendous threat to Front Benchers has been shown today in various ways. Often, a Member who has been successful in the ballot can be approached by other Members with more ideas touching on issues that affect the public. A thousand choices of subject present themselves in the early-day motions on our Order Paper, for instance. The Leader of the House is frequently asked for time to debate early-day motions, and in fact they are often debated: now that chance will go.

We also often hear the Leader of the House saying that the question raised by an hon. Member is a matter of great public importance, and that he should take his chances in the ballot. After today, unless we can be reassured otherwise, the right hon. Gentleman will no longer be able to say that.

It is true, as the right hon. Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) said, that private Members' time for Adjournment debates has been doubled. The modest amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) suggests considering private Members' motions on four Wednesday mornings a year, which amounts to about half an hour a week. What is wrong with that? My amendment proposes four Mondays a year for this purpose, which amounts to no more than 20 minutes a week. My hon. Friends have already demonstrated that the Government are afraid of such motions, which is why, at the same time as doubling private Members' time to discuss subjects on the Adjournment, the Government are commuting our real power. There can be only one reason for eliminating that power: such debates really mattered.

The Leader of the House should accept one or other of the amendments—I am not too bothered which. I have proposed Mondays because I think that voting at 7 o'clock on a Monday on a motion or a closure would be a better

[Mr. Nigel Spearing]

time. Even a closure can be a bit of a threat, for reasons of which we are all well aware. I think that that would be more convenient than voting at 2 o'clock on a Wednesday, as proposed by my hon. Friend. But if my amendment falls I will support his, since Madam Speaker has been gracious enough to allow us to proceed at some stage to both. Perhaps the Leader of the House will concede my idea of Mondays, if only because they will involve only three hours, instead of the four and a half or five hours involved in the other amendment.

I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury is not here at the moment. I neither followed nor agreed with what she said. I would hope that no Government will reduce the powers of Members of this House, because by doing so they would reduce the powers of the electorate as well. If the Government do that, they are demonstrating an arrogance which our democratic traditions should not tolerate. I hope that none of us, when we leave this place, will be sorry that we connived at the change.

5.45 pm

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): It comes as a great shock to me to be called one of the awkward squad when, as hon. Members will know, I have been all my life the epitome of the gentle, calm and flexible politician. However, if I am to be awkward on this occasion, I hope that I shall do so with vigour and intent.

I have been here a very long time and I think it patronising to suggest that those of us who object to some of these changes do so merely because we are used to the old ways and have nothing useful to contribute. It is suggested that our objections are based, not on an understanding of what the House of Commons should be doing, but on a wish to stay as we always have been.

On the contrary, I believe that some of the problems raised this afternoon are fundamental. It is important to have extra time for Back Benchers, and I welcome Wednesday morning debates. Indeed, it would be ungracious of me not to, as I have been lucky enough to initiate one or two of them myself. But they should not be an alternative to allowing Back Benchers the muscle that goes with a vote. I am sure that the Leader of the House is not silly enough to think that they are an alternative. He must realise that Members of Parliament know the difference between a general debate and forcing the Government to take note of a vote which expresses the opinion of all parties.

So why are we being told that these are minimal changes to which we should not object because they simply ameliorate the workings of the House and, to use the phrase of my hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), make it more efficient? That is not so. I do not mind people thinking me an idiot, but I do not want them to make it too clear. In this instance, the Leader of the House does himself an injustice. He does care about the rights of Back Benchers, but he cannot genuinely believe that we are so naive as not to be able to see what is happening.

Front Benchers, for their own sensible and focused reasons, are bent on ensuring that there are ever fewer opportunities for ordinary Members to cause trouble. But trouble is what Parliament is all about. I have sat in the European Parliament and listened to those well organised debates in which people read out speeches without accepting any interventions and then brief representatives of the media outside the Chamber, congratulating themselves on ably representing a democratic system when in fact they are doing nothing of the sort.

It is debate, fight and teasing out all the awkward things that people do not want known that is important about the Chamber. It has been like that for many centuries.

Mr. Dalyell: Does my hon. Friend remember the Member of the European Parliament who was least willing of all to give way at any time when she and I were indirectly elected MEPs? His name was Giulio Andreotti.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Yes, and we all know that Mr. Andreotti was exceedingly good at organising procedure. Indeed, he made an entire career out of it. I was brought up by a man who believed in procedure because he understood that, when one was in a tight corner, having control of the standing orders was the way to limit any difficult debate. He understood that knowing how the standing orders operated gave one the power to control what was going on in any committee. That is a lesson that I have never forgotten.

I agree with 10-minute limits on speeches when many people want to speak and when the debate lends itself to hon. Members making one or two individual points. That is fine. There is not a problem with that. However, it is not always suitable. In some debates, people have to have the time to make a thoughtful speech, to accept interventions and to develop an argument. That cannot always be done in a truncated speech.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Does my hon. Friend agree that not only Members of the European Parliament but parliamentarians from various long-established democracies recognise that the rights that we have had in this place far exceed what they have? Is there not a danger that we shall go their way, in the sense of sitting shorter hours and putting much more emphasis on activities outside this place? What we have established over the years—a full-time Parliament which sits for far longer than other Parliaments in Europe—is being slowly eroded and undermined. That is not good for parliamentary democracy.

Mrs. Dunwoody: It is no accident that some people apparently spend an enormous amount of effort getting here and then cannot wait to spend all their time out on College green. I am old-fashioned enough to think that this is the place where we ask questions of the Government. If we have long recesses and ever longer periods when there is no one sitting in the House of Commons, Governments are not altogether unhappy because it means that they do not have to answer awkward questions. We are here to pose the awkward questions.

There are already whole areas of legislation that slip through. The European Standing Committees are disgracefully undermanned and underwomaned. Many people who are well known outside the House on every television programme on the face of God's earth are rarely to be found in those boring old Committees in which a lot of the work is done hour after hour by people asking awkward questions and examining the implications of legislation.

I believe that the Leader of the House is genuinely trying to help, but I am so worried about the way in which the House of Commons is going that I believe that the time is coming for some of us to make our views painfully clear to the electorate. The House must never become merely a backdrop for a few hours of cable television. It must never ever become a Chamber to which people come only when they think that they have their soundbites and their colours correct. It must not become a place to which people come to deal with just one tiny aspect of a complicated subject.

Parliament is dependent on the detailed knowledge and commitment of Members of all sorts of shapes and sizes. In the 30-odd years that I have been here, I have seen many people with diverse views, many of which I did not accept. They made complex speeches about aspects of legislation which I had not envisaged because I had no way of knowing the impact of a particular Bill. They succeeded in convincing the House of their view because they had something important to say. If we ever lose that diversity and become mere exponents of the brief intervention and the calm acceptance that Back Benchers are here merely as walk-ons, democracy will be damaged.

It is not the noise that people object to in this place. It is not the shouting and the constant turmoil. It is the failure to understand that that turmoil frequently reflects genuine depths of feeling out in the country. If that ceased to be expressed, the silence would be deafening, and the result would be much more like anarchy.

5.54 pm

Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow): It is a great pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody). There is much in what she says with which I am bound to agree. I hope that the House will take notice of the advice that she gives from the standpoint of her long experience of parliamentary matters. I share her anxiety about the future of the House and the future powers of Back Benchers to express views and articulate the views of the people whom they represent. More and more I see the House becoming simply a rubber stamp for the Executive.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will appreciate that I speak from a particular standpoint. During the past year or so I have put myself in a position in which perhaps few Back Benchers have previously found themselves. The hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich said that the only thing that really mattered at the end of the day was the vote. That is correct. It is becoming more apparent that the views expressed in the House are perhaps listened to, but in great measure disregarded because for understandable reasons the Executive have a view as to which way they want to go and which way they want to take the country.

Sometimes, as has been proved recently, the Executive want to take the country in a direction in which the country palpably does not want to go. My colleagues and I were able to stand up to the Government during the past 12 or 18 months because we knew that the people whom we represented thought that we were right in that great debate and that the Government were wrong. Yet throughout the debate it was apparent for all to see that the only thing that the Government recognised was, not the force of the argument—night after night my colleagues deployed an argument which was undoubtedly cogent and irrefutable—but the force of the vote. The Government prevailed because they had more voting power than we so-called rebels.

The single issue to which I have referred is not the point. The point is what is happening to our Parliament. It is relevant to consider what is happening to our Parliament in the context of the European Union. It is apparent for all to see—no one can argue about it—that what is decided in treaties has to go through the House even though the vast majority of Back Benchers may feel that it is wrong. By signing the treaties, the Government have signed away the right that we as Back Benchers previously had to decide matters.

That was demonstrated on 24 November last year when I and eight of my colleagues had the party Whip withdrawn because we failed to support the Government in a vote to send £75 million more to the European Union. I venture to suggest that, had it been a domestic issue, we would not have been drummed out of the regiment. The Government had to deliver on that particular promise, as on all the other promises that they have made, because they have committed Britain and all the people whom we represent by signing the treaties. That is a particular development of the past 25 years. As the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich rightly said, that is the wrong way for Parliament to proceed.

I am worried about how difficult it will be to explain to our electorate exactly how little power we have here as Back Benchers. At present, by and large, the electorate feel that when they send us to Parliament we can have a great influence over what goes on here, decide matters on their behalf and ensure that their view is fully represented.

We can certainly make representations, but I return to the point that ultimately the only thing that the Executive recognise is voting power. The measures that we are debating today will give more time for Back Benchers to ventilate their own private or constituency interests, but it will be at the expense of the time that we have as Back Benchers for scrutinising legislation and controlling the Executive.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael Morris): I now call Mr. Rooker.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can it be registered that others of us were waiting to speak when you called the Front-Bench spokesman? Anyone looking for an example of Front-Bench fixing could find it in the way the two-hour motion was slipped through on a Friday. I must say to the House authorities—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. That is not a matter for the Chair. I call Mr. Rooker.

6 pm

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) and many of my other hon. Friends have made valid points this afternoon, as did the hon. Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill). I also recall many of the examples cited by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) from the last Labour Government.

While there has been an experiment this past year, what my hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) said was true. The parliamentary Session now coming to

[Mr. Jeff Rooker]

an end has not by any stretch of the imagination been typical of previous Sessions during my 20 years in the House, and I suspect that the Session due to start on 15 November will not be typical either.

We must make it clear to our constituents that we are the law-making authority. Nothing involved in the package affects the law-making process in terms of new legislation. That is sad; I wish that it were otherwise and that we could start to reform the House and produce quality legislation. A package of 24 items was announced and agreed last December and today we are dealing with just four or five. They are all important matters, but we are not dealing with some of them—for instance, the scandalous way in which we deal with European legislation. I understand from the Select Committee report produced in July, which I read in the recess, that hon. Members have often attended European Standing Committees and virtually been asked to agree legislation of which the text has not even been available. That practice must stop, as it is unacceptable. We need more time to tackle that problem.

I have just one question of clarification to ask the Leader of the House. Will he confirm that the rule remains in force whereby, on Second Reading of a Finance Bill, the 10 o'clock rule does not apply, thus allowing any hon. Member who has not been called yet to stand in his or her place and be called to speak and continue the debate? I see that the Leader of the House nods in agreement. It is an important matter.

I can think of only three cases in the past 20 years when an hon. Member has stood up at 10 pm, after the Front Benchers have sat down, and has said, "I demand my right under the rules to be called," and has been called by the Speaker. The House is not happy when that happens. I am one of the three people to have made use of that procedure, and I was not in the House's good books. I wanted to explain to my hon. Friends that there are procedures that they can use in the House if they have a mind to, but they do not. Sometimes procedures that are not used go by default. I should hate hon. Members to lose the opportunity of raising issues on Second Reading of the Finance Bill.

Wednesday mornings have proved useful. I used one in March to raise the subject of domestic violence and was told by the Minister not to worry as a Bill was coming from the other place covering all the issues that I had raised.

Mr. Mackinlay: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Rooker: I cannot give way, because, for obvious reasons, my time is limited.

Change is slow to occur in this place. The sloth of this place is such that it took 34 months for us to begin the experiment proposed in the Jopling report. That is a thundering disgrace. I do not blame anyone in particular on either side of the House, but my example shows how slow the rate of change is in this place.

Procedure is not a tool in itself; it is a tool that we use to help and represent our constituents. It is not the be-all and end-all, but it is important. We must master the procedure, not let it control us; we must shape it, mould it and modernise it.

Life should be tough for Ministers. The 13-week recess belongs in a bygone age, and it will be when we have a change of Government. We need more reform than is proposed in the measures that we are discussing today. We must create a useful Parliament which holds Government to account, creates good quality legislation and allows those affected by our legislation to wield greater influence over our proceedings. None of those improvements will be achieved through the measures, which represent a tiny pinprick in a package of reforms that is long overdue.

6.6 pm

Mr. Newton: I, too, have only a few minutes for my speech. We have been trying to allow as many speeches as possible in the debate. It is ironic that what has been said this afternoon contrasts with the cause of the earlier delay: the attempt to tease out an agreement. That period was uncomfortable for me because of the number of people who demanded the exact opposite of what has been demanded of me this evening. The great majority of hon. Members wanted the changes that we have made because they felt them to be right. While I do not dismiss—as I never seek to dismiss—points that have been made, we should be clear that the support expressed from the Front Benches and by my right hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) today is widely expressed around the House, and has been over many months.

I hope that I shall be forgiven if I do not take much time to respond to those who have spoken in support of the measures, but respond to those comments that were less supportive. I am sure that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will ensure that Madam Speaker's attention is drawn to some of the comments made about the Wednesday morning arrangements.

I cannot recommend the amendments, or any variant of them, to the House. The Jopling report specifically recommended that private Members' business should be taken on a motion for the Adjournment, to ensure that no votes were taken during a morning sitting. That system has worked well and has commanded general support. I note the proposal of the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), but the transfer of private Members' business to Wednesday mornings has, as has already emerged, given Back Benchers more time on the Floor of the House.

There is no case to be made for providing a further four half-days. That would be contrary to the basis of the Jopling reforms, which were designed not to increase the amount of time that the House sits, but to decrease it to a more realistic level and provide a balance. In practice, the experiment has resulted in an increase in the time available for private Members' business.

There is some irony in the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) should have made the speech that he did. I find it difficult to think of anyone who has demonstrated more clearly the effectiveness of the Chamber and the role of the Back Bencher than my hon. Friend and some of his hon. Friends during our consideration of certain recent Bills. No one who has been in the House during the past two years could say that the influence of the House has diminished and that Whitehall and Ministers need not bother about it. That is an extraordinary description of the way in which I perceive and feel that the place operates and is perceived. I am sorry that I have no time for further and fuller comment. I merely say that we also had a piece of vintage Bolsover.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 165, Noes 17.

Division No. 227] **[6.10 pm**

AYES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Alton, David
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Matthew *(Southport)*
Bates, Michael
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Bellingham, Henry
Beresford, Sir Paul
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Body, Sir Richard
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bowis, John
Brandreth, Gyles
Bright, Sir Graham
Brown, M *(Brigg & Cl'thorpes)*
Brown, N *(N'c'tle upon Tyne E)*
Browning, Mrs Angela
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D N
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Congdon, David
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Cormack, Sir Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davies, Quentin *(Stamford)*
Dicks, Terry
Dowd, Jim
Duncan, Alan
Eagle, Ms Angela
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Fabricant, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Forth, Eric
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gillan, Cheryl
Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Gunnell, John
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Haselhurst, Sir Alan
Hawkins, Nick
Heald, Oliver
Hendry, Charles
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Higgins, Rt Hon Sir Terence
Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Horam, John
Hughes, Robert G *(Harrow W)*
Jack, Michael
Jenkin, Bernard
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Lidington, David
Lilley, Rt Hon Peter
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Luff, Peter
MacKay, Andrew
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malone, Gerald
Mandelson, Peter
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martlew, Eric
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Michael, Alun
Miller, Andrew
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Pawsey, James
Pickles, Eric
Radice, Giles
Rathbone, Tim
Rendel, David
Riddick, Graham
Robathan, Andrew
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Robinson, Mark *(Somerton)*
Roche, Mrs Barbara
Rooker, Jeff
Sackville, Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Nicholas
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Streeter, Gary
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Sir Teddy *(Southend, E)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Timms, Stephen
Tredinnick, David
Trend, Michael
Tyler, Paul
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Ward, John
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whitney, Ray
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Willetts, David
Wright, Dr Tony
Yeo, Tim
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Timothy Wood and
Mr. Simon Burns.

NOES

Anderson, Donald *(Swansea E)*
Barnes, Harry
Bennett, Andrew F
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Tom
Dalyell, Tam
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Flynn, Paul
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Madden, Max
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Simpson, Alan
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Spearing, Nigel
Spellar, John
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Dennis Skinner and
Mr. Andrew Mackinlay.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That—

(1) Standing Order (Consolidation bills) below shall have effect from the beginning of the next Session:

> "(1) In this order 'a consolidation bill' means a public bill which falls to be considered by the select committee appointed under Standing Order No. 123 (Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills).
>
> (2) Notices of amendments, new clauses and new schedules to be moved in committee in respect of a consolidation bill may be received by the Clerks at the Table before the bill has been read a second time.
>
> (3) When a motion shall have been made for the second reading, or for the third reading, of a consolidation bill, the question thereon shall be put forthwith.
>
> (4) If a motion that a consolidation bill be not committed is made by a Minister of the Crown immediately after the bill has been read a second time, the motion shall not require notice and the question thereon shall be put forthwith and may be decided at any hour, though opposed."

(2) Standing Order (Law Commission bills) below shall have effect from the beginning of the next Session:

> "(1) Any public bill, the main purpose of which is to give effect to proposals contained in a report by either of the Law Commissions, other than a private Member's bill or a bill to which Standing Order (Consolidation bills) applies, shall, when it is set down for second reading, stand referred to a second reading committee, unless—
>
> (a) the House otherwise orders, or
>
> (b) the bill is referred to the Scottish Grand Committee.
>
> (2) If a motion that a bill such as is referred to in paragraph (1) above shall no longer stand referred to a second reading committee is made by a Minister of the Crown at the commencement of public business, the question thereon shall be put forthwith.

(3) The provisions of paragraphs (3) to (6) of Standing Order No. 90 (Second reading committees) shall apply to any bill referred to a second reading committee under paragraph (1) above."

Motion made, and Question put,

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session—

(1) Standing Order (Money resolutions and ways and means resolutions in connection with bills) below shall have effect:

"(1) The Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on motions authorising expenditure in connection with a bill and on ways and means motions in connection with a bill—

(a) forthwith, if such a motion is made at the same sitting as that at which the bill has been read a second time; or

(b) not later than three-quarters of an hour after the commencement of those proceedings, if the motion is made otherwise.

(2) Business to which this order applies may be proceeded with at any hour, though opposed."

(2) In Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) paragraph (1)(d) and the proviso thereto shall be omitted.—[*Mr. Newton.*]

The House divided: Ayes 143, Noes 19.

Division No. 228] **[6.21 pm**

AYES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Alton, David
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baldry, Tony
Bates, Michael
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Bellingham, Henry
Beresford, Sir Paul
Body, Sir Richard
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bowis, John
Brandreth, Gyles
Bright, Sir Graham
Brown, M *(Brigg & Cl'thorpes)*
Brown, N *(N'c'tle upon Tyne E)*
Browning, Mrs Angela
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Congdon, David
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Cormack, Sir Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davies, Quentin *(Stamford)*
Duncan, Alan
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Emery, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Fabricant, Michael
Forth, Eric
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gillan, Cheryl
Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Hawkins, Nick
Heald, Oliver
Hendry, Charles
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Horam, John
Hughes, Robert G *(Harrow W)*
Jack, Michael
Jenkin, Bernard
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Lidington, David
Lilley, Rt Hon Peter
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Luff, Peter
MacKay, Andrew
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malone, Gerald
Mandelson, Peter
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Miller, Andrew
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Pawsey, James
Pickles, Eric
Radice, Giles
Rathbone, Tim
Rendel, David
Robathan, Andrew
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Rooker, Jeff
Sackville, Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Nicholas
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Streeter, Gary
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Timms, Stephen
Trend, Michael
Tyler, Paul
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Ward, John
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whitney, Ray
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Willetts, David
Wright, Dr Tony
Yeo, Tim
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Timothy Wood and
Mr. Simon Burns.

NOES

Austin-Walker, John
Barnes, Harry
Bennett, Andrew F
Campbell-Savours, D N
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Tom
Dalyell, Tam
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Flynn, Paul
Gunnell, John
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Marlew, Eric
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Simpson, Alan
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Spearing, Nigel
Spellar, John
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Dennis Skinner and
Mr. Andrew Mackinlay.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put,

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session—

(1) Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.) shall be repealed and Standing Order (Standing Committees on Delegated Legislation) below shall have effect:

"(1) There shall be one or more standing committees, to be called Standing Committees on Delegated Legislation, for the consideration of such instruments (whether or not in draft) as may be referred to them.

(2) Any Member, not being a member of such a standing committee, may take part in the deliberations of the Committee, but shall not vote or make any motion or move any amendment or be counted in the quorum.

(3) Where a Minister of the Crown has given notice of a motion to the effect that an instrument (whether or not in draft) upon which proceedings may be taken in pursuance of an Act of Parliament (other than a draft deregulation order) be approved, the instrument shall stand referred to a Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, unless—

(a) notice has been given by a Minister of the Crown of a motion that the instrument shall not so stand referred, or

(b) the instrument is referred to the Scottish Grand Committee.

(4) Where a Member has given notice of—

(a) a motion for an humble address to Her Majesty praying that a statutory instrument be annulled, or a motion of a similar character relating to a statutory instrument, or to any other instrument (whether or not in draft) which may be subject to proceedings in the House in pursuance of a statute, or a motion that the House takes note of a statutory instrument, or

(b) a motion that a measure under the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919 be presented to Her Majesty for her Royal Assent, or a motion relating to an instrument made under such a measure,

a motion may be made by a Minister of the Crown at the commencement of public business, that the instrument be referred to such a committee, and the question thereon shall be put forthwith; and if, on the question being put, not fewer than twenty Members rise in their places and signify their objection thereto, the Speaker shall declare that the noes have it.

(5) Each committee shall consider each instrument referred to it on a motion, 'That the committee has considered the instrument'; and the chairman shall put any question necessary to dispose of the proceedings on such a motion, if not previously concluded, when the committee shall have sat for one and a half hours (or, in the case of an instrument relating exclusively to Northern Ireland, two and a half hours) after the commencement of those proceedings; and the committee shall thereupon report the instrument to the House without any further question being put.

(6) If any motion is made in the House of the kind specified in paragraphs (3) or (4) of this order, in relation to any instrument reported to the House in accordance with paragraph (5) of this order, the Speaker shall put forthwith the question thereon and such question may be decided at any hour, though opposed."

(2) In paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 84 (Constitution of standing committees) and in paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 86 (Nomination of standing committees) for the words "statutory instruments or draft statutory instruments or measures under the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919 and instruments made under such measures" there shall be substituted the words "instruments (whether or not in draft)".

(3) Standing Order No. 15 (Prayers against statutory instruments, &c. (negative procedure)) shall be entitled "Delegated legislation (negative procedure)"; and at the end of the said Standing Order there shall be added the words "or be disapproved, or words to that effect".

(4) Standing Order (Proceedings under an Act or on European Community documents) below shall have effect:

"(1) The Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings under any Act of Parliament or on European Community documents not later than one and a half hours after the commencement of such proceedings, subject to the provisions of Standing Order No. 15 (Delegated legislation (negative procedure)).

(2) Business to which this order applies may be proceeded with at any hour, though opposed."

(5) In Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) paragraph (1)(b) and the proviso thereto shall be omitted.

(6) Standing Order No. 94F (Scottish Grand Committee (statutory instruments)) shall be entitled "Scottish Grand Committee (delegated legislation)"; in paragraph (1)(a) of the said Standing Order for lines 5 to 7 there shall be substituted the words "of a similar character relating to a statutory instrument or to any other instrument (whether or not in draft) which may be subject to proceedings in the House in pursuance of a statute, or of a motion that the"; in paragraph (1)(b) of the said Standing Order for the words "a statutory instrument or draft statutory instrument" there shall be substituted the words "an instrument (whether or not in draft) upon which proceedings may be taken in pursuance of an Act of Parliament (other than a draft deregulation order)"; and the words "or draft instrument" shall be omitted wherever in the said Standing Order they occur.

(7) For paragraph (2)(e) of Standing Order No. 94A (Scottish Grand Committee (composition and business)) there shall be substituted the following paragraph:

"(e) motions relating to instruments (whether or not in draft) referred to it in accordance with Standing Order No. 94F (Scottish Grand Committee (delegated legislation));".—[*Mr. Newton.*]

The House divided: Ayes 137, Noes 14.

Division No. 229] **[6.32 pm**

AYES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Alton, David
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baldry, Tony
Bates, Michael
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Bellingham, Henry
Beresford, Sir Paul
Body, Sir Richard
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bowis, John
Brandreth, Gyles
Bright, Sir Graham
Brown, M *(Brigg & Cl'thorpes)*
Brown, N *(N'c'tle upon Tyne E)*
Browning, Mrs Angela
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Congdon, David
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davies, Quentin *(Stamford)*
Duncan, Alan
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Emery, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Forth, Eric
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gillan, Cheryl
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Gunnell, John
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hawkins, Nick
Heald, Oliver
Hendry, Charles
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Horam, John
Hughes, Robert G *(Harrow W)*
Jack, Michael
Jenkin, Bernard
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Lidington, David
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Luff, Peter
MacKay, Andrew
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malone, Gerald
Mandelson, Peter
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Marlew, Eric
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Merchant, Piers
Michael, Alun
Miller, Andrew
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Pawsey, James
Pickles, Eric
Rathbone, Tim
Rendel, David
Robathan, Andrew
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Rooker, Jeff
Sackville, Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Nicholas
Spellar, John
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Streeter, Gary
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Tredinnick, David
Trend, Michael
Tyler, Paul
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Ward, John
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Willetts, David
Wood, Timothy
Wright, Dr Tony
Yeo, Tim
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Roger Knapman and
Mr. Simon Burns.

NOES

Bennett, Andrew F
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Tom
Dalyell, Tam
Flynn, Paul
Gill, Christopher
Mackinlay, Andrew
Madden, Max
Simpson, Alan
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Spearing, Nigel
Wilkinson, John
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Harry Barnes and
Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session—

(1) Standing Order (House not to sit on certain Fridays) below shall have effect:

> "(1) The House shall not sit on ten Fridays in each Session to be appointed by the House.
>
> (2) If a motion to appoint such Fridays is made by a Minister of the Crown the question thereon shall be put forthwith and may be decided at any hour, though opposed.
>
> (3) At its rising on the Thursday before each of the Fridays so appointed the House shall stand adjourned till the following Monday without any question being put, unless it shall have resolved otherwise.
>
> (4) Unless the House shall have resolved to adjourn otherwise than from the previous Thursday to the following Monday, the Fridays so appointed shall be treated as sitting days for the purpose of calculating any period under any order of the House and for the purposes of paragraph (8) of Standing Order No. 18 (Notices of questions, motions and amendments) and of Standing Order No. 62 (Notices of amendments, &c., to bills); and on such Fridays—
>
> (a) notices of questions may be given by Members to the Table Office, and
>
> (b) notices of amendments to bills, new clauses and new schedules and of amendments to Lords amendments may be received by the Public Bill Office,
>
> between eleven o'clock and three o'clock."

(2) Standing Order (Wednesday sittings) below shall have effect:

> "(1) The House shall meet on Wednesdays at half-past nine o'clock and shall between that hour and two o'clock proceed with a motion for the adjournment of the House made by a Minister of the Crown.
>
> (2) Save as provided in paragraphs (3) and (4) below, the subjects for debate on the said motion shall be chosen by ballot under arrangements made by the Speaker; and no subject shall be raised without notice.
>
> (3) On the last Wednesday before any adjournment of the House for more than four days, the subject for debate on the said motion until half-past twelve o'clock shall be "matters to be considered before the forthcoming adjournment".
>
> (4) On not more than three Wednesdays in each Session to be appointed by the Speaker, the subject or subjects for debate on the said motion until half-past twelve o'clock shall be select committee reports chosen by the Liaison Committee.
>
> (5) Not more than two subjects shall be raised before half-past twelve o'clock, and not more than three between that hour and two o'clock.
>
> (6) A motion for the adjournment of the House not disposed of at two o'clock shall lapse and the sitting shall be suspended until half-past two o'clock; the House will then proceed with private business, motions for unopposed returns and questions; no subsequent motion for the adjournment of the House shall be made until all the questions asked at the commencement of public business have been disposed of; and, save as provided in paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration), no Member other than a Minister of the Crown may make such a motion before the orders of the day or notices of motions shall have been entered upon."

(3) In paragraphs (1) and (2) of Standing Order No. 9 (Sittings of the House) the words "Wednesdays " and "Wednesday" respectively shall be omitted; and in the proviso to paragraph (7) of the said Standing Order, after the word "o'clock" in line 57, there shall be inserted the words "in the evening".

(4) Standing Order No. 10 (Sittings of the House (suspended sittings)) shall be repealed; the reference to the said Standing Order in paragraph (7) of Standing Order No. 9 (Sittings of the House) shall be omitted; and in paragraph (1)(a) of Standing Order No. 133 (Time and manner of presenting petitions) the words from "conclusion" in line 10 to "and" in line 14 shall be omitted.

(5) In Standing Order No. 13 (Arrangement of public business) paragraphs (7), (8) and (9) shall be omitted; in paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 9 (Sittings of the House) for the words from "returns" in line 4 to the end of the paragraph there shall be substituted the words "and questions"; in Standing Order No. 15A (New writs) the words "or notices of motion" shall be omitted; in paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 90 (Second reading committees) the words "or notices of motions" in line 15 shall be omitted; and in paragraph (1)(b) of Standing Order No. 133 (Time and manner of presenting petitions) the words "or motions" in line 18 shall be omitted.

(6) In paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 131 (Liaison Committee) the word "and" in line 4 shall be omitted and after the word "Commission" in line 7 there shall be inserted the words "and

> (c) to report to the House its choice of select committee reports to be debated on such Wednesdays as may be appointed by the Speaker in pursuance of paragraph (4) of Standing Order (Wednesday sittings)".

(7) Standing Order No. 22 (Periodic adjournments) shall be repealed and Standing Order (Periodic adjournments) below shall have effect:

> "When a motion shall have been made by a Minister of the Crown for the adjournment of the House for a specified period or periods, the question thereon shall be put forthwith, and may be decided at any hour, though opposed."

(8) Standing Order No. 54 (Consolidated Fund Bills) shall be repealed and Standing Order (Consolidated Fund Bills) below shall have effect:

> "When a motion shall have been made for the second reading of a Consolidated Fund or an Appropriation Bill, the question thereon shall be put forthwith, no order shall be made for the committal of the bill and the question for third reading shall be put forthwith; and the said questions may be decided at any hour, though opposed."

(9) In paragraph (1)(a) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) the words "or any Consolidated Fund Bill or Appropriation Bill" shall be omitted.—*[Mr. Newton.]*

Amendment proposed: (a), in paragraph (2)(1), after 'shall', insert:

'except on four such days to be appointed by the House' —*[Mr. Bennett.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 26, Noes 113.

Division No. 230] **[6.43 pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Barnes, Harry
Boateng, Paul
Campbell-Savours, D N
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Tom
Dalyell, Tam
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Flynn, Paul
Gale, Roger
Gunnell, John
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Mackinlay, Andrew
Maclennan, Robert
Madden, Max
Mandelson, Peter
Marlew, Eric
Michael, Alun

Rendel, David
Simpson, Alan
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Spellar, John
Tyler, Paul
Winnick, David
Wright, Dr Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Nigel Spearing and
Mr. Andrew F. Bennell.

NOES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baldry, Tony
Bates, Michael
Bellingham, Henry
Beresford, Sir Paul
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bowis, John
Brandreth, Gyles
Bright, Sir Graham
Browning, Mrs Angela
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Congdon, David
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davies, Quentin *(Stamford)*
Duncan, Alan
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Emery, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Forth, Eric
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Gillan, Cheryl
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hawkins, Nick
Heald, Oliver
Hendry, Charles
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Horam, John
Hughes, Robert G *(Harrow W)*
Jack, Michael
Jenkin, Bernard
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Lidington, David
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Luff, Peter
MacKay, Andrew
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malone, Gerald
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Merchant, Piers
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Pawsey, James
Pickles, Eric
Rathbone, Tim
Robathan, Andrew
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Rooker, Jeff
Sackville, Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Nicholas
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Streeter, Gary
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Trend, Michael
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Willetts, David
Wood, Timothy
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Simon Burns and
Mr. Roger Knapman.

Question accordingly negatived.

Amendment proposed: (c), in paragraph (5), leave out

'paragraphs (7), (8) and (9)'

and insert

'paragraph (7) shall be omitted, in paragraph (8) the words 'On four days other than Fridays' shall be omitted and the words 'On not less than four Mondays' shall be inserted, and in paragraph (9) the words from the first word 'House' to the first word 'Notice'.' —*[Mr. Spearing.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 19, Noes 116.

Division No. 231] **[6.54 pm**

AYES

Barnes, Harry
Boateng, Paul
Campbell-Savours, D N
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Tom
Dalyell, Tam
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Flynn, Paul
Gordon, Mildred
Gunnell, John
Mackinlay, Andrew
Madden, Max
Mandelson, Peter
Michael, Alun
Simpson, Alan
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Spellar, John
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Nigel Spearing and
Mr. Andrew F. Bennett.

NOES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Alton, David
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baldry, Tony
Bates, Michael
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Bellingham, Henry
Beresford, Sir Paul
Boswell, Tim
Bowis, John
Brandreth, Gyles
Bright, Sir Graham
Browning, Mrs Angela
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Congdon, David
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Duncan, Alan
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Emery, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gillan, Cheryl
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hawkins, Nick
Heald, Oliver
Hendry, Charles
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Horam, John
Hughes, Robert G *(Harrow W)*
Jack, Michael
Jenkin, Bernard
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Lidington, David
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Luff, Peter
MacKay, Andrew
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malone, Gerald
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Marlow, Eric
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Merchant, Piers
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Pawsey, James
Pickles, Eric
Rathbone, Tim
Rendel, David
Robathan, Andrew
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Rooker, Jeff

Sackville, Tom
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Nicholas
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Streeter, Gary
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Trend, Michael
Tyler, Paul
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Willetts, David
Wood, Timothy
Wright, Dr Tony
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Noes:
Dr. Liam Fox and
Mr. Richard Ottaway.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put,

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session Standing Order No. 45A (Short speeches) shall be repealed and the following Standing Order (Short speeches) shall have effect:

> "The Speaker may announce at the commencement of proceedings on any motion or order of the day relating to public business that she intends to call Members to speak for not more than ten minutes in the debate thereon, or between certain hours during that debate, and whenever the Speaker has made such an announcement she may direct any Member (other than a Minister of the Crown, a Member speaking on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, or not more than one Member nominated by the leader of the second largest opposition party) who has spoken for ten minutes to resume his seat forthwith."—[*Mr. Newton.*]

The House divided: Ayes 120, Noes 12.

Division No. 232] **[7.04 pm**

AYES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Alton, David
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baldry, Tony
Bates, Michael
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Bellingham, Henry
Beresford, Sir Paul
Boswell, Tim
Brandreth, Gyles
Bright, Sir Graham
Browning, Mrs Angela
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D N
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Congdon, David
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Dowd, Jim
Duncan, Alan
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gillan, Cheryl
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gunnell, John
Hamilton, Sir Archibald
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hawkins, Nick
Heald, Oliver
Hendry, Charles
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Horam, John
Hughes, Robert G *(Harrow W)*
Jack, Michael
Jenkin, Bernard
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Lidington, David
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Luff, Peter
MacKay, Andrew
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malone, Gerald
Mandelson, Peter
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Marlow, Eric
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Merchant, Piers
Michael, Alun
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Pawsey, James
Pickles, Eric
Rathbone, Tim
Rendel, David
Robathan, Andrew
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Rooker, Jeff
Sackville, Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Nicholas
Spellar, John
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Streeter, Gary
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Trend, Michael
Tyler, Paul
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wood, Timothy
Wright, Dr Tony
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Dr. Liam Fox and
Mr. Richard Ottaway.

NOES

Barnes, Harry
Bennett, Andrew F
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Dalyell, Tam
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Gordon, Mildred
Madden, Max
Simpson, Alan
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Spearing, Nigel

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tom Cox and
Mr. Andrew Mackinlay.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Standards in Public Life

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Willetts.]*

7.15 pm

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Roger Freeman): Before I open the debate, I should like to welcome to the Opposition Front Bench the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Foster). For a long time, he sat—

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): Silent.

Mr. Freeman: Literally silent, but it was a thoughtful silence. We welcome him to the Opposition Front Bench. Although I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman and I will differ on policy, one thing is certain: the debate may be frank, but it will be courteous.

An all-day debate took place in the House on 18 May this year on the first report of the Nolan committee on standards in public life, so far as they affect the Government. Exactly two months later, on 18 July, the Government published their response to that report in the form of a White Paper and statements on the response were made here and in the other place.

I announced then that it was the Government's intention to have a further debate in this spill-over period. The debate would cover the proposed rules for business appointments for former Ministers before they were introduced from the start of the new Session, and the White Paper as a whole. I am pleased to be able to honour that commitment today.

I should like to make clear at the outset the very great degree of common approach between the Nolan committee and the Government. The Government's White Paper accepted all the major recommendations in the committee's report addressed to Government. Work on implementing a large number of those recommendations is now under way. Indeed, in some cases, it had already started before the White Paper was published.

I emphasise the fact that the Government accept the seven principles of public life set out in the Nolan report. They are important and they are worth repeating. The principles, which the committee set out as an over-arching framework to its recommendations, were selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. I am sure that the whole House will recommend and accept those seven principles. They are worth repeating constantly.

We are confident that those in public life in this country already adhere to those principles to a very high degree, as the committee acknowledged in its report. But we believe that the acceptance and implementation of the committee's recommendations will help to provide public reassurance on that point in areas where there may have been confusion or doubt.

I deal now with several specific and important issues to which I drew to the attention of the House in my statement on 18 July. I refer first to outside appointments taken up by former Ministers of the Crown. The Government believe that it is in the public interest that former Ministers with experience in government should be able to move into the private sector, not only to earn their living but to contribute to the United Kingdom economy—a view that is shared by Lord Nolan and his committee. But it is equally important that, when a former Minister takes up a particular appointment, there should be no cause for any suspicion of impropriety.

A balance needs to be struck, and I believe that the guidelines on the acceptance of appointments outside Government by former Ministers of the Crown, which I placed in the Library on Monday, achieves that. The key point is that we want those with experience of business, professions and other walks of life to come into Parliament and into Government, and then have the opportunity to return.

The aims of the guidelines are to counter suspicion, however unjustified, first, that the statements and decisions of a serving Minister might be influenced by the hope or expectation of future employment with a particular firm or organisation, and, secondly, an employer could make improper use of official information to which a former Minister has had previous access.

The guidelines provide a means for former Ministers to ask the advisory committee on business appointments for its advice about any appointments that they wish to take up within two years of leaving office.

That is not a statutory system—in fact, Lord Nolan and the committee came down in favour of an advisory system and not a statutory one—but the expectation is that all Ministers will ask the committee for advice. I should make it plain that I have authority only to speak on behalf of the Prime Minister and the current Administration, but we expect that all Ministers, if they are placed in a position of wishing to take up outside appointments, will seek the advice of the committee. Indeed, that is the reason why the guidelines are cast in terms of the availability of the committee to provide advice. It is not a statutory, but an advisory system.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Freeman: I will certainly give way, but I should like first to finish the point because it is important.

If a Minister chooses not to seek the advice of the committee, that will inevitably become public. The published reports of the advisory committee will ensure appropriate scrutiny. That is the sanction.

Mr. Maclennan: The Minister has placed great emphasis on advice, yet one of the Nolan committee's recommendations that touches on taking up appointments, and for which the committee made it plain that advice was not necessary, was that no Cabinet Minister should take up an appointment in business for three months, and that that should be automatic and not a discretionary matter. Why have the Government rejected that?

Mr. Freeman: With great respect, the Government have not rejected that; they have accepted it, with one proviso—I am coming on to it—that there may well be circumstances in which the advisory committee might feel that even the three-month waiting period could be waived. The circumstances are very limited and special, such as a return to an occupation where there was absolutely no conceivable conflict of interest or, indeed, any possibility that there could be justifiable suspicion.

I draw the attention of the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) to the fact that permanent secretaries—I suppose that there is some

[Mr. Freeman]

analogy—typically wait three months. The reason for the three-month waiting period for Cabinet Ministers and for permanent secretaries as a general rule is that they are privy to information about policy across all Departments: Government policy as a whole. Junior departmental Ministers are normally privy only to the policies of their particular Department. That is the reason for the three-month waiting period.

From my own experience, and in the experience of many right hon. and hon. Members in the Chamber tonight, I know that, when one moves from one Department to another, one's knowledge tends to stale remarkably quickly, because of the pace of modern life and modern government. I therefore believe that there is justification for the three-month rule, since general knowledge of policy will quickly stale.

A two-year maximum waiting period applied to specific jobs for which departmental Ministers, including Secretaries of State, may have specific knowledge, as I say, may be caught in some limited circumstances—I hope limited circumstances—by a need to wait. That is because of their more specialist knowledge, experience and connections with prospective employers.

Mr. Maclennan: I do not want to delay the Minister on this point but I think that he is chopping logic. Either a provision is automatic or it is discretionary. Nolan recommended that it should be automatic that Ministers do not take up appointments in business for three months. The Government are providing the discretion to waive it. That is not an acceptance of the Nolan recommendation: it is a clear rejection of it. Indeed, it is less than candid to present it as the Minister has.

Mr. Freeman: If, with the leave of the House, I am able to make the winding-up speech, I shall certainly reflect further on what the hon. Gentleman has said. I will refresh my memory as to precisely what the Nolan committee said in relation to the three-month rule for Cabinet Ministers. If the hon. Gentleman speaks, it might provide him with an opportunity to develop the point further.

The advisory committee will consider each request on its merits. It will ask the former Minister for details of the appointment, and also for details of any direct or indirect contact that he or she has had with the prospective employer or any of its competitors. There will be a standard form for such information, although Ministers will of course be able to supplement it with a letter.

The advisory committee will then consider each appointment against tests to ensure that the appointment cannot be seen as being in some way a reward for past favours, that it will not give the prospective employer an unfair advantage through access to trade secrets of competitors or knowledge of unannounced Government policy, and that it will not give rise to justifiable public concern for any other specific reason.

But in doing that, the committee will wish to be satisfied that any concerns are justified and not mere speculation. The committee will need to balance any points under those tests against the desirability of former Ministers being able to move into business or other areas of employment, or the need for them to be able to start a new career or resume a former one.

The advisory committee will be able to advise the former Minister that it sees no objection to the appointment, or it may recommend a delay of up to two years before it is taken up; or for a similar period, it may recommend that a former Minister should stand aside from certain activities of his employment or profession. One thinks, for example, of a solicitor.

All former Ministers of Cabinet rank will be expected to wait three months after leaving office before they take up any appointment, unless the committee confirms that the proposed appointment is such that no considerations of improper advantage could apply. As I said earlier, if the committee considers that a longer waiting period is necessary, it will advise the former Minister accordingly. The committee will consider requests for advice in confidence and, of course, independently of the Government. Its advice will be made available for publication, but only when an appointment is taken up.

I would expect it to become the practice that the employing organisation would refer to the advisory committee's advice when it announces that a former Minister is joining that organisation. The committee will produce an annual report summarising the cases with which it has dealt in the previous year. It is intended that the guidelines will come into effect from the start of the next Session of Parliament on November 15.

The Nolan committee also made recommendations on the business appointments rules as they affect civil servants and special advisers. I intend to publish, for consultation, after the start of the next Session, changes to those rules, which will include bringing special advisers within them for the first time. We intend that the new rules, including those which affect special advisers, will come into effect on 1 April 1996, but I would expect any special advisers appointed between today and the end of March 1996 to agree to abide by the existing rules on a voluntary basis.

Next I should like to mention the civil service code, the final text of which I announced on Monday. We have proceeded with particular care in this area. Our objective has been to maintain and build on the consensus which greeted the original draft code produced by the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee. I repeat the congratulations that the Government gave the Committee on its draft at the time. I see the Chairman of the Treasury and Civil Service Sub-Committee, the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice), in his place and I repeat, specifically for his benefit and for those on his Committee, our thanks.

Hon. Members will recall that we accepted the substance of all the recommendations of the Nolan committee on the code. Those were that the code should cover wrongdoing of which a civil servant is aware although not personally involved with; wider reporting of appeals by the civil service commissioners; a confidential appeal channel independent of a civil servant's line management; and introduction as soon as possible.

We published a revised draft in July to allow the civil service unions and others the opportunity to comment on the text, as it then incorporated the results of the initial consultation, including the Nolan committee recommendations. In fact, the further consultation has resulted in only a few very minor drafting alterations. I believe that we now have a succinct statement of the constitutional relationships and values that civil servants must uphold, which in all substantive respects commands near universal approval. That consensus is a precious asset, on which we should now build.

We agreed with the Nolan committee's recommendation that the code should be implemented as soon as possible, without waiting for legislation. Subject to the necessary Order in Council, we shall introduce the code in December to take effect from 1 January 1996.

I turn now to a point put to me by the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) in questions on my statement on 18 July. He asked whether the text that the Government had proposed for a revised first paragraph of "Questions of Procedure for Ministers"—which, as hon. Members will know, is published by the Prime Minister—could be amended to indicate that Ministers would withhold information from Parliament only in exceptional circumstances.

I have looked at "Erskine May" to see how far it has been a policy of successive Administrations to withhold information on certain matters. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) did the House a service in 1977-78 by putting a series of questions to the then Labour Administration, of which the right hon. Gentleman was a senior member, about departmental practice in withholding answers to questions. Such practice was extensive, and the results are summarised on page 292 of "Erskine May".

Since then, there have been many advances towards greater openness and I am sure that all hon. Members welcome that fact. Of course, the House would not have discussed the text of "Questions of Procedure for Ministers" at all in 1978, as it was not published by any Prime Minister before 1992. The Security Service had not then been avowed. It has now been placed on a statutory footing and there is an oversight committee of parliamentarians. This is the first Government to set out a clear standard of open government and to refer disputes on the provision of information to the ombudsman to be tested against clearly expressed exemptions. All those developments have been initiatives of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

No Government in the world operates on a basis of total transparency. It would not serve the interests of good government to operate a policy of total openness about, for example, the operations of the security and intelligence services, matters of great defence or diplomatic sensitivity, or Cabinet proceedings. I believe that the House accepts that.

It would be true to say that the occasions when information will be withheld are "exceptional": the intention is to be as open as possible. But we must invoke the precision of the Government's code of practice on access to official information in "Questions of Procedure for Ministers" without implying that the code would be definitive in a court of law, or indeed in Parliament, where the balance of public interest will need to be considered case by case.

Mr. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills): The White Paper on open government contains a reference to the fact that we may appeal to the ombudsman, but the new proposal does not. It appears to me that paragraph 27 is being loosened and that the interests of the House, as opposed to those of the Executive, were better served by the old rubric. The new form of words refers to

> "withholding information only when disclosure would not be in the public interest"

That is the heart of political debate in this place. The Scott inquiry examined those issues carefully and it will release its report soon.

Therefore, I believe that it is a little previous to suggest that this is the finished word on "Questions of Procedure for Ministers". I do not think that I have expressed vigorously enough my deep opposition to the idea that this is a weakening of that higher standard which requires Ministers to account truthfully to the House and to the public.

Mr. Freeman: My hon. Friend will be pleased to know that I intend to propose an amendment to the text. The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney asked me to reflect upon the published text and I shall now read my proposed change—which has been approved by the Prime Minister—into the record. I obviously welcome the comments and views of hon. Members.

The new formulation of "Questions of Procedure for Ministers" shall be as follows:

> "Ministers must not knowingly mislead Parliament and the public and should correct any inadvertent errors at the earliest opportunity. They must be as open as possible with Parliament and the public, withholding information only when disclosure would not be in the public interest, which should be decided in accordance with established Parliamentary convention, the law, and any relevant Government Code of Practice".

I have provided three references: first, established parliamentary convention—I have given the reference in "Erskine May"—secondly, the law; and, thirdly, any relevant Government code of practice. My hon. Friend has also drawn attention to the document on open government that we have published already. I hope that the amendment provides greater clarity. Right hon. and hon. Members will no doubt wish to study the record and perhaps reflect further upon the debate.

My hon. Friend referred to the ombudsman. I believe that Ministers should be accountable to the House for their actions. I believe that the ombudsman has [illegible] role in examining the actions of Ministers and Departments with regard to openness and access to information by members of the public. However, if it is thought that a Minister has misled the House, he must come to the Dispatch Box and give an account of himself. The House, and not the ombudsman, must examine the evidence and bring him to account.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for living up to his promise and reflecting further on the wording of the proposed revised draft of "Questions of Procedure for Ministers". The crux of the matter is how the public interest is defined. I thought that the form of words proposed originally was very weak. It said that Ministers must not knowingly mislead Parliament and withhold information

> "only when disclosure would not be in the public interest".

I think that the criteria that the Minister has submitted for judging the public interest are helpful; I shall certainly study them with great care. However, I remind the Minister of the remarks of the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills a few moments ago. We are living in the shadow of the Scott report and I believe that, when it is published, it will throw a great deal of light on how

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public interest has been interpreted in the past and what is and what is not proper for Ministers to disclose to the House and to the public.

Mr. Freeman: It is fair to say that, when the Scott report is published, studied and doubtless debated, we shall all have to reflect on what it says and on the sentiments and the wishes of the House in that regard. I cannot possibly anticipate what will be said.

The right hon. Gentleman asked me to reflect further on that point, and I have done so. The amendment to "Questions of Procedure for Ministers" becomes effective immediately. Any further changes that may or may not be deemed appropriate will also become effective at the proper time. It is not a matter of the Prime Minister issuing instructions at the beginning of a Parliament and then forgetting about it; we have made an amendment that seeks to address the points raised and considered by Nolan.

Dr. Tony Wright (Cannock and Burntwood): I ask the Minister to reflect on what he said about Ministers' differing accountability to the House and to the ombudsman. In a number of instances, the ombudsman has been able to extract information from Ministers that Members of Parliament were not able to extract. That occurred most recently with the very important report about fraud in the Treasury. Is it not crucial that the same rules about openness should apply across the public arena, whether it is in relation to Members of Parliament or members of the public? Should not the guidelines reflect that fact?

Mr. Freeman: The rules apply specifically to Ministers of the Crown. In terms of being called to account by Parliament, it would not be helpful if the ombudsman intervened and examined the alleged statement or misstatement. In my judgment, it better reinforces the accountability of Ministers if the Minister involved, either by personal statement or by debate, accounts to Parliament directly.

As for the role of the ombudsman in relation to open Government, the record so far has been successful. It was a sensible and constructive move and I see no degree of confusion or irreconcilability between the role of the ombudsman in relation to Government Departments and accountability of Ministers for the veracity of what they say to Parliament. I hope that what I have just said will have shown the House the clear and satisfactory progress that we are making on developing the White Paper proposals in those key areas.

One further part of the White Paper that I wish to mention briefly—as it takes up half the committee's recommendations addressed to Government—deals with quangos. The Nolan committee divided its recommendations into those that affected appointments to certain quangos—in this case executive non-departmental public bodies and NHS bodies—and those that dealt with the general propriety of board members and, in one or two cases, the staff of those bodies.

On appointments, the Government were able to accept virtually all the committee's recommendations, many of which in practice built on the public appointment unit's review of guidance on public appointments. That was issued at the beginning of the year, formed the mainstay of the Government's evidence on public appointments and had already been agreed by Ministers by the time the committee published its report. The committee's main additional recommendations to that framework were that panels or committees with an independent element should be set up to advise on all appointments to executive NDPBs and NHS bodies; and that a new, independent commissioner for public appointments should be appointed. The essential principle of all such appointments is that they should be based on merit or qualification for the job.

In their response, the Government set out in some detail the way that they envisaged the advisory panels working in practice. They proposed that such arrangements should be comprehensively in place by July 1996. The Government also accepted the proposal for the commissioner and in my statement of 18 July I announced that the post would be publicly advertised immediately. That duly happened, and the arrangements for appointing the commissioner are now well advanced. We should be in a position to announce the new commissioner later this month.

On the general governance of quangos, the committee made a number of recommendations concerning the implementation of best practice procedures through, for example, codes of conduct and openness, building in each case on existing Government initiatives. The Government accepted those recommendations, and they are being implemented.

Among the most important recommendations were those proposing a review of the legal framework governing propriety, accountability and the arrangements for external audit in public bodies. We expect to complete that review by the end of the calendar year. I know that many with interests in the area, including the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon), contributed material to the review. We shall pay careful attention to what they have said, and publish proposals in a consultation paper.

In his speech to the House on 18 May, my right hon. Friend and predecessor the Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt) paid tribute to the selflessness—a Nolan principle, as I have noted—of the large numbers of people who serve on public bodies for little or no remuneration. I should like to echo his remarks, and I am sure the whole House joins me in that commendation.

We do not view non-departmental public bodies from the viewpoint of appointments or propriety alone. They exist to do a useful job; they are not set up when there is no need for them or kept needlessly in existence when their function is finished. Since 1979, we have abolished hundreds of NDPBs. I am pleased to announce that when annual figures are next published in December this year, they will show a further reduction of more than 100, which will mean a net fall of more than 40 per cent. since 1979, so I hope that the House will see that it is possible to combine economy and efficiency with the highest standards of propriety and that the Government are doing both.

The Government have never been reluctant to take any steps necessary to improve the quality of the country's public life and public services. I hope that I have clearly outlined to the House how we are now doing that through our White Paper response to the Nolan committee and the current work to implement that response. I know that they are issues of considerable importance to the House and I look forward to hearing the views of right hon. and hon. Members accordingly. With the leave of the House, I shall seek to reply to points raised in the debate when we conclude it.

7.44 pm

Mr. Derek Foster (Bishop Auckland): I thank the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for his kind remarks. Of the 16 years that I have been in the House, 13 have been relatively silent. I spent 10 years as the Opposition Chief Whip, one further year as a Whip and two years as the parliamentary private secretary to our former leader, Neil Kinnock. It could well be that already people are saying to themselves, "I liked him better when he was silent." I hope that is not the case. We shall see.

I look forward very much to debating with the right hon. Gentleman these and others matters over the coming months, and I am sure that, as he says, even though we may differ—not violently but certainly substantially—at least the debate will always be courteous.

I thank the Minister for fulfilling his promise in his statement to the House on 18 July 1995 at column 1473 first to publish a text for consultation on guidelines to Ministers accepting business appointments before introducing the rules at the beginning of the next Session; secondly, to have a debate on the White Paper as a whole in the spillover session; and thirdly, to consult on an extension of business appointment rules to Ministers' special advisers.

The Minister was courteous enough to answer two written questions of mine on Monday 30 October and to place other material in the House of Commons Library. However, I have to say—I hope he does not think that I am being churlish—that the press had the information at 2.30 pm, but it did not come my way until 5 pm. I know that Madam Speaker, and I am sure Madam Deputy Speaker, will have some views on that, as Madam Speaker has expressed her views from time to time.

The Minister's predecessor, the right hon. Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt), in opening the civil service debate on 23 March 1995, quoted the November 1994 report of the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil, which said:

> "The British Civil Service is a great national asset. Since the 1870s, it has been the permanent and impartial instrument of all administrations. Governments have always seen it as their duty to preserve its efficiency and honesty for their successors."—[*Official Report*, 23 March 1995; Vol. 257, c. 549.]

Let me, on behalf of my party, wholeheartedly endorse that view.

Before I was elected to the House, I spent 10 years in the private sector, nine years in the public sector and a number of years in the voluntary sector. I may be unique in that experience. Each sector has enormous strengths. Each has much to learn from the others. None has the monopoly of wisdom. In particular, the idea that the business culture is or should be paramount has in my view been profoundly damaging to our society and democracy. Hopefully, that short-sighted, arrogant philosophy has almost run into the sand. If not, it will do so shortly after the present Government are swept out of office whenever they have the courage to call a general election.

Let us make no mistake. We would not be having tonight's debate without the deliberations of the Nolan committee. The Prime Minister set up the Nolan committee only because his Government were sinking beneath a sea of allegations of sleaze. That was the act of a man desperate to sweep those allegations from the tabloid front pages into the long grass of the lengthy consideration by the Nolan committee.

On 20 May, the Prime Minister announced to the Sunday newspapers:

> "I not only accept the broad thrust of Nolan's recommendations, I agree with Nolan."

Many of us heard the Prime Minister say in the House today that he accepted the broad thrust of Nolan's recommendations. If he agrees with them, let the Prime Minister support Nolan and vote for the implementation of his recommendations in full on Monday night.

Business appointments are a bone of contention. The Chancellor of the Duchy's predecessor claimed in his evidence to the Nolan committee that no change to the existing arrangements was required. Other parliamentarians, such as the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler) and Lord Younger, were critical of the current position, and Nolan accepted their concerns. Nolan recommended, on page 54 of his first report that

> "a system similar to the civil service business appointment rules should apply to Ministers."

Nolan helpfully set out the salient features of the civil service scheme on page 52:

> "i) all civil servants at grades 1 and 1A . . . and 2 . . . must submit their future job plans to the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments for approval . . .
>
> ii) they must seek approval both for their first job and for any others within two years of leaving the civil service."

Bearing in mind that far more public concern had been expressed about former Ministers taking up appointments than about civil servants doing so, the innocent layman would expect the rules laid down for Ministers to be at least as stringent as those laid down for civil servants. On the face of it, that is not so. When the Chancellor of the Duchy issued guidelines on Monday, the words

> "must submit their future job plans"

and

> "must seek approval for both their first job"

had become "may seek advice" for Ministers. An obligation placed on civil servants had become an option for Ministers.

The Chancellor of the Duchy said in his statement to the House on 18 July:

> "We accept the Nolan committee's recommendation that Ministers should be brought within the scope of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments."—[*Official Report*, 18 July 1995; Vol. 263, c. 1473.]

He claimed to be implementing Nolan in full. When the right hon. Gentleman briefed the press on Monday, he repeated that claim. When he spoke on television the other day, he made the same claim, yet it is clear that the scheme for Ministers is far weaker than that for civil servants—against the Nolan recommendation.

The Chancellor of the Duchy will argue that is irrelevant, because, if a Minister did not seek advice—or having sought advice, did not heed it—that will seep into the public domain and lead to censure in the press. To

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me, that "may" is dishonest. Loosely translated, it means that Ministers had better seek advice or else. If that is the case, why did not the right hon. Gentleman say so? Would it not have been better to say, "Ministers will be expected to seek advice," or even, "Ministers should seek advice"? After all, in "Questions of Procedure for Ministers", the phrase "Ministers should" appears in almost every paragraph.

If the Chancellor of the Duchy is looking for an effective sanction to buttress "Ministers should seek advice" rather than "Ministers may seek advice", would it not be far more satisfactory to place a duty or even an expectation on the business advisory committee to make it public that a former Minister had not sought advice—or having sought it, had not heeded it? That would be far better than the somewhat dubious practice of someone—not the Minister, of course—whispering behind a hand to some journalist, so that information seeps into the public domain.

I still believe that the guidelines are unsatisfactory and I urge the Chancellor of the Duchy to withdraw them, even at this late stage, and to replace them with new guidelines that will fulfil his promise to implement Nolan in full—especially as the right hon. Gentleman reiterated that he is seeking to aid the Prime Minister in his determination

> "to uphold the highest standards in public life".

After the Chancellor of the Duchy made his statement to the House on 18 July, two of his former colleagues took up lucrative business appointments. The former Foreign Secretary went to NatWest for a sum rumoured to be £200,000, for a three-day week, and the right hon. Member for Wiltshire, North (Mr. Needham), a former Minister for Export Trade, joined his long-standing friend and patron, Lord Prior, at GEC for more than £100,000.

It is disturbing that both claim to have voluntarily submitted themselves to the advisory committee under the chairmanship of Lord Carlisle. It is difficult to disagree with the conclusion of *The Guardian* leader on 4 September:

> "If the Whitehall machine gave Mr. Needham a clean bill of health then it is the system itself which is sick."

If the Chancellor of the Duchy does not like *The Guardian*, perhaps *The Independent* has more credence. The headline to its leader the same day shouted "Nolan is not enough". The leader writer claimed:

> "Lord Carlisle has got it wrong. He should have insisted on a decent interval between Mr. Needham's period as a trade minister and his appearance on the GEC board . . . The Needham case is a timely reminder that, Nolan notwithstanding, the battle is not over yet".

As to the civil service code, I congratulate the Government on seeing sense. The code is a major step in the right direction and although I share the fears of the Council of Civil Service Unions that the code does not go far enough, we nevertheless welcome it. Why should there be a new civil service code? Permanent revolution within the service has not only affected morale, leaving a pall of insecurity over its work, but has fragmented the service—which has diluted its sense of unity of purpose underpinned by common values.

More fundamentally, as the clash of cultures has deepened and become all-pervading, an increasing number of civil servants have complained of unwarranted pressure from a variety of sources. The code ought to help in that direction. It was seen as having several advantages. It was envisaged that the code would have

> "some clear public status, public endorsement going beyond the government of the day."

The code would have far wider currency than existing documents, being available to all civil servants and to the public. The process of drawing up the code would itself encourage far wider public and parliamentary debate. The code would provide far greater clarity about the role, duties and responsibilities of civil servants. Finally, the code would be a unifying force in the increasingly heterogeneous civil service.

I see two great advantages in the code. First, there is the onus placed on Ministers to read the code, to take notice of it and not to ask civil servants to act outside its provisions. The other advantage is the institution of an independent appeals procedure, which is wholly welcome. My predecessor, the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), said of the code on 18 July:

> "we still believe that legislation is necessary. If the Government were to press ahead with it, they would have our full co-operation."—[*Official Report*, 18 July 1995; Vol. 263, c. 1475.]

That remains our position.

It is revealing that the Government's first position was that the new code was not necessary. Fortunately, after the powerful inquiry conducted by the Sub-Committee of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee under the distinguished chairmanship of my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice), the Government saw sense, and some consensus has emerged from the subsequent consultations.

I hear rather dark rumours to the effect that the Sub-Committee chaired by my hon. Friend is to be abolished. The House would regret that. The quality of its work has been extremely high, and it has gained enormous respect throughout the civil service and in Parliament. The House will wish to join me in thanking my hon. Friend and his colleagues on the Sub-Committee for its outstanding work.

I have a few reservations about the code. It is arguable that it does not fully address the relationship between civil servants and Parliament, especially parliamentary Select Committees. Secondly, the code does not adequately deal with a civil servant's relationship with the public. It is possible, for example, that Scott will argue that civil servants have a duty to the public interest over and above the duty that they have to Ministers.

Finally, the Chancellor of the Duchy will agree that the acid test of the code's effectiveness will be how it is implemented and received in the civil service. He will know that the Council of Civil Service Unions argues with some force that central Departments in the civil service should issue detailed advice and guidance to departments on a wide range of issues.

The Chancellor of the Duchy has been courteous enough to make an announcement to the House on "Questions of Procedure for Ministers", and we thank him for that. We shall study it with some care. Again, the House has Nolan to thank for developments on "Questions of Procedure for Ministers". Nolan recommended that "the Prime Minister puts in hand the production of a document drawing out from 'Questions of Procedure for Ministers' the ethical principles and rules which it contains to form a free-standing code of conduct or a separate section within the new QPM."

The Government responded by accepting Nolan's proposals, with some reservations, and producing a draft of the new ethical part of the QPM.

There was some public criticism that the new draft would encourage ministerial secrecy. Nolan proposed a draft which included the words:

"Ministers must not mislead Parliament. They must be as open as possible with Parliament and the public."

The Government draft said:

"Ministers must not knowingly mislead Parliament and the public . . . withholding information only when disclosure would not be in the public interest".

Fears were expressed that Ministers could withhold information at will because they define the public interest.

The Observer of 16 July revealed that the Cabinet had, the previous week, accepted the proposal of the Chancellor of the Duchy to delete the public interest defence. *The Times* of 11 July claimed that the new draft would be published immediately following Cabinet approval. On 18 July, in his statement to the House when responding to my hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury, the Chancellor of the Duchy referred to Cmnd. 2290, "Open Government", for a further definition of when disclosure would not be in the public interest. There are more than four pages of exemptions in that document, which the right hon. Gentleman claims is still under consultation more than two years after publication.

On 18 July, in response to my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), the Chancellor of the Duchy said:

"I shall come back to the House during the debate"—

that is, this debate—

"with perhaps more thoughtful proposals on how more generally we can either cross-refer or define those circumstances."—[*Official Report*, 18 July 1995; Vol. 263, c. 1484.]

Now the Chancellor of the Duchy has fulfilled his promise. He has come back to us, and we shall study what he has produced with great care.

It would have been possible to range even more widely over the subjects touched on by the Chancellor of the Duchy, but I know that other colleagues want to contribute to the debate. I shall therefore say only that we are indebted to Nolan for making the recommendations on the subjects before us this evening. I am glad that the Government have taken most of them on board. I should be glad to hear what the Chancellor of the Duchy has to say about my submission that his recommendation on business appointments is rather weaker than Nolan recommended. I look forward greatly to future debates on the civil service in this House.

8.6 pm

Mr. Tom King (Bridgwater): I know that the whole House will join me in welcoming the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Foster) back to a more audible role at the Dispatch Box. I appreciate his remarks about the work of the Nolan committee. The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) and I are the holders of a unique letter of appointment. Other members of the Nolan committee were advised of the expenses that they could claim for. We were advised that, as we were already in receipt of public funds, no money would be available to pay us for any of our work.

It would have been intolerable if Nolan's work had been consigned to the wastepaper basket. That is why I so greatly appreciate the role played by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy. His was not the most exciting speech that I have ever heard in the Chamber—he quite properly eschewed that—but he took us meticulously through the range of issues with which he has been dealing. Problems of standards in public life, and the leadership that we in the House ought to exhibit, are sometimes the subject of brilliant illumination, but more often they are matters of painstaking attention to detail of the type that the Nolan committee has performed.

Sometimes I think that these matters should not be the subject of so much party political exchange. This afternoon I resented the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition. He does no one any service by trying to turn these issues into acutely party political ones. On the contrary, they are in the main matters about which each and every Member of the House will have to make up his mind.

The committee's first report included 54 recommendations, to which the Government's response has been effective, more than adequate and prompt. I should like to put that clearly on the record.

I am glad that the Government accepted the recommendations about Ministers. I believe that that was right. I am not breaching any confidences by disclosing that there was a strong view across the Nolan committee that the procedures that existed for civil servants should be replicated as far as was sensible for Ministers. We recognised that there were differences for Ministers. Civil servants are in the main able to anticipate and plan their retirement. That is not always true of every occupier of the Front Benches.

I thought that the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland was unkind in one respect. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy has said that Ministers may ask the advisory committee. He drew attention today to the word "may". He made the point that the committee was advisory and non-statutory. It seemed to me extraordinarily courteous of my right hon. Friend to say that he did not wish in advance to bind any other Administration that might at some long distant date possibly occupy the Government Benches.

He discharged his responsibility clearly and personally on behalf of the Prime Minister to make it clear that Ministers in the current Administration would be required and expected to ask the advisory committee about any appointment. I want to hear from the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland an unequivocal pledge that, if at any time in the future there were a Labour Administration, the same requirement imposed by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy would apply to any Minister leaving a Labour Administration.

Mr. Derek Foster: I have no hesitation in giving such a pledge. I intended to say that I was grateful to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for making it clear in his opening remarks about business appointments that

[Mr. Derek Foster]

the Prime Minister and the Government would expect Ministers to seek the committee's advice. That was a useful clarification of the guidelines issued on Monday.

Mr. King: I am grateful for that, as I know the whole House will be. The right hon. Gentleman may not be so pleased with what I am now about to say.

I resented very much the remarks that he made in reference to my right hon. Friends the Members for Witney (Mr. Hurd) and for Wiltshire, North (Mr. Needham). They were quite uncalled for. Although there was a brief mention of the issue in the tabloid press and other newspapers, once people had considered the matter, they observed that in both cases my right hon. Friends behaved with propriety. That is a good test. It is not a current issue at present.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Witney has gone to work for and make his experience available to a British bank operating in extremely competitive markets around the world. He will find George Shultz operating for the Americans. He will find French diplomats and politicians and German and Italian former leading Ministers who occupied different posts now seeking to assist their national economic effort.

I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney. He could easily have gone off and written a few more of the excellent thrillers that he writes—indeed, I am sure that he will. He will be working full time. However, he will make his contribution in the economic field.

The real point that I want to bring out relates to my right hon. Friend the Member for Wiltshire, North. It is no secret—indeed, it is well known in the House and it is certainly well known in industry—that my right hon. Friend was an outstanding ambassador for Britain. He was a first-class Minister for Trade, many would say probably the best that we have had for a long time. He struck fear into our foreign competitors because he was extremely effective in the relationships that he established and the help that he gave.

I listened to what the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland had to say. I do not impugn in any way his patriotism, which I respect, but the people who would have been most pleased to hear what he said are our French and German competitors. They would have liked to see my right hon. Friend the Member for Wiltshire, North told to do nothing for two years in the fields in which he worked.

It was in the interests of our nation that, as soon as my right hon. Friend left his ministerial role, he should make himself available in the fields in which he had operated to maintain efforts in exports, provided that he did not discriminate unfairly between one British company and another. I am not aware of a single complaint from a British company. My right hon. Friend's assistance is to the benefit of Britain and many of our constituents who work in the factories that my right hon. Friend helped to obtain orders for in recent years.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Wiltshire, North is good in exports, why should we wear a hair shirt as a country and ban him from taking any part in exporting? Why should he not do so, provided that he does not make improper use of information that he gained as a Minister? Although the system is not yet set up, my right hon. Friend checked with Lord Carlisle to find out whether he thought that it was improper for him to act in that way. His energies will be employed to support British companies. I believe that that is absolutely right. If Opposition Members say that that is wrong, their views do not coincide with the best interests of Britain.

Mr. Derek Foster: I have the highest regard for the right hon. Member for Wiltshire, North (Mr. Needham). We joined the House together. We were members of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry together. He was a very good Trade Minister. However, the right hon. Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King) shares the myopia of a good number of his hon. Friends in not understanding the outrage, not of Labour Members of Parliament—that is not of much significance—but of the people outside. They are tired of the long parade of former Ministers going to lucrative jobs in the City or elsewhere. They do not understand it, and they are fed up. That is the mistake that the right hon. Gentleman makes. It is the mistake that his Government are making and that the Chancellor is making in providing a weak scheme.

Mr. King: That was a monstrous intervention. The right hon. Gentleman talks about outrage outside as if it was not stimulated by the comments made in here. He is at it again. It is disgraceful. No one in America said to James Baker when he went to work for the company for which he now works that he must not do it. George Shultz, who was a distinguished Secretary of State, worked for Bechtel. My old sparring partner, Dick Cheney, the former United States Secretary of Defence during the Gulf war when I discharged the role of Secretary of State for Defence, is now president of a major international company called Haliburton, a United States company. No one in America suggests that he is feathering his nest. There is a respect for such people of ability, who made a sacrifice for a period.

The right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland must know from his previous incarnation as Chief Whip that many people in the House make sacrifices to be Members of Parliament and represent their constituencies. They do not receive the financial rewards that they could enjoy in outside activities. My right hon. Friend the Member for Witney certainly made sacrifices for many years when he worked for his constituents and in the Government. Yet manifestly he is capable of making a much greater contribution and could have advanced himself considerably more than he did.

Mr. Richard Shepherd: The United States has much tougher rules and regulations on employment after government service. The key is the rule about employment in a related field. The anxieties expressed are invariably about people going from a field of activity in government to a private sector company operating in a related field. In the United States, to do so is a criminal offence and could result in a prison sentence.

Mr. King: My hon. Friend knows that that is precisely the point that we have tackled in the Nolan committee. That is why we say that a system must be set up to make sure that there is no abuse. But if the matter is taken to the ultimate political correctness, it will be manifestly to the disadvantage of this country. That is why I am attacking that attitude. I think that the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland understands that point.

Mr. Mackinlay: The right hon. Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King) and, to some extent, my right hon. Friend the Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Foster), seem to be overlooking one fact. Part of the concern felt outside the House is due to the fact that people take up lucrative jobs to which they give a considerable amount of energy and enthusiasm while, at the same time, remaining as members of the legislature and receiving £33,000 a year. George Shultz is not a member of Congress; he has given up his role in government and the legislature.

In Poland, where there is a developing legislature, if politicians decide to take jobs outside the Administration, they take only half their legislative salary. Such action gives a signal to the electors that the politicians have another interest. I am not trying to say that it is wrong for people to have other jobs—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Janet Fookes): Order. The hon. Gentleman is trying to make a speech—he should be making an intervention.

Mr. King: I think that I have got the hon. Gentleman's drift. If he reads the Nolan report, he will see that we set out clearly at the start that we believe that this House is a better place and serves democracy better because its Members do not have limited backgrounds without a wider range of experience or the capacity to embrace other activities.

Last night, in another place, Lord Jenkins made a speech on the Griffiths report, the Lords' version of the Nolan report. That experienced former Labour Member of Parliament and Minister, who subsequently joined another party, was passionately in favour of not having full-time Members of Parliament. He recognised the importance of having Members of Parliament with outside experience and interests to bring to the House.

It should also be possible that ex-Ministers—but only subject to vetting—take up outside interests. It is right that the arrangements that we proposed and that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister accepted should be incorporated in the guidelines. This is the right step to take, so that the experience of those with outside interests can be used to benefit our country.

8.21 pm

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): If my speech concentrates mainly on criticisms or questions, I might give the distorting impression that I do not broadly welcome the Government's response to the Nolan committee's report. I welcome it because the committee has moved quickly, and across a broad canvas, to tackle matters of considerable significance to the running of our democracy.

I listened with great interest to the right hon. Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King), who has given much time and effort in the past year to a job for which he received no pecuniary reward. Perhaps he, like the former Foreign Secretary, the right hon. Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd), made sacrifices in order to carry out that job in the public interest.

I take issue with the right hon. Member for Bridgwater if he seeks to rest his argument too heavily on comparisons with the United States, which has a different political culture. In the United States, it is common for senior figures from industry to parachute into the executive arm of government and then return to industry. It is not—or has not historically been—so common in this country for such moves to be made.

I strongly agree with my noble Friend Lord Jenkins that it is desirable for people with a wide experience of life outside Parliament to contribute to our debates in the legislature. I would deplore the development of purely professional Members of Parliament, who start as researchers, graduate up the ladder of preferment to Cabinet office, then move out into some other lucrative job. That would not produce a House of Commons that truly represented the nation's interests. There has been some homogenisation in the House since I first became a Member of Parliament nearly 30 years ago. There is less diversity of background among Opposition Members, and also among Conservative Members.

The Nolan committee worked rapidly and carried out a firefighting job. Due to the tone of today's debate we have almost forgotten the circumstances in which the committee was set up. There was widespread concern about a number of highly publicised episodes involving Members of Parliament and Ministers, which caused the widest unease and created the sense that standards were slipping. There was a sense that many of the conventions on which our democratic workings rested were inadequate to cope with the temptations of modern, competitive, entrepreneurial life.

Those concerns were justified. I note that the Nolan committee said that the majority of Members of Parliament were upright citizens and not reprehensible—I am sure that is true. But the spectacular cases that came to our notice—some of which are still under consideration in the Privileges Committee and some of which are under scrutiny in the Scott inquiry—made it imperative that the Government move quickly.

We must not believe that the Nolan report, as published, can be the last word on the matter. The Nolan committee produced a good report quickly, but it was a report in time and we live in a fast-moving world, so we must return to reconsider some of the issues in a different context. The firefighting job, which was done so well by the Nolan committee, does not get to the root of many of the problems.

It is not possible in the ambit of today's debate fully to explore the necessary alternative approaches, but I shall allude to them, as I did in my evidence to the Nolan committee. Today's world needs more checks and balances built into the system. We need greater scrutiny of Executive action by the courts—a trend that has already accelerated in the past decade—and a greater sense of constitutionalism underpinning the conventions that have been taken for granted and have been found inadequate.

Constitutionalism requires the acceptance by all arms of government that there are limits to the power that the Government can exercise, and that those limits are defined by society, enjoy the acceptance of society and should not be transgressed. That sense does not permeate our system as it does those of most of the developed democracies.

[Mr. Robert Maclennan]

We have sometimes taken pride in the fact that we have a flexible, quickly developing unwritten constitution. The down side of not having a written constitution is that there are no agreed norms of public behaviour on which we can rely.

It is interesting to see from the agreed code of conduct for civil servants, one of the achievements of this exercise, how we are still hung up on the Victorian constitution and the concept that civil servants' first loyalty is to Ministers of the Crown. In a certain mechanical sense, that is undoubtedly true, but in any other country civil servants' first loyalty would be to a written constitution to ensure no transgression of authority and no unintended use of powers. At all times, that would be their overriding responsibility.

I was interested to notice that we have taken a small step towards recognising some overriding responsibility that goes beyond that of loyalty to Ministers of the Crown—the reference in the code of conduct to loyalty being subject to the provisions of the code. That is a most helpful step, because it means that what Ministers see as being in the public interest is not the last word. The code defines general principles that could override the Minister's perception of where the public interest lies.

I come now to some matters of detail that I hope the Minister will be able to clarify when he replies. He may already have made some announcements on these matters that I have failed to note. The first refers to the only matter in the report that deals with Members of Parliament—bribery. It states that the law on bribery as it impacts on Members of Parliament is rather obscure and the Select Committee, set up to consider standards in public life, asked that the matter should be referred to the Law Commission. The Government undertook to do that following the debate on the matter. We have had that debate, so I now ask the Minister whether the matter will be referred to the Law Commission. It would be helpful if it were.

Mr. Mackinlay: It is interesting that, if the Law Commission proposes a Bill in respect of the bribery of Members of Parliament, following a decision of the House earlier this evening, the Second Reading of that measure will be taken not on the Floor of the House but in Committee.

Mr. Maclennan: As the hon. Gentleman says, that is interesting.

I come now to the responsibility of the Prime Minister for his Ministers' behaviour. This is an area in which the Government appear to have rejected the recommendation of the Nolan committee. In paragraph 13, on page 49, the committee recommends that the first paragraph of "Questions of Procedure for Ministers" should be amended to say that it will be for the Prime Minister to determine whether Ministers have upheld the highest standards in any particular circumstance.

The reason given by the Government in their White Paper for departing from that seems specious and somewhat disturbing, not only theoretically but in practice. The reason given is that it will

> "go too far towards suggesting that the Prime Minister's relationship with his Ministerial colleagues is that of invigilator and judge. And it would not reflect the responsibility that Ministers should have to justify their conduct to Parliament."

That reflects a confusion among Ministers. Parliament has no role in appointing Ministers, nor any responsibility for the way in which they conduct themselves. It can show its displeasure and it may diminish a Minister's reputation, but it would be historically unusual for Parliament to eject a Minister on grounds of conduct. That responsibility lies with the Prime Minister, and that should not be avoided.

However, that creates an immediate practical problem. If the Prime Minister shrugs off that responsibility and says that it is not for him, who is responsible for deciding whether the behaviour, against which a complaint has been made, is acceptable or unacceptable? That reflects a couple of unfortunate episodes involving the Cabinet Secretary in which he was called upon to investigate allegations of ministerial impropriety and to pronounce. That is a road down which we should not go. To have permanent secretaries or Cabinet Secretaries pronouncing on the behaviour of Ministers seems to be to ask them to exercise a political function or even a quasi-judicial function that will not strengthen the independence of the civil service. I ask Ministers to look again at that point rather carefully.

With regard to the conduct of and procedure for Ministers—I am not trying to make fun of an earlier exchange between the Leader of the Opposition and the Home Secretary—I wonder whether there is a genuine confusion in the Government's mind on the question of accountability and responsibility. The new rules for the conduct of and procedure for Ministers that are set out in the Government's White Paper speak of Ministers being

> "accountable to Parliament for the policies, decisions and actions of their departments and agencies".

That seems on the face of it to be a clear statement, but it does not lie nicely with the statement made by the Home Secretary in the House on 19 October when he said:

> "I am personally accountable to the House for all matters concerning the Prison Service. I am accountable and responsible for all policy decisions relating to the service. The director general is responsible for day-to-day operations."—*[Official Report,* 19 October 1995; Vol. 264, c. 517.]

If that kind of distinction made by the Home Secretary on that occasion between accountability and responsibility is sustained, it makes almost complete nonsense of the effectiveness of the new code of conduct and procedure for Ministers, which claims, I repeat, that Ministers are accountable not only for policies but for decisions and actions of their Departments and agencies. There is a need to clarify the exact rubric under which Ministers are acting in that area.

With respect to the question of Ministers' business appointments, on which I intervened in the speech of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, I do not wish to labour the point, but it is clear that Nolan recommended that there should be an automatic waiting period of three months before Ministers took up their jobs. It made the point specifically and it was right to say that three months would not affect any question of misconduct—it would not mean that bad behaviour was less or more likely. But it referred to the perception of simply eliding the responsibility of Ministers into a new business job. It spoke clearly on that issue. There was no question of it being a discretionary matter on which advice should be sought. It was automatic.

In that, the Government seem to have departed from what was recommended, and that is a mistake. Whether we like it or not, even in the case of the most public-spirited Ministers who have, to use the words of the right hon. Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King), experienced sacrifice—I think that he meant financial sacrifice as Secretary of State for Defence because it is hard to think what other sacrifices were involved, although perhaps family life and a number of other things could be said to have been sacrificed—there is much to be said for an interval of three months. There is also much to be said for suggesting that it will not deprive the public of services of value if such a person takes a holiday for three months before taking up his new job.

We have made remarkable progress on the civil service in recent months, but I do not think that that can be the last word. What we have is not exactly a whistleblower's charter. There are some interesting questions to be discussed about civil servants' duties. Under one of the provisions of paragraph 11 of the new code—as I read it—civil servants have a duty to disclose illegalities and criminal behaviour, but that is the extent of their disclosure duty. They are permitted to communicate observations of other behaviour that is outside the terms of the code, but they are not required to do so.

It is at least arguable that, in the public interest, there should be a duty—I would not like to define it tonight—to disclose other matters that come to the attention of civil servants: behaviour that might not be illegal, but whose consequences might be hazardous to the public or the environment, for example.

As the Minister said, much of the report is devoted to quangos. I probably would not do the House a favour by devoting a further 10 minutes to that subject; I shall simply say that, although admirable steps have been taken to ameliorate the current system, I do not think that setting up quangos to vet quangos is the whole answer. As the Minister will know, I consider that many of the responsibilities of quangos ought to be transferred to elected bodies as soon as possible, but it may be beyond the scope of this debate to explore the constitutional changes that would be necessary to achieve that.

I feel that Parliament, rather than an appointed body, should vet some of the more senior appointments that are made—and may properly be made—by the Executive. I have in mind major jobs such as that of Director General of the Prison Service. If Mr. Derek Lewis, for instance, had had to give an account of himself to a Select Committee of either House, the arguments for and against would have been fully deployed and considered, and there would have been a greater degree of public consent behind his appointment. I suspect that, if that had happened, the circumstances surrounding Mr. Lewis's appointment would not have been unravelled in a manner which, whatever the outcome, could not have been other than embarrassing to the Government.

Mr. Mackinlay: George Shultz's appointment had to be confirmed by Congress.

Mr. Maclennan: To go through the procedure of advise and consent would be to risk falling into the trap into which—with presumption—I advised the right hon. Member for Bridgwater not to fall: the trap of trying to extrapolate from American experience and apply it here. Nevertheless, there is much to be said for adapting such a process of consideration.

I end as I began, by expressing my satisfaction that so much has been done in such a short time.

8.43 pm

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): I welcome the two new faces on the Opposition Front Bench. They have become "shadows", but I congratulate them on coming out of the shadows and emerging from the Trappist corners to which they were previously confined.

I shall make a very short speech. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Mandelson) will be pleased about that, because he will be making his maiden speech, and should be given every opportunity. I shall confine my remarks to the civil service code, about which I spoke in our March debate.

I welcome the draft code produced by the Minister on 30 October. In almost all material respects it is the same as the Civil Service Sub-Committee's code, as published in the report of the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service. I am pleased that it has been broadly supported both by the Government and by the Opposition parties, and endorsed by the Nolan committee, with minor but useful modifications. The main modification was that the draft civil service code should be revised to cover circumstances in which a civil servant, while not personally involved, is aware of wrongdoing or maladministration taking place. I consider that a sensible modification. Following consultation, the code has now been published by the Government and will begin to operate in 1996.

There has been widespread support for the code due to the general recognition of the importance of an impartial, non-partisan and non-corrupt civil service. It is recognised that that is a priceless gift which is very important to our democracy. There was a feeling that, at a time of great managerial change, when the civil service was being fragmented, we needed to re-emphasise and endorse the underlying values that we had all accepted in the past.

I am not making a party political point here, but when a party has been in power for a long time—as the Conservative party has—it is necessary to state again that the civil service is not the prerogative or preserve of any one party. That, too, was part of the motivation for the code. I suppose it is also true that civil servants occasionally begin to feel that, if a party continues to win elections, it will always do so, which can affect the advice that civil servants give to Ministers.

The code has two main merits. First, it sets out clearly and in one place the responsibilities and duties of civil servants, and the responsibilities and duties of Ministers in relation to civil servants. That has not been done before. Secondly, it provides for the first time an independent appeals system for aggrieved civil servants, protecting them against misuse of their services by Ministers.

I cannot pretend that it was merely the merits of our arguments that won the day. We have all described the Scott inquiry as hovering over Parliament, Government and the civil service like a cloud or a sword of Damocles. I think that the Government felt the need for a response to be prepared beforehand, which was very sensible of them. They therefore changed their mind about the code. After spending about 18 months arguing against us, and sending the head of the civil service to argue against us, they suddenly said, "Well, actually we have changed our

[Mr. Giles Radice]

mind and we accept your position." I do not criticise the Government for that; in fact, I congratulate them on such sensible action.

That emphasises the need for consensus in our views of the civil service. The principles that we have been discussing—the concept of an impartial, non-corrupt, non-partisan civil servant, for instance—should have the support of all parties in the House. The civil service is not the property of a single party, and it should not be made into a political football by Opposition parties either. It is very important to us. I firmly believe, and always believed while I was Chairman of the Sub-Committee, that there should be consensus for advances and reforms in the civil service. I tried to broker that. It broke down after 1992, but until then there was consensus, and it is important that such a consensus should again be built up and maintained. We set an example in the Sub-Committee which others have followed. I hope that they will continue to follow it.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) spoke of the possibility, which I think is now a probability, of the functions of the Sub-Committee being transferred to a new Select Committee. This is not the time to make jokes about why the new Deputy Prime Minister needs his own Select Committee, although I am sure that he does because he is such an important person. I hope that the new Committee will have all the functions of the old Sub-Committee and that none will suddenly fall by the wayside.

In particular, I hope that the Cabinet Office will still be under the purview of that Committee. From time to time, we should also be able to look at quangos in the same way as the Sub-Committee looked at them. Nobody else will do that if we do not, and I see it as within the purview of the new Committee.

Select Committees come in for a great deal of stick. I have read the brilliant, well written book by the political columnist of *The Independent*, Andrew Marr. It is called "Ruling Britannia". I am not Mr. Marr's agent, but I advise hon. Members to read it. He says that Select Committees have not really proved to be a great success and that television and radio programmes are far more effective watchdogs of democracy.

I see his point and I accept that the Select Committee system has faults. They are only as good as their members, but they have one priceless advantage over television and radio: we can send for persons and papers. We can call the head of the civil service to explain why he is not in favour of having a code of practice, and his arguments begin to sound rather silly. The head of the civil service will not appear on "Panorama" or "Newsnight" and will certainly not be investigated over a long period. We have that advantage and we must press it home because it is very important for our parliamentary democracy. We can also make lengthy and detailed investigations.

The Nolan committee was set up because people were worried about standards in public life. That was damaging to our democracy and it is still potentially damaging. That is why it is important to get these matters right. Clearly, Monday's debate will be important. However, we must not go to the extreme of saying that no parliamentary weapon is any good at all. The Select Committee system is potentially a weapon of considerable value to Parliament and to our democracy.

8.53 pm

Dr. Tony Wright (Cannock and Burntwood): Having just voted for shorter speeches, I shall do my best to make one. It is not unusual for Governments to set up committees. Sometimes they do it because they want a committee to provide an answer that they already know, sometimes it is to kick an issue into touch and sometimes it is to avoid a crisis that is enmeshing them. Usually the reports from such committees gather dust because the crisis has gone and things have moved on. Nolan is different. There was a crisis and setting up the Nolan committee was certainly the response to it, but that committee is different because it has delivered and it will not go away. It has made an impact on the way in which we practise politics in Britain that will be there for ever. Out of one crisis and one set of circumstances, quite fundamental changes are taking place.

Nolan responded with urgency and in a way that has enabled the Government to act quickly. Because the committee was set up on a standing basis, its influence will go on being felt in all the areas that it examines. That is one of the reasons for some Conservative Members in their private moments telling us that they find it hard to forgive the Prime Minister for setting the committee up in the first place. It is not just a source of immediate difficulty: it will be a source of continuing difficulty for them.

There will certainly be continued displeasure by those isolated Conservative Members who brought the House into such disrepute that a system has to be put in place which will have the most fundamental consequences for the whole of our democracy. That is good, but some hon. Members, and especially some Conservative Members, will think that it is bad. From this small beginning something large is beginning to emerge.

Nolan acted impressively and did in six months what the House has been unable to do over many a year. When I gave evidence, I could not persuade the committee to set up a public appointments commission to put the appointments to quangos on the same basis as those to the civil service, but the committee came close to what I wanted in the emergence of a proposal for a public appointments commissioner who will add an independent element to the process. What an indictment of the House it is that we have had to wait for Nolan to make proposals that over the years the House could have made on all the fronts and issues with which the Nolan committee concerned itself.

In a statement about Members' interests which could apply across the board, Nolan says:

> "The overall picture is not one of an institution whose Members have been quick to recognise or respond to public concern."

That is a masterly understatement on the nature of an institution which has caused this crisis to arise and which has required outside intervention to put it right. The partisan way in which the House is even now responding to Nolan underscores the point.

For a long time, the Government simply wanted to brush aside all the concerns that hon. Members tried to raise about the issues with which Nolan was called upon to deal. The House and the Government refused to treat seriously Ministers going to boardrooms, patronage, quango appointments, the audit of public bodies or the interests of Members. The Government's response was to say that those were not great concerns, but when the crisis mounted they began to make minimal adjustments.

Statements started being made and papers produced of a minimal sort, but then the crisis got worse, until finally Nolan had to be invented. The Government, however, still took the same approach to the Nolan committee. They tried to persuade the committee that on those crucial issues they were right and those of us who had been saying something else were wrong.

The Nolan report comprehensively rejected what the Government were arguing on the key issues of business appointments of Ministers, patronage, the need for an independent element in quango appointments and the need for external audit. To all those things, on which the Government had refused to move, saying that they were right and we were wrong, the Nolan committee said that it could not agree and made a set of recommendations far closer to what the critics had been saying than to what the Government had been defending.

The high point of that process was reached when the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's predecessor gave his evidence. What an experience that was. The following morning, the *Financial Times* talked about it being "breathtaking in its complacency" and Peter Riddell said in *The Times*:

> "David Hunt has seriously misjudged the Nolan inquiry. Over nearly two hours yesterday, his approach was a mixture of the blustering, the defensive and the partisan. He did not even seem to understand why it was necessary to set up the inquiry in the first place.
>
> That is bunkum and balderdash of a high order."

It is no wonder that the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has gone—presumably to the great boardroom in the sky.

Now the Government say—indeed, I heard the present Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster saying this all over the broadcast media yesterday—that they have accepted "all" the Nolan recommendations which apply to them; that was the theme. By this evening, however, the theme has changed ever so slightly. Now we are being told that the Government have accepted virtually all the Nolan recommendations which applied to them or, in one mode, all the major recommendations which applied to them.

I do not want to detain the House unnecessarily, but it should be put on record that in a whole lot of particulars, many of them important, the Government have chosen not to accept the Nolan recommendations. I will run through them quickly.

The Nolan committee wanted to make the Prime Minister the judge of ministerial conduct. Indeed, the only underlined sentence in the Nolan report is on that very point. Nolan says that it is "axiomatic" that the Prime Minister is the judge of whether a Minister has behaved properly. What have the Government done? They say in their response that it goes "too far" to make the Prime Minister the judge of that, taking away the one underlined statement to be found in the whole Nolan report about the pinnacle of accountability in the system.

Is that not revealing? It means that, so long as a Minister can get away with something politically in the House—and of course Ministers do so with majorities, as we have seen just recently—contrary to the Nolan recommendation, there is no role for the Prime Minister in having to come to a view on whether the conduct is honourable and consistent with being a Minister.

What about the three-month automatic waiting period for Ministers before they can take up business appointments? The Government response is to say that it "serves no useful purpose". Useful to whom? Useful to the public interest or useful to Ministers? Nolan said that there should be an appeal mechanism from Ministers to the Prime Minister and that, for the same reason as before, the Prime Minister should have a decisive role in relation to Ministers' ability to take up appointments and the conditions attaching to them. In their response, the Government say that there is "no constitutional need" for such a mechanism.

The Nolan report says that Ministers should keep a register of hospitality and that the register should be made available to the public. The Government response is to say that "no useful purpose" would be served by keeping such a register. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster nods. I shall be happy to give him the references if he wishes.

The Nolan report says that successful appeals under the civil service code should be reported to Parliament. The Government say that they should not and that we need to protect confidentiality. Nolan says that there should be regular surveys of Departments and agencies to ensure that they understand what ethical standards are and that those standards are being applied. The Government say that they should not be such surveys and that we should have "no prescription" on that matter.

Nolan says that records of invitations and hospitality offers should be kept by all Departments and agencies. The Government say that there will be no central prescribing in such matters.

Nolan says that reappointments to quangos should not be automatic. Indeed, that is so important that Nolan comments expressly and directly on the Government's own guidance for the health service. Commenting on the Government's national health service document, Nolan said:

> "Re-appointments should not be automatic. The performance of the post-holder should be reviewed. A balance should be struck between maintaining continuity on boards and recruiting new members to inject fresh ideas."

The Government have said that reappointments will be automatic. There will not be an independent element at the reappointment stage. When one considers that some of the worst abuses of patronage involve people whose reappointments are now being made, one sees how important that is.

I cannot resist quoting briefly from Simon Jenkins. Andrew Marr has already been recommended, but the Government will dislike it even more if I recommend Simon Jenkins. His splendid book, "The Nationalisation of Britain," is his verdict on the Conservatives' centralist years. Writing about Nolan in *The Times*, he says:

> "As for the 15,000 health authority posts that had to be filled in 1991, it was the most undignified case of catch-as-catch-can in the history of public patronage. On seeing his list, one health administrator paraphrased Wellington and hoped they would 'terrify the consultants as much as they terrify me.'"

They are the people who are now being reappointed. Nolan said that they should not be reappointed automatically; contrary to Nolan, however, the Government have said that they will be.

[Dr. Tony Wright]

Nolan says that the Audit Commission should have the power to publish public interest reports on national health service bodies. The Government say that they are considering that. The Government say that because advisory quangos, nationalised industries, public corporations and tribunals are not covered "substantively" in the Nolan report, they will not be within the Public Appointments Commissioner's formal remit. Yet we know that the subject of advisory quangos is extraordinarily important. There are more than 800 of them and they are concerned with the safety of medicine, what goes into food, whether things are regulated for the environment, and so on.

I shall not quote from it now, but there is a recent splendid report from Democratic Audit/Channel 4/Human Rights Centre, university of Essex entitled "Behind Closed Doors: Advisory Quangos in the Corridors of Power". It shows that there are important questions to be asked about the connections between those who sit on some of the important advisory quangos and the industries that they are regulating. The need for an independent element is crucial. The Government have taken the view, although they need not have done so, that advisory quangos will not be covered by the Public Appointments Commissioner.

Nolan says:

> "The Public Appointments Unit should be taken out of the Cabinet Office and placed under the control of the Public Appointments Commissioner."

The Government insist that that will not cover the PAU's role in advising the Prime Minister on a whole range of strategic appointments. However, we know from paragraphs 49 to 51 of "Questions of Procedure for Ministers" that in a whole range of appointments the Prime Minister's is the key role. Yet the PAU and the Public Appointments Commissioner are not to have a role in that respect.

We are told—this was raised by the hon. Member for Aldridge, Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd)—that openness codes were needed for bodies which fell outside the ombudsman's jurisdiction. The Government say yes, but because they are outside the ombudsman's jurisdiction there is no right of appeal against the denial of openness. That is different from the situation in relation to bodies which fall within the jurisdiction. The sensible thing would have been to extend the jurisdiction.

One of the obiter dicta of Nolan was that the ombudsman's jurisdiction should be extended. With great respect to Nolan, he got it wrong, but I know what he tried to say—that the ombudsman's jurisdiction should be devised in such a way that everything falls within it unless bodies are specifically excluded. The report actually put it the other way around, but that is what Nolan meant. That is what the Government are being asked to do, but no action has resulted.

We had a welcome clarification today on the question of procedure for Ministers and the withholding of information in the public interest. It was extraordinary that the Government's initial response included a provision to allow Ministers to withhold information on a blanket public information ground. That flies in the face of what the Government have been trying to do in identifying the criteria which would determine what the public interest was. I am glad that the Government have changed their mind about that.

Contrary to what the Chancellor of the Duchy would have us believe, the Government have not accepted all Nolan's recommendations. Indeed, on that quick count, 14 recommendations have not been accepted.

Finally, I want to make a general point. The Nolan committee rejected a statutory approach. It thought about it briefly, but said that we should continue doing things in a rather informal, British "good chaps" sort of way. I did not think that its rejection of a different approach was entirely convincing. There will be government by codes—probably there will be more codes than there are in the telephone directory. There will be codes for Ministers, civil servants, members of quangos and Members of Parliament—one has only to name it and there will be a code for it.

In fact, had a statutory approach been adopted many years ago, many of the problems could have been avoided. For example, back in 1976 the House was advised by the Salmon Commission that it should put the case of attempting to bribe Members of Parliament on a statutory footing. The House ignored that recommendation.

Some of the best things that Nolan said are about whistleblowing and its importance in ventilating concerns. I do not want to advertise my Whistleblower Protection Bill, but it contains a model of how codes must be supplemented by a framework and backstop of legislative protection. That is the model that we need, but instead we have a system that we make up as we go along. It is an informal system, but I want it to be on a more statutory basis.

Disraeli once said famously that this country is governed not by logic but by Parliament. Nolan is a departure from the usual way in which things are done. It is the beginning of a constitutional reform mechanism. I should like it to be converted into a permanent, constitutional commission. If we do that, the series of crises which began this process may result in our ending up with a modern constitution.

9.13 pm

Mr. Peter Mandelson (Hartlepool): I agree with my good and hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) that it is nice and, indeed, quite a relief to be out of the shadows. It is a great privilege to be speaking for the first time from the Dispatch Box, on such an important subject and in support of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Foster), who made a distinguished speech. On the Government Bench is the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Parliamentary Secretary, the hon. Member for Orpington (Mr. Horam), whom I knew slightly in different—I would not say better—times. I look forward to many courteous exchanges with both Ministers.

This debate, like the current controversy about the disclosure of Members of Parliament's outside earnings, has revealed that the Government are on the horns of a dilemma. The Government, correctly in my view, responded to public disquiet about sleaze by setting up the Nolan committee. In doing so, they raised immense public expectations that tough action would be taken. However, having tried to implement Nolan in full—I think that that is what he intended before the summer—

the Prime Minister has run up against the all-powerful right-wing road block which seems to call all the shots in the Tory party these days. For them, Nolan is in crucial respects a crackdown too far. As a result, Ministers are facing the dilemma of either backing away from Nolan on the crucial points to appease the party, in which case they will infuriate the public, as we have already seen, or implementing Nolan in full, in which case they will have much more trouble on their Back Benches.

Surprise, surprise, our stalwart Prime Minister has chosen to swim with the tide of internal party opinion rather than stand up convincingly for the public interest. Caving in seems to have become a compulsive habit of his, whether on Europe, education vouchers, welfare cuts, asylum seekers or divorce reform. Instead of wanting to do what is right, he simply does whatever the right want him to do.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that on Nolan, whether in relation to jobs for the boys for ex-Ministers, as it is regarded by members of the public, or Members' disclosure of their outside earnings, the public are beginning to ask what on earth the Tories have to hide. Why will they not come clean? Why cannot ex-Ministers face the same requirements concerning their business appointments as civil servants?

Let us not forget that it was the Prime Minister who set up the Nolan inquiry. I am sure that Conservative Members will reflect on the fact that we would not be here tonight—indeed, we would not be here next Monday night—if it were not for him. Let us also not forget why the Prime Minister took the action that he did. His Government seemed to be mired in sleaze. The reputation of public life looked set for ever to be tarnished by one revelation after another about this Minister or that wrongdoing. So the Prime Minister acted. He acted properly and well, and now I believe that Parliament, too, must act.

On matters affecting standards in public life, which we are debating tonight, our decisions must do three things. First, they must place the greatest onus of responsibility on elected public figures to act, and to be seen to be acting at all times, with total propriety and openness. It is nonsense that civil servants who advise should be placed under greater constraint and obligation than Ministers who decide, yet that is being proposed in the business appointment rules.

Secondly, the decisions taken must be completely clear and unambiguous: no "musts" becoming "mays", no woolly words, no clever drafting, no room for manoeuvre later and no get-out clauses. Above all, there must be no room for confusion in what is being proposed and what is being agreed. If there is, we will not be able to satisfy our third and most crucial duty, which is to ensure that what is done in the public's name and paid for out of the public purse is genuinely in the public's interest, not in the party's interest. That is especially important in relation to the growing army of special political advisers who are setting up shop in Whitehall.

I refer now to the business appointment rules. I must say straight away that I have considerable sympathy with the point made by the right hon. Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King) about the right hon. Member for Wiltshire, North (Mr. Needham). I do so for very strong personal and constituency reasons, for it was the right hon. Member for Wiltshire, North who took on and single-handedly fought off Chinese dumping of cheap magnesium products in Europe, and thereby secured the important magnesium works in Hartlepool—no mean feat and achievement. I pay tribute to him quite sincerely for that because when others, including his officials, were not interested, he was.

On the wider issue, there is no doubt about Nolan's intentions on the system for business appointments that should apply to Ministers. The report says:

> "The civil service system is tried and tested . . . it provides a strong reassurance to the public."

It should be applied to Ministers.

It is true that Nolan talks about applying the system "with some slight modifications", but members of the committee were clear about what that means—they said so in paragraph 36. Modification, they meant, was in respect of the role of the Prime Minister, who receives recommendations from the advisory committee on business appointments, not the general application of the system to Ministers.

Nolan says on the narrower issue of the Prime Minister's role:

> "It might seem invidious . . . for Ministers who have just been dismissed by the Prime Minister to have to submit their future employment plans to the same Prime Minister for consideration."

Given the circumstances in which many of the Prime Minister's right hon. Friends have had to be felled by the prime ministerial axe, one can understand why they might not want to have quite so much to do with each other in future.

Indeed, one might also say that in certain cases—the right hon. and learned Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) comes to mind—submitting every subsequent job and each additional business appointment to the Prime Minister for his consideration would take a wholly disproportionate amount of the Prime Minister's time.

We can put aside the Government's view on that narrow issue of appeal, although I take very strongly the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Dr. Wright), who spoke with some force on the matter. The more important issue is whether the system as a whole in its basic operation for Ministers should be voluntary or mandatory, by which—incidentally—I do not mean statutory. I fully accept both Nolan's view and the Government's conclusion on that.

In their original response, the Government seemed to accept the obligatory basis of the system in its application to Ministers, but as my right hon. Friend the Member for Bishop Auckland said, they now seem to be saying that former Ministers may—rather than must—seek the advisory committee's view on their business appointments. That is a very important and fundamental shift by the Government away from what Nolan was proposing.

Let us be clear about that. It was not a sort of take-it-or-leave-it service that Nolan had in mind for Ministers. It was a proper, open and transparent regulatory instrument to ensure that all Ministers and private businesses would not be involved in playing footsie under the table, swapping favours or scratching each other's backs when their new recruit was in a Government office.

The only reason why the Minister has backtracked on this issue must be that some of his colleagues simply do not want to have to face the system. We must ask again: what have they got to hide? The scope for evasion under

[Mr. Peter Mandelson]

the Government's modified proposals is great in our view, and the system simply will not command public confidence unless the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster makes it absolutely clear tonight that elected politicians are subject to the same discipline as unelected officials. I hope that he will promise to bring forward revised guidelines accordingly, or at least clarify what the Government have in mind, to the complete satisfaction of the Opposition and the general public.

I now turn to the civil service and the civil service code. The code owes its existence to the strenuous efforts of my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North, who chairs the Treasury and Civil Service Sub-Committee. I pay tribute to his work and to that of the Committee. We strongly support the introduction of a code that sets out the principles and the framework within which civil servants undertake their duties. However, we believe that more specific guidelines are needed in addition to the general principles set out in the code if the code is to have real force and real bite. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Bishop Auckland said, the code must also be buttressed by legislation.

I draw the Minister's attention to one aspect of the code. On page 59 of the report, Nolan makes a recommendation—it could be called the whistleblower's clause—which states:

> "We recommend that the draft civil service code should be revised to cover circumstances in which a civil servant, while not personally involved, is aware of wrongdoing or maladministration taking place".

The Nolan committee also proposes deleting the words "within their control" from a sentence in paragraph 7 of the draft code, which reads:

> "civil servants should endeavour to ensure the proper, effective and efficient use of public money within their control".

In other words, if civil servants know of examples of wrongdoing or maladministration outside their immediate purview or control, they should be able to blow the whistle. I am interested to know how the Government view that recommendation, as I believe that it has very important implications for the operation of the protections in the code.

Let us put into perspective why such a code is needed. In comparison with many countries, our system of government is honest, open and untainted by corruption. I do not believe that anyone gains by pretending otherwise. I believe that our high standards owe a huge amount to the integrity and the devotion of the civil service. However, two serious problems have arisen concerning the civil service that must be borne in mind when considering the Nolan proposals and the draft code.

The first is that, as a result of the Government's desire to marry the public service culture with that of the marketplace in the operation of government, the ethos and the standards of the former have suffered at the hands of the latter. That is not to say that the operations of the civil service are immutable for all time—I do not think that they are—or that public and private cannot combine; I think that they can and they should. However, the system must be policed and regulated very carefully in order to ensure that the standards of the public service are not undermined by some of the sharper practices of the private sector.

The second problem arises from the fact that the Government have been in power for 16 years. That is too long for most people, and it is certainly too long for Labour Members. When an Administration has been in office for that length of time—I shall express my point carefully—there is a temptation for Ministers and civil servants to cut corners, to take certain procedures for granted and to slide into relationships with outside interests about which they would be more wary in other circumstances. That is bound to occur by virtue of the longevity of the Government's term in office.

Therefore, we must be very vigilant about using civil servants to perform party political tasks, such as writing conference speeches, briefing Government Back Benchers on party points and so on. I believe that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster should offer the House some reassurance on those points and outline what action the Government intend to take to curb any misuse or abuse of civil servants' time and talents for party political purposes.

The right hon. Gentleman should also understand that senior civil servants have become understandably worried about their job security and the political pressures on them in the light of recent events. I shall not go into the merits or demerits of Derek Lewis's running of the Prison Service, but the manner of his sacking raises some important issues for the civil service and for its terms and conditions of employment which Nolan does not cover in the proposed code of practice.

As we know, Mr. Lewis's appointment was summarily terminated in a letter from Mr. Richard Wilson, permanent secretary at the Home Office on 16 October. We all understood why he was sacked, but the contractual basis of his sacking was never made clear and it has not been made clear since.

I put it to the Minister that, as a result of that action, any official at that level in the civil service now must consider him or herself at risk of similar treatment. Does the Minister agree that such a threat—and it is a threat as it has happened once and it could happen again—exerts an insidious political pressure on senior officials to toe the line, or, in the case of Mr. Lewis, to carry the can or be fired?

If Mr. Lewis was not wrongfully dismissed—no doubt the Government will maintain that in response to the case that he is bringing—and he was not fired on the basis of his contract, the only way he could have been removed was by use of the royal prerogative.

The Government have stated in the past that the Crown's power to dismiss at will will not be used in practice and that they will abide by ordinary employment legislation. As I have raised the issue with him tonight, it behoves the right hon. Gentleman to clarify the position and give the House and the entire civil service an assurance that in future the Government will not use the royal prerogative to get rid of civil servants they do not like and whose faces do not fit.

I shall now refer to special advisers. There is a further source of real concern about developments inside Whitehall which Nolan touches on but does not delve deeply into—the Government's use of paid, political so-called special advisers. Such appointments have been made by Labour as well as Conservative Administrations in the past. I willingly accept that, in appropriate cases, they have a role to play, but the present Government are recruiting a veritable army of such people at enormous public cost, which is estimated at £1.5 million a year.

In reply to a parliamentary question, the Prime Minister said that £9 million had been spent on such people since 1988. We are entitled to ask what all that money is being spent on, how those people fit into the civil service structure and how they can be properly covered by civil service procedures and the civil service code.

Almost one third of the current flock of advisers have been taken on directly from Conservative central office. Are they helping Ministers in pursuit of better government, which would certainly justify the public expenditure involved, or are they merely assisting politicians in pursuit of their party careers, in which case the payment of their salaries should revert to Conservative central office?

Nolan rightly brought special advisers within the scope of the business appointments system, and we welcome that, but further transparency is needed in their employment and use. They are causing increasing concern and alarm among many in Whitehall. They have extensive access to confidential information and knowledge of future policy developments. Their value to business is therefore immense, as has been amply demonstrated by the traffic of ex-special advisers into well-paid lobbying and consultancy jobs.

Until recently, the Deputy Prime Minister's special adviser, Dr. Alan Kemp, was so useful to the private sector that he only worked for the right hon. Gentleman part-time, so that a business named Capita could employ Dr. Kemp the rest of his time. The company was simultaneously employing Dr. Kemp and tendering for lucrative Government contracts. That clear conflict of interests continued four years before it was stopped when the Cabinet Office rightly insisted this summer on ending that arrangement and forcing Dr. Kemp to choose between his public and business interests.

Mr. Spearing: Has my hon. Friend any knowledge of who has responsibility for the appointment of such persons—particularly the individual that he just mentioned—and for the terms of service that would allow split employment of that kind?

Mr. Mandelson: Such appointments are made on the personal fiat of the individual Ministers concerned, which raises an important issue in the case of another individual. If the Duchy has any doubt about the need for closer examination of the role of special advisers and of how they operate within Whitehall, the right hon. Gentleman should consider that very special of special advisers, Mr. David Hart at the Ministry of Defence—the so-called triumphant ideologue at the heart of Government, as he has been dubbed. That rings a bell, and that is among the nicer things said about Mr. Hart by the Tory-supporting press.

Mr. Hart has been at the Ministry of Defence for two years. He is apparently unpaid, yet he inhabits an office near the Secretary of State. Mr. Hart deals with a range of policy issues but his status is so ambiguous and arouses such suspicion that apparently he never attends meetings at which civil servants are present—no doubt so that they cannot question any advice that he gives. That itself raises a number of suspicions and sounds a number of alarm bells—that a special adviser cannot even sit down in the same room as civil servants because of the nature of his appointment and because of the character of the man. Mr. Hart is referred to as "independent", which is more than can be said for the Secretary of State, who apparently jumps every time Mr. Hart opens his mouth.

Mr. Radice: Did he write the Defence Secretary's conference speech?

Mr. Mandelson: Mr. Hart is in such a privileged position that his security pass takes him to the heart of the Ministry of Defence and gives him access—ordered specifically and personally by the Secretary of State—to the Ministry's classified information.

My hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North, not for the first time, is absolutely correct. Mr. Hart was involved in the preparation of the Secretary of State's disastrous speech at the Tory party conference, which alone should be ground enough for Mr. Hart's dismissal.

Nolan should take a keen interest in such invisible but clearly highly influential individuals at the heart of the Government, if only because that particular individual is viewed within Whitehall as such a dangerous character that—I have this on good authority—even the Prime Minister has tried to have Mr. Hart removed from his job. Of course, the Prime Minister failed.

Real civil servants, unlike the shadowy David Hart, are rightly respected for their loyalty and dedication to good government. They will no doubt serve the next Government with the same commitment and diligence that they do the present one. When we talk of the problems of maintaining standards of conduct in public life, we ought to understand that those problems would be much larger without the standards of integrity, independence and political neutrality that are the hallmarks of the British civil service.

The Nolan committee's proposals in relation to Ministers and civil servants, and, as far as they go, to special advisers, will strengthen our system of government. They should be agreed and implemented in full by the Government. I hope that the Minister will carefully consider the views expressed tonight by hon. Members on both sides, including those of the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd). I hope that he will illuminate for us how the Government intend to implement Nolan in full, to the complete satisfaction of the British public.

9.40 pm

Mr. Freeman: With the leave of the House, I shall reply to the debate. The House will wish to congratulate the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Mandelson) on his maiden speech in his new position. We welcome him to it and look forward to vigorous debates with him. I certainly did not agree with 98 per cent. of what he said—

Mr. King: Ninety-nine per cent.

Mr. Freeman: I stand corrected.

One of the main thrusts of his speech was the idea that the Prime Minister had not displayed courage or conviction as regards Nolan. Nothing could be further from the truth. It was the Prime Minister who condemned the actions of some hon. Members, who set up the Nolan committee, and who then accepted its recommendations. *[Interruption.]* I shall deal in a moment with the point

[Mr. Freeman]

made by the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Dr. Wright). Therefore, there can be no criticism of the Prime Minister's actions: he has led from the front. He leads a united Cabinet, which has agreed in full the response to Nolan's recommendations for Government.

Both the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Foster) and the hon. Member for Hartlepool raised an important and serious point, which I shall attempt to deal with briefly but clearly. They said that the guidelines should compel former Ministers to seek the advice of the committee, and presumably—although the hon. Gentleman did not say this—to follow the guidance that it offers. That at any rate was the logic of his argument about those separate but related points.

Nolan recommended an advisory system. The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) implied that that system should march in step with the one for the civil service. I shall argue that it does—for instance, when it comes to the three-month waiting period. This is an advisory committee, which will report back to the Minister who seeks the advice. The hon. Member for Hartlepool did not suggest any sanction that could be imposed. Had he suggested one, I would have paid closer attention to rewording the document. There is no sanction, apart from the opprobrium of the House, the media and the public, if a Minister does not consult the committee or ignores its advice. That is a powerful sanction; I would argue that it is all that is required to be effective.

I gave a pledge, matched by one from the shadow Chancellor of the Duchy, that members of this Administration would consult the committee as and when appropriate. I hope that that statement will be taken at face value. I think that this will provide an effective system, just like the one for the civil service.

Mr. Mandelson *rose—*

Mr. Freeman: When the hon. Gentleman participates in future debates, perhaps he will keep a careful eye on the clock and divide the remaining time in two. Tonight he did not quite manage the mathematics, so I hope that he will allow me to answer the debate properly.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned page 59 of the Nolan report—whistleblowing in the civil service. I am sure that he has read our response carefully, but perhaps I can repeat, for his benefit, that the Government have accepted the relevant recommendation and have put the relevant mechanism in place. The civil servant will first consult his permanent secretary. If he is not satisfied with that reply, he will then be able to consult the civil service commissioners. That is an important new step. I welcome it and I know that the House will welcome it.

The hon. Member for Hartlepool referred—in the House, so protected by privilege—in an unsavoury and unsatisfactory way, to Dr. Kemp and Mr. David Hart. As I have worked with both of them, I shall respond. Let me first say a word about special advisers.

The system was set up by a Labour Prime Minister. I hope that the hon. Gentleman spoke with the authority of the Leader of the Opposition on the matter. The procedure is simple. It is not all Ministers but Cabinet Ministers who appoint special advisers. They are civil servants covered by all the obligations imposed on a civil servant. For example, a special adviser is not allowed to campaign.

Mr. Mandelson: What about Mr. Hart?

Mr. Freeman: I shall come to Mr. Hart in a second. Special advisers cannot be overtly political. They cannot write in a journal. They cannot be prospective parliamentary candidates. Advisers employed on new contracts are now subject to the advisory committee on business appointments.

I hope that the hon. Member for Hartlepool will reflect on what he said about Dr. Kemp. I will read the record. I hope that he will take an opportunity to withdraw the hint of impropriety that he suggested in the activities of Dr. Kemp. That was not an honourable way to proceed, because the facts are otherwise. Dr. Kemp has behaved perfectly properly. He is one of the special advisers to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister and I also work closely with him. Dr. Kemp was appointed as a full-time special adviser to my right hon. Friend when he took up his responsibilities in early July. There are certainly no justifications for suggesting impropriety in his previous activities as a part-time adviser at the Department of Trade and Industry. Proper procedures were in place to make sure that that did not happen.

The hon. Member for Hartlepool was right to say that Mr. David Hart is unpaid. Therefore, Mr. Hart is not a special adviser but a political adviser—a personal appointment by the previous Secretary of State for Defence, renewed by the current Secretary of State. Mr. Hart works with civil servants. I was Minister of State for Defence Procurement for one year, during which time, I sought Mr. Hart's advice about procurement matters on several occasions. He works with the civil service, frequently attends meetings at which civil servants are present and provides valuable advice on saving money out of the defence budget.

Mr. Mandelson: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Freeman: No, I will not give way. I am answering the debate.

Mr. Mandelson: Why did the Prime Minister try to get rid of Mr. Hart?

Mr. Freeman: The hon. Gentleman asks from a sedentary position why my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister tried to get rid of Mr. Hart. There is not a shred of veracity in that suggestion. It is absolutely not true.

I apologise to the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland on one point. I do not know why he received the answer to his written parliamentary question at 5 o'clock. I will look into the matter. I scrupulously try to make sure that hon. Members receive the correct information at 3.30 pm. Some of our systems for getting information to large numbers of hon. Members leave something to be desired, but it may have been our fault.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King) dealt in a robust and admirable fashion with the implied criticisms of my right hon. Friends the Members for Witney (Mr. Hurd) and for Wiltshire, North (Mr. Needham). I wish to put it on record that my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney, a former Cabinet Minister, waited three months.

I remind the House of the tests. The tests were whether there was an act of favouritism, whether any competitive knowledge was taken by the former Minister to the new job and whether there was any other specific, justifiable concern. The advisory committee on business appointments was not asked for informal advice because the system is not yet formally in place. However, Lord Carlisle, who chairs the committee, offered his judgment that the actions of my right hon. Friends were entirely consistent with what the committee would have advised.

The word "lucrative" is often used in relation to jobs. It is a pejorative term which is not worthy of proper, rational discussion about the system. *[Laughter.]* The right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland laughs. I am bound to say that the Labour party should exercise responsible leadership on the matter, as my right hon. Friend suggested. Perhaps we have to educate the public. We want former Ministers, Labour or Conservative, to return to the private sector for the good of the economy, and to be paid fairly and properly.

Mr. Derek Foster: What the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues fail to understand is that the general public strongly favour the use of the word "lucrative"—£100,000 and £200,000 are regarded as substantial sums. That is particularly true when those sums are spoken of by a Government who are against the statutory minimum wage and who argue forcibly about low-paid workers being paid too much and pricing themselves out of a job.

Mr. Freeman: I can do no more than repeat the sentiments of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater, who said that all of us must understand the real world, and the salaries that are commanded and have to be paid in the private sector. The right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland has experience of that. If a job is to be done properly in the private sector, it should be fairly and properly rewarded. Talk of taking lucrative positions does not help the public debate.

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland raised a number of issues, including the three-month period. My expectation and presumption is that that period will normally apply. The Nolan committee has not described the subject in detail, but some civil servants have been allowed to take positions within three months—for example, vice-chancellorships of universities. There may be parallel circumstances that should apply to former Ministers. It would be wrong to omit from the guidelines and the operation of the advisory committee the ability to be flexible in some circumstances. However, the presumption is that the period will normally be one of three months. As the House will know, former Ministers receive redundancy payment that lasts for three months, so there is some symmetry and logic in the arrangement.

Mr. Mackinlay: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Freeman: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I do not give way to him, as I should, as a matter of courtesy, respond to the points raised. If there is time, I shall certainly give way to him.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland for raising the subject of the bribery of Members of Parliament, and I shall refer his point to the Home Secretary, whose Department has responsibility for such matters. I am not aware that the issue presents an immediate problem to the implementation of the Nolan committee's proposals, but I take his point seriously.

There seems to be some confusion over the Prime Minister's responsibility. Obviously, Ministers must command the confidence of the House, and of the Prime Minister. If a Minister does not command the confidence of the House, he cannot sustain himself in the role of Minister. Such confidence must be sustained in the longer term—in politics I would define that as a matter of days, perhaps weeks. A Minister must command the confidence of the House—it may not agree with him, but it has long been the tradition that, in terms of his behaviour, a Minister must command the confidence of the House. Who sacks him? It is the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister can sack a Minister for other reasons. The Minister might still command the confidence of the House, but not that of the Prime Minister; the Minister may be incompetent or unable to do the job properly, or his or her face may not fit. I see no problem—one of the clear reasons that we gave for not making the Prime Minister the sole arbiter and judge was to reinforce the need for a Minister to be accountable to Parliament, but that in no way reduces the Prime Minister's power to move Ministers when they no longer command his confidence or are not doing the job properly.

The hon. Member for Hartlepool raised the issue of accountability of Ministers and agencies. There seems to be much confusion about the underlying issues that needed to be considered or even reconsidered in relation to the responsibilities of Ministers and the chief executives of agencies.

The key point is that agencies are part of the civil service; they are part of a Minister's Department. The Minister is fully accountable to Parliament for the work of the entire Department, including any agencies. A Select Committee—I think the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee—has recently suggested direct accountability to Select Committees by chief executives of agencies. That takes us down a difficult path.

At the moment, the Minister is fully responsible, including to the Select Committee, for the work of his Department. He does not have to accept the blame for every last action within his Department. That would be absurd. We would not have modern British Government under Labour or Conservative Administrations if that were the case. However, he is accountable.

The purpose of the framework document in creating an agency was simply to define what responsibilities could be delegated to the chief executive of the agency. I do not claim that we have it right in the case of all 109 agencies. I want to consider the experience that has accumulated during the past few years to see where improvements can be made. We do not claim that everything is perfect.

The hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) talked about the civil service code, and I am grateful for his bipartisan approach. First, prodded by the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland, I confirm that we want a Select Committee to cover the Office of Public Service, and it may be that related matters can be added to that definition. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will continue in his helpful role to the House—I do not mean that in a partisan way—if a new Select Committee is set up. I hope that that Select Committee will have a sufficient remit to consider all the issues raised by the right hon. Gentleman.

[Mr. Freeman]

My test of impartiality for a civil servant—it does not matter whether it is a permanent secretary or the youngest recruit—is whether he has the enthusiasm to work for an Administration run by different political parties. It is an important question. If I judge that the answer is no, that civil servant has crossed that line of impartiality, of objectivity, of service to the Crown but not to a political party. That is an important test. I believe strongly in an impartial civil service. It is not right—this is one reason for the civil service code commended by the right hon. Gentleman—ever to put a civil servant in a position where he is involved with, or supporting, a party political, narrow partisan activity, function or whatever. It is always a matter of balance and judgment, because hard-and-fast rules cannot be written, but I hope that I have given the thrust of my views.

I conclude by referring to the contribution of the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood, which in turn was repeated by the hon. Member for Hartlepool. I had not realised, and I apologise, that he is a graduate of that distinguished academic institution, Desborough primary school and, what is more, Kettering grammar school. I am the Member for Kettering. My only regret is that Shirley Williams abolished Kettering grammar school—I hope much to the chagrin of the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood.

Surprisingly, the hon. Gentleman criticised what he saw this afternoon as a partisan approach to the Nolan committee and then proceeded to make what I thought was largely a partisan speech. Nevertheless, he raised a number of important issues. I want to characterise the Government's response to that part of Nolan dealing with the role of Ministers—Government Nolan, as it is known—as a whole-hearted acceptance.

Frankly, it is not fair—the hon. Gentleman was straining at gnats—for the him to characterise our acceptance as rather grudging. It is not grudging at all. Where there is good reason to differ from Lord Nolan's committee, we have spelt it out. Lord Nolan is not God. Neither is my right hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater a heavenly body—at least not yet. To assume somehow that everything that Lord Nolan and his committee said, in a rapidly produced report, must be taken literally, is foolish.

I shall read the record and, because of my high regard for the two academic institutions to which the hon. Gentleman went, I shall write to him with a full and proper response. However, I hope that the House is convinced that we have responded to Nolan promptly, whole-heartedly, with enthusiasm and, above all, correctly.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Lord Commissioner to the Treasury): I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Measles and Rubella Immunisation

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Wells.]*

9.59 pm

Mr. Llew Smith (Blaenau Gwent): Towards the end of last year, more than 7 million children were vaccinated against measles and rubella. The official reason given by the Government—

It being Ten o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Wells.]*

Mr. Smith: As I was saying, the reason given by the Government was that we were facing a measles epidemic. The Department of Health predicted that

> "between 100,000 and 200,000 cases would occur. Thousands of children would have to be admitted to hospital with measles complications, such as pneumonia . . . around 50 children would die."

That prediction would obviously frighten the toughest of families, but what is important is whether it reflected reality.

Having spoken to many people—including many authorities on the subject—and read many research papers, I believe that there was no evidence to support the claim of an epidemic and its tragic consequences. If the Minister considers that I am wrong, will he please inform me where the documents for parents and doctors explain how those conclusions were reached? I have read the document for parents, and it gives no such information.

Where in the research papers produced by doctors from the Communicable Diseases Surveillance Centre, and in the paper by H. R. Hobad and others—listed by the Chief Medical Officer as being central to the Department of Health's policy—is it explained how those conclusions were reached? Will the Minister provide me with the calculations predicting such an epidemic in H. R. Hobad's paper? I want to be given the calculations, not the reading list that one doctor received when he requested the same information.

I have repeated that demand because, if the Minister's recent reply is correct, the method of calculation suggests that there has been an epidemic just about every year for the past decade, which is clearly arrant nonsense. I am not the only person to conclude that the Department of Health was not telling the truth in predicting such an epidemic. Eminent people such as Dr. Nicholson, editor of the *Bulletin of Medical Ethics*, stated:

> "If government doctors are allowed to get away with basing the mass campaign on a lie, it will be all the easier for them to be untruthful the next time that suits their purpose. Like any other doctor, they must recognise that it is no longer acceptable to lie to patients."

That is even more worrying when we consider that, in one of her many press releases, the former Secretary of State for Health stated that the public

> "should be able to expect high standards of disclosure"

with a health service that had "public confidence" and where the public were "well informed." We now know that that was a publicity stunt, because those aspirations were certainly not met in last year's measles vaccination campaign.

What about possible side effects after the injection? The Department of Health and Health Promotion Wales stated in the literature that they sent to parents:

> "Side effects are uncommon. They are usually very mild and disappear quickly."

While the Department of Health carried out a scare campaign about the extent of the likely epidemic and the dangers of vaccination, it lulled parents into a false sense of security by giving them inadequate information. Professor Richard Moxon of Oxford university said:

> "The concerns expressed by these parents are very plausible. There is a horrendous gap in the country's research."

I should like to mention a family in my constituency, Mr. and Mrs. Gregory, whose child was vaccinated against measles and rubella. After a diagnosis of the child, their doctor recorded in her medical record that her ill health was the result of the vaccination. What is more, research that was conducted by the US Centres of Disease Control and Prevention identified 34 major side effects to MMR and DPT jabs.

In March 1995, the Communicable Diseases Surveillance Centre published a paper in *The Lancet*; the Government were aware of the results in that paper in mid-1994, six months before the vaccination campaign. The paper reported the results of research in which the side effects of immunisation were actively looked for rather than relying on the previous passive system of reporting by doctors. By linking hospital admission records, the authors showed that the incidence of various side effects was higher and more serious than had been previously thought. Why did not the Government tell parents the truth and not put out the kind of nonsense that they obviously did put out?

There is another reason for concern, because people such as Dr. Nicholson highlighted the fact that the measles-rubella vaccination campaign was an experiment. He stated:

> "In 1991, the Department of Health issued guidelines requiring all experiments in NHS patients to be reviewed in advance by local research ethics committees. No such committee approved this experiment."

The fact that it was an experiment was made clear in a recent edition of the *British Medical Journal*, in an article written by the director of the immunisation division of the CDSC. She wrote:

> "The campaign approach for delivering vaccines has not been tried before in an industrialised country . . . the comprehensive surveillance system in place . . . will show the consequences of the campaign to be associated accurately."

Will the Minister explain why that experiment did not go before any of the ethics committees?

The mathematical model which it is claimed predicted the measles epidemic depends entirely on the rate of spread of measles among 10 to 14-year-olds being at least twice as high as the spread among five to nine-year-old children. Will the Minister please detail what empirical scientific evidence exists to support that assumption?

I shall now deal with compensation for the victims of vaccine damage. As Rosemary Fox of the Association of Parents of Vaccine-Damaged Children reminds us:

> "In 1979 a Royal Commission recommended that the Government should be strictly liable for vaccine damage—not only because this was morally right, when damage resulted from a scheme promoted by the Government, but also because it would show that the Government had confidence in vaccination. Sadly, despite our long campaign to get the Government to compensate the injured, it has so far refused to do so."

That is confirmed in an answer by the then Under-Secretary of State for Social Security, now the Secretary of State for Wales, to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. Burden). The Minister stated:

> "The payment is not compensation, but is designed to ease the present and future burdens of those suffering from vaccine damage and their families."—[*Official Report*, 27 April 1995; Vol. 258, c. *643*.]

In order to qualify, the individual must have suffered severe mental or physical disablement of 80 per cent. or more in cases where it could be shown that, on the balance of probability, the damage resulted from any vaccination.

We must remember that while it may not be too difficult to prove who is at fault in a road crash and to obtain compensation, it is extremely difficult to prove that vaccine has caused damage. Even for those who are successful, the payment for experiencing horrific physical or mental injuries is a mere £30,000. Will the Minister consider amending the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 to ensure far more generous compensation, not payment, for those whose lives have been destroyed, and will he ensure that the period for which claims can be made is extended? Will he also consider introducing a Freedom of Information Act, as they have in United States of America, to make information about licensing and side effects of pharmaceutical products publicly available?

I want to comment on the awarding of the contract to supply the vaccines. Will the Minister explain why the contract to supply approximately 8 million doses of vaccine, the cost of which must have been in excess of £100,000, was not advertised and put out to tender, as required by law, through the *Official Journal of the European Communities*?

Does the Minister accept that an excuse of "extreme urgency" does not stand up to serious analysis? If he denies that, will he inform me when the Department of Health decided to run a massive campaign of measles and rubella vaccination? Was there a period of five months before the vaccination campaign? If so, that is not a case of extreme urgency. Does he accept that it still does not qualify as "extreme urgency" by the laws of the European Union, to which we are subject, as those are concerned with emergencies caused by natural disasters such as earthquakes?

Will the Minister explain how the NHS Supplies Authority managed to equate "events unforeseeable" with the fact that the vaccine was needed precisely because the Department of Health claimed to have foreseen an epidemic? The Department cannot have it both ways—saying that the events were unforeseen and also that it had foreseen the events.

Will the Minister inform me whether the companies offered the contract already had supplies of measles and rubella vaccine that were left over from 1992, and for which there was no demand? Even allowing for that, does he accept that more supplies were still necessary and that it was surprising that tenders were not sought from other companies in other parts of the world supplying the vaccine?

Will the Minister inform me of the number of instances when financial penalties were applied to manufacturers of the measles and rubella vaccine used in the vaccination

[Mr. Smith]

campaign in November 1994, because of an identified fault in the supply of the vaccines or instructions as to their preparation? Will he confirm that one of his former colleagues, Baroness Hooper, an ex-Minister in the Department of Health, became a non-executive director of one of the two companies—Smith-Kline Beecham—that were given the vaccination contract just one month after the national campaign was launched? Will he also confirm that, since 1989, one of those companies—again Smith-Kline Beecham—made donations to the Conservative party totalling £110,000 and of £35,000 to that right-wing think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies?

How does the Minister respond to the people who argue that vaccinations are not effective? For example, Wrexham general practitioner Dr. Joanna Cleeson was reported in *The Guardian* as stating:

> "These diseases declined before vaccination with improved sanitation, hygiene and nutrition; vaccination has not affected the rate. Scarlet fever disappeared without a vaccine. Sweden does not have whooping cough or diphtheria jabs and their decline has been the same as in other countries."

My position is one of concern that far too many components are given in one go, and I support the view of the national body, JABS—Justice Awareness and Basic Support—that vaccinations are not suitable for all children, that there should be health examinations before children are vaccinated, together with checks for signs or a family history of atopic reaction, and that vaccines should be offered separately if a child is felt to be at extra risk of side effects. Will the Minister comment on those demands?

I want to comment on the response of organisations such as Gwent Community Health to concerns expressed by families in my constituency such as Mr. and Mrs. Gregory of Tredegar, when they feared that their child was dying as a result of the vaccination. They were treated with disdain by the representative from Gwent Community Health when they were in desperate need of support and guidance. I would have thought that their concerns should have been listened to, respected and acted upon, but the opposite was the case. So much for the principles of the NHS customer charter launched this year.

The very same family also sent a report on vaccinations to Gwent Community Health, asking for its observations. They were told in March this year that the report had been sent to the relevant Government Department for comment. About six months later, I telephoned Gwent Community Health asking why Mr. and Mrs. Gregory had still not received a reply. A few days later, I received a copy of the reply, which was stamped 14 February 1995. Why did Gwent Community Health write to my constituents saying that it had sent the report to the Government and were awaiting a reply when it had received that reply a month earlier?

Will the Minister investigate all the complaints that I have made against Gwent Community Health? If such an investigation is carried out, it will go some way towards proving that the current Minister for Health was sincere when he said in one of his press releases:

> "Health authorities need to show that they are listening to the views of local people."

I am not alone in the belief that there should be a full public inquiry to examine these and many other issues raised by a number of eminent people. If the Minister agreed to such an inquiry, he would be responding positively to promises made in many statements from the Department of Health about "honesty" and "accountability". That would ensure that the words of the previous Secretary of State for Health were a reflection of reality and not just a public relations exercise. The previous Secretary of State said:

> "the public are not just users of the NHS, but shareholders."

If the Minister is unable to answer some of my questions for a variety of reasons, I am sure that they will be answered in writing in the next few days.

10.17 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Tom Sackville): I congratulate the hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Smith) on raising this important issue but I agree with very few of his conclusions. In fact, I advise him to be more careful about the sources for the information that he has put before the House.

As the hon. Gentleman knows, to many parents measles is an inconvenient and infectious disease from which many children suffer. To the World Health Organisation, measles is one of the main killing diseases of childhood and is responsible for at least 1 million childhood deaths each year. It is not a trivial illness and should not be underestimated. It can lead to complications such as pneumonia and encephalitis with the possibility of epilepsy and brain damage.

Nor is it just a serious disease in developing countries. In the United States epidemic of 1989-91, 130 children died of measles and its complications despite the availability of modern intensive care facilities.

Our record on measles in recent years has been good. Through our progressive efforts, such as the introduction of target-based payments for GP immunisation services, we have been able to raise immunisation coverage to levels well in excess of 90 per cent. Accordingly, target diseases have fallen to very low levels.

That apparently satisfactory situation has led some people to think that measles is no longer a problem and that, because there have been so few deaths, we need not worry. We have not been complacent, because the pattern of measles is like a volcano—after years of smouldering it suddenly explodes, producing an epidemic. That is exactly what occurred recently in Holland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. When such epidemics occur now, they affect people who are older than those who used to catch measles, and for them the complications and chances of death are much higher.

The reasons for the cyclical epidemics are well understood. With 90 per cent. vaccine coverage of the target population each year and 90 per cent. vaccine efficacy, only 80 per cent. of the population has full protection. Each year one accumulates 20 per cent. of the year's cohort as susceptible and, after about five years, the scene is set for a resurgence of measles.

To use the volcano analogy again, over the past few years our measles experts in the Department of Health and in the Public Health Laboratory Service have been acting as seismologists. They have been collecting information and carefully monitoring the situation. Unlike a volcano, which cannot be prevented from erupting, we have the capacity to prevent a measles epidemic.

In 1993, using the most extensive surveillance data, two groups of scientists based at the Public Health Laboratory Service and at the university of Oxford gave evidence to the Department of Health's independent expert advisers—the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation—that a measles epidemic was likely. The estimated date for the epidemic was 1996 or 1997. The predictions of both groups pointed to between 150,000 and 200,000 cases and up to 50 deaths. The JCVI reviewed all the available data, which included the experience of other countries with measles epidemics, and took account of the experience of adverse reactions associated with the relevant vaccines.

The committee agreed that it was right to prevent an epidemic when that could be done. It recommended that the most effective way to do so was to re-immunise all children aged five to 16 years simultaneously. That approach is fully supported by the World Health Organisation. Only last week, at a meeting of world experts on immunisation, Sir Gustav Nossal, chairman of the WHO scientific advisory group of experts and of the children's vaccine initiative, described measles immunisation campaigns as examples of a brilliant strategy appropriate to the purpose of preventing a disease causing 1 million deaths a year.

Following the recommendation of the JCVI in late 1993 and its acceptance by Ministers, the Department of Health started to lay down plans to implement an immunisation campaign. By mid-1994, however, it became clear that there were important changes that meant that the planned timetable needed to be accelerated if an epidemic was to be averted. Measles cases in England and Wales were occurring at a higher frequency, and among older children, than in previous years. It also became clear that an epidemic was already occurring in parts of Scotland. During the winter of 1993-94, 138 young people were admitted with measles to one hospital alone in Glasgow. Since 1970, there has been only one occasion—1973—when epidemics occurred simultaneously in England, Wales and Scotland.

In the light of those events, the group charged with implementing the measles campaign decided that there was no alternative other than to implement a campaign in the autumn of 1994 if an epidemic was to be averted. That plan had the full support of the chief medical officer and Ministers. I should point out at this stage that the only way to prove a prediction of an epidemic correct would be to let it happen. To do that would have been a gross dereliction of our responsibility for public health and would have been indefensible. Imagine the feelings of any parent of a child who died of measles if it transpired that the Department of Health knew that an epidemic had been predicted and efforts had not been made to prevent it.

The hon. Gentleman has made much of an article written by a Dr. Richard Nicholson, whom he described as an eminent source. All the expert advice at my disposal leads me to believe that Dr Nicholson at least does not fully understand the technicalities of immunisation, of mathematical modelling or of vaccine manufacture. Furthermore, Dr Nicholson has made some allegations of impropriety by the Department of Health in the vaccine purchase arrangements and he has even gone so far as to suggest that the Department's staff deliberately misled the medical profession and lied to the public. These are very serious charges.

Mr. Llew Smith: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Sackville: I will not, as I have very little time left.

I unconditionally refute these allegations, and I regret that the hon. Member has made use of his position in the House, under parliamentary privilege, to repeat them. I hope that he will reconsider.

Following the decision to implement the campaign in November 1994, the NHS Supplies Authority approached every vaccine manufacturer to alert them to the country's requirements and to establish their ability to supply the required amounts of vaccine.

Mr. Smith: Will the hon. Gentleman give way now?

Mr. Sackville: No, as I have very little time and a great deal to cover.

Only two manufacturers could provide the quantities of vaccine in the time available. Competitive tenders were sought and contracts awarded. The usual rigorous criteria for licensing and testing were applied. With only three months available to manufacture, pack, label, test and supply vaccine, the EC rules for awarding contracts in emergency circumstances were followed, and appropriately so. The price negotiated was close to the lowest paid worldwide, and far lower than that paid by any other industrialised country.

At that stage, detailed market research was undertaken by the Health Education Authority to establish the information requirements for the campaign. Draft material was fully tested with parents and young people and evaluated in one district where a pilot immunisation campaign was run. A commercial sector advertising agency developed four different approaches for television advertising, and they were market-tested. The version that was used for the advertising campaign had by far the strongest support from parents.

In advance of the campaign, studies were undertaken by the Public Health Laboratory Service to investigate adverse reactions in children receiving second doses of measles and rubella vaccine. Colleagues from the United States and the Netherlands provided evidence based on their experience with second doses of the relevant vaccines. All relevant evidence pointed to a very low likelihood of adverse reactions.

The campaign was implemented in November 1994. In England, more than 7 million children were immunised, with school staff playing an essential part in ensuring the smooth running of the campaign. The results of the campaign have been excellent, with 92 per cent. of children aged between five and 16 being immunised. Since the campaign, the only two cases of measles that have occurred in the age groups covered have been in children who were not immunised in the campaign. A predicted epidemic has been averted.

As with all immunisations, however, the possibility of adverse reactions is always taken very seriously. We recognise that under-reporting of adverse reactions occurs, but there is far less of a problem with the reporting of more serious reactions, and they are the ones that matter most. It must also be emphasised that over-reporting can and does occur. The fact that an event occurs after an immunisation does not necessarily mean that it has been caused by the immunisation. It is very understandable that parents might make that association when faced with a problem in a child who had been immunised recently.

[Mr. Sackville]

Doctors were alerted by the chief medical officer to report adverse reactions on yellow cards—the usual method—on three separate occasions before the campaign. In view of the high profile and magnitude of the campaign, it is surely reasonable to suggest that there was good compliance on reporting. Furthermore, professional staff of the Medicines Control Agency followed up serious reported cases to obtain detailed information on a child's medical history.

Approximately 8 million children were immunised in the United Kingdom. A total of 2,735 reactions were reported among 1,202 children—a rate of one child affected with any reaction whatsoever for every 6,700 immunisations. Most of the reports were of minor conditions, many of which were unlikely to be linked to immunisation. There were no deaths. There were 530 reports of serious reactions—one for every 15,000 immunised children. One quarter of these reports were of immediate allergic-type reactions from which no serious or long-lasting effects are known to have resulted. In the remaining three quarters, there was a full recovery in those children with late onset reaction expected to have been caused by the vaccine.

All those cases reported on the yellow card scheme, with a clear link between the reaction and the vaccine, made a complete recovery. For children in whom recovery has been incomplete, the evidence did not support an association with the vaccine. All such reported conditions are known to occur in the absence of immunisation.

Last November saw an outstanding public health exercise. Not only has a measles epidemic been averted, but measles is now at an historic low level in this country. As anticipated, adverse reactions were either trivial, or those that were serious occurred very rarely and were unlikely to be caused by the vaccine. Our actions were in full accordance with WHO policies. Knowing that an epidemic was imminent, it would have been indefensible not to implement this campaign.

Since we ran the campaign, we have spent considerable time and resources ensuring that a full evaluation has been undertaken. The monitoring of adverse reactions has been a keystone of this work. I shall be placing a full report on the campaign in the Library.

I regret some of the hon. Gentleman's comments and I reject his conclusions. I believe that we took the right action, that we took it at the right time and that we have achieved the right results.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-nine minutes past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 3 November 1995

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

National Health Service (Fundholding)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—[*Mr. Conway.*]

9.34 am

The Minister for Health (Mr. Gerald Malone): I am pleased to have this opportunity to debate such an important topic. The House will find it interesting to have an opportunity to explore how far statements made by former Opposition spokesmen on fundholding now reflect the views of the current team or, indeed, the views of the people they represent. General practitioner fundholding is one of those issues that appear to divide Opposition Members. It certainly has in the past and it will be interesting to discover whether it will today. Perhaps we shall be given a clearer view of their proposals for the future of primary care and, perhaps, some final acknowledgement of the important role that fundholders have already played in reshaping local health services to benefit patients. I will return to that subject later.

First, I want to make clear what the Government are doing in the primary care sector and fundholding in particular. It is widely recognised that the NHS is in a constant state of change and development. That is not surprising and there are a number of reasons for that. Medical technology, public expectations and other pressures all require the NHS constantly to change and adapt. The same is true of all other health care systems. We need only to look around the world to realise that many countries are not coping with the pressures, whereas in this country the NHS, as it is shaped by Government policies, is coping. The conclusions that I draw from those international trends is that the United Kingdom is out in front, while other countries are following our lead.

The Government's overriding aim in that process of change is to ensure that the quality of NHS care we have tomorrow is better than we have today. I want to set out the four key aims for the NHS. First, we want to make services high quality and effective, focusing on the care of individuals as well as improving the health of the population, as set out in "The Health of the Nation". I hope that the House will recognise, as I am sure the public recognise, that "The Health of the Nation" strategy is an extremely important development, leading the NHS away from simply coping with problems to positively developing the health of the nation and moving more towards prevention than we have ever previously been able to do.

Secondly, we aim to give patients the right services in the right way. It is not just about improving the quality and range of clinical services and developing the patients charter, but about ensuring that services are accessible to people. The NHS must be at the heart of every local community. Patients must be confident that the organisation of services reflects what they want and need, rather than what others think they should have.

At the core of the reforms is the point about putting patients' care first. The changes that have occurred and the move from the acute to the primary sector ensure that treatment is taking place in an appropriate setting, as near to the patient as possible. Under the old NHS patients were pushed around the system; under the NHS as we envisage it today, patients will find services much closer to where they live.

Thirdly, we want services to fit together in a seamless way, with no gaps or overlaps and with strong links between all parts of the NHS. Many people with varying degrees of expertise work within the service. Now, the consultant cannot work in splendid isolation from the community midwife; nor can the GP from the social worker. Only through partnership among professionals can we the secure highest quality of care for patients. What underpins that aim is the principle that when the patient is being treated, he should not notice when he is moving from one element of care to another. Care for the patient should be seamless.

Lastly—and I make no bones about this point—we must give patients as much as we can from the money available. I am always astonished by the Labour party constantly saying in debates that getting value for money and putting the mechanisms in place to achieve that are almost unimportant. The taxpayer is now putting record levels of money into the health service, yet the Opposition think that unimportant.

The truth of the matter is that that money is not only for the men in grey suits—the accountants and financial directors or, indeed, the Treasury—but embraces those in white coats who are now far more involved in managing the NHS than ever before. Benefits can also be obtained through improvements in clinical effectiveness and audit. That is part of the process that has been under way since 1990 to ensure that the NHS is accountable in detail to Parliament and the public. In essence, it means ensuring that decisions are made at the right level by those in the right place who have the right information.

I wonder whether Opposition Members would disagree with any of that. I would be surprised if they could. They say that they share our objectives, but, when the mechanisms are put in place and we debate them, they say that the mechanisms are wrong. If they sign up to those objectives, it is all the more amazing that they can continue their opposition to fundholding. I cannot think of a better example than fundholding that meets all the four aims necessary to improve the NHS.

I now cite examples of the ways in which fundholders deliver the key principles. First, they make services responsive to the needs of patients and they make them more accessible. There are examples of that happening all over the country, as I see when I visit GP practices, fundholding and non-fundholding. For example, in Buckinghamshire, the patients of Dr. Maisey and his partners no longer have to attend the local district general hospital for radiology or out-patient services.

Patients at a practice in Ealing now have access to a range of complementary medicine at the practice, which is increasingly what patients want. Under fundholding, if patients think it desirable and doctors think it a clinically

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appropriate way to deliver treatment, that is what happens. Before fundholding was introduced, those patients had to go into hospital for orthopaedic, rheumatic or physiotherapy treatment. Patients agree that life is much better when fundholders can use their discretion and ensure that care is delivered closer to the patients.

One of the arguments constantly used by the Opposition is that in fundholding we have created a two-tier health service. Yes, we do have a two-tier NHS—the NHS that we had in 1989 and the NHS that we have now in 1995. Let me give the House an illustration of the difference. Under the old NHS, the number of people waiting more than 12 months was 223,311. This year, the figure is 32,194. The average waiting time under the old NHS for in-patient or day case admission was 9.3 months, whereas the average time now is four months. Under the old NHS, there were 38,900 hospital doctors; there are now 44,600. There were 3,051 medical school places available; there are now 3,315.

The Opposition say that we have cut the national health service and that we, as a Government, have not been decent custodians of it, but the opposite is true. The service has become far more effective and is now a top-tier NHS. That is what the Opposition would dismantle.

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield): I am interested in the Minister's comments about the two-tier system which he denies that fundholding has created. I should like an answer to the questions that I have been asking him and the Secretary of State for some time. If there is not a two-tier system, why are my constituents, who are waiting for treatment at Pinderfields hospital in Wakefield, being asked whether they belong to a fundholding practice or not? Why is it that patients from fundholding practices needing certain specialist treatment can get it while patients from non-fundholding practices cannot?

Mr. Malone: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has given me the opportunity to deal with that point. As he well knows, when we set out to introduce fundholding, there was agreement with consultants and the medical profession as a whole as to how we would view priorities. Every emergency is treated as a priority and the treatment is similar. Where fundholding bites is in the purchasing of marginal care in hospitals where there is spare capacity for fundholding patients. Of course, when people present to have certain needs addressed, the question to which the hon. Gentleman referred will be asked because it has to be determined whether there is a contract with the fundholder for that particular service.

What amazes me about the Opposition's comments about there being a two-tier system is that they imply that everyone across the country was treated in the same way under the old NHS. I said that in 1989 there were 223,311 people waiting for treatment, but they did not all wait the same length of time. That time varied from region to region, and waiting lists still vary from region to region. It is absurd that the Opposition denigrate the fact that we have been making progress. They wish to denigrate the fact that using fundholding in a different way from a health authority to purchase margins of health care is providing better treatment for patients.

The Labour party is, as it has always been, the party of levelling down. It does not ask why health authorities are not purchasing their health care in the same innovative way as fundholders so that patients benefit. The purpose of fundholding is to create a leading edge by which others will inform themselves of best practice. It also creates targets to which others may aspire.

Mr. Bernard Jenkin (Colchester, North): Do not Labour's complaints about fundholding fail to make it clear that fundholding is advantageous to patients? Does my hon. Friend recall the time when there used to be a multi-tier health service across the country? The treatment that one received and how long one had to wait for it was a lottery, depending on where one lived. Does he remember that the two-tier system of 1979 meant that, if one could persuade the picket line to let one through, one was treated, but, if one could not cross the picket line, one went without treatment?

Mr. Malone: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. It is important for patients and the country as a whole that we demolish the two-tier argument. The Opposition use it to suggest that it is unusual that waiting times vary across the country, but that has always been the case.

Mr. Hinchliffe: At the same hospital?

Mr. Malone: When there were 223,000 people waiting for treatment, there were of course different waiting lists at the same hospital, but then people had to buy care to move up the waiting list. Now, the NHS treats people within an average of four months rather than nine months. That is the system that we have developed.

Mr. David Congdon (Croydon, North-East): Does my hon. Friend agree that, as the evidence shows that GP fundholders get no more funding per patient on their list than equivalent non-fundholders, the reality is that fundholders use their purchasing power far better than the bureaucracies of the health authorities? Is not the challenge for health authorities to bring their use of purchasing power to the level of that of fundholders?

Mr. Malone: My hon. Friend is right. If that were the question asked by the Opposition, I might have some sympathy with them. I was coming to the point raised by my hon. Friend. Fundholding is about making services more coherent and providing stronger links between the primary and secondary care sectors and within the primary care team. It is these fundamental changes that have delivered the margins with which fundholders are able to buy additional care for their patients.

There is an example of that in Manchester which shows how fundholding can help a practice focus on how to be better organised, involving the whole primary health care team. Doctors there have greatly improved the practice for patients by reducing non-attendance and improving immunisation services. The practice will not stop there, and that is one of the characteristics of fundholding. The doctors and professionals concerned are keen to move the boundaries ever further forward and they are looking to develop a wide range of in-house services not previously available.

But that is only part of the story. Fundholding is not just about improving services. Our strategy under the "Health of the Nation" White Paper is central to the aim that I set out earlier of improving the health of the population as well as delivering first-class health care. GPs are ideally placed to make a major contribution to that. Their dual role of needs assessment and direct patient care puts them at the leading edge to achieve genuine health gain.

For example, there are new and novel solutions to meet problems being faced by the community. In County Durham, Dr. Derek Brown has developed a scheme called "Positive Parenting" to help parents of children under five move safely through concerns that they may have over their children's health, be they speech difficulties or sleeping.

In such ways, GPs are using the flexibilities of the fundholding scheme to seek improvements in the health of the population. Who better than fundholders can demonstrate how doctors, directly involved in managing resources, can secure not only better care for their patients but better value for money for that care?

Mr. Stephen Timms (Newham, North-East) *rose—*

Mr. Malone: I will give way in a moment.

The point about managing resources is absolutely crucial. On fundholding, the Labour party has been slippery. It has moved towards the principle and said that the principle is all right. Now I understand its policy to be—it may change yet again today—that, sure, it thinks that it is fine to be a fundholder, but it will not let the medical profession get their hands on the funds. That is the most patronising, absurd attitude towards the medical profession that I can think of. The use of the funds, and the responsibility that that brings, has transformed much of primary care in our country.

Mr. Timms: In view of what the Minister is saying about fundholding, will he clarify whether it is the Government's intention that all general practitioners should become fundholders, and, if so, in what period does he envisage that taking place?

Mr. Malone: If GPs wished to become fundholders, I would very much welcome it. But it will not be compulsory. The Government's policy has not changed. *[Laughter.]* The Labour party's health spokesman, the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish), may laugh, but when we introduced fundholding, I remember Labour Members' tales of how it would never happen in practice because doctors would not like it. Yet now more than 50 per cent. of the population of England and Wales are served by fundholders. Not only do the doctors like it, the patients like it as well.

I see the process rolling forward, not by compulsion, but in an entirely voluntary way. The Government are not forcing them. It is peer group pressure. When one doctor sees what is happening in a fundholder's surgery and the improvements that the fundholding practice is able to bring to bear on patient care, there is a "me too" principle—*[Interruption.]* There is a "me too" principle of being able to do better for the patients.

Mr. Michael Stephen (Shoreham): Does my hon. Friend remember that, when we introduced fundholding, the Labour party predicted that doctors would be going bankrupt all over the country? Has that scare story been realised?.

Mr. Malone: No, it has not, but it is useful for my hon. Friend to remind us of what the Labour party was saying about fundholding. We shall contrast with some interest what it was saying, and what we recollect of it, with what—perhaps—it will say about it today.

I should like to look at some other examples. In Glossop, there is the development of a homeward bound unit for people with learning disabilities, which has provided an ideal link between leaving a long-stay institution and moving into the local community. Not only does it provide a better, more integrated service, but that unit saves the NHS more than £500,000 a year in in-patient costs.

I use that specific example of a saving which can now be spent on patient care to take head on the other argument against fundholding that the Labour party uses: that it absorbs far too much in management costs and that it is an inefficient use of funds. I find that a rather surprising argument. We are for ever seeing the rather lugubrious face of the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer popping up on television saying that the problem with the Government is that they are not prepared to invest; that they look at short-termism and are not investing in services.

Well, proper management in fundholding is such an investment. Let us get the amount of it in context. The amount that has been invested in fundholding management is 0.1 per cent. of the total NHS budget. That investment is well worth while. The House should consider what just one fundholder can achieve. If one fundholder saves £500,000 for the NHS, which can be deployed in further patient care, just think of what is happening across the country.

Doctors who are directly involved in managing those resources at the grass roots are getting better value. Overall, fundholders have achieved efficiency savings of more than 3.5 per cent. a year in return for increased management expenses. Not only have they achieved it once, but have done so every year since the scheme began to operate.

Ms Margaret Hodge (Barking) *rose—*

Mr. Malone: I shall give way in a moment.

The savings have been achieved by releasing the innovation and ideas in primary care on better ways in which to deliver services.

Ms Hodge: Two questions arise. We are not talking about additional administrative costs as a proportion of the total NHS budget, but as a proportion of what was previously spent on GPs. By how much has that increased? Will the Minister reply to the point raised by the hon. Member for Croydon, North-East (Mr. Congdon)? Do not GP fundholders receive additional moneys ostensibly to cover those administrative costs? Are they not better off than GPs who are not fundholders?

Mr. Malone: The hon. Lady persists in refusing to recognise the point which I happily concede: of course fundholders get extra money for administration. I point to the fact that not only is that a good use of public money—an investment, as the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer would no doubt tell us if he were making this speech. Such investment has produced greater efficiency in health care and has delivered a net benefit of about 2 per cent. Those funds can then be devoted to patient care and would otherwise have been lost.

So I make no apology for saying that good management in fundholding is right. Investment must be at the proper level. As long as it continues to drive more efficiency and better patient care, it is a proper deployment of public funds.

The illustration that I have given the House of how freedoms have worked is just a portion of what has been happening across the country. GPs are now able to

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manage NHS resources to improve the care for their patients—the freedoms and services that the Labour party wants to end; taking away from patients the improvements that they have seen and enjoyed. Only the Labour party would wish to make services worse for patients. Indeed, what it probably means is that it would be satisfied if the worst in the land was the criterion on which every service should be administered.

That is the implication of the Labour party's argument about two-tierism. If it thinks that those who are doing better are doing unfairly by their patients, the clear corollary must be that, to introduce fairness into the system, everybody must proceed at the pace of the worst. That is not an agenda that this House or the public would accept, and it is certainly not an agenda that the 50 per cent. of the population think is realistic for the way forward.

I should like to move to the important role of new health authorities in supporting primary care. It is a key feature—

Mr. Henry McLeish (Fife, Central) *rose—*

Mr. Malone: I will give way in—

Mr. McLeish: It is on the previous point.

Mr. Malone: In that case, I shall give way.

Mr. McLeish: The Minister has talked ostensibly about the 50 per cent. of GPs and the population covered by fundholding. I expect that a fair chunk of his speech will be given over to the other innovations and activities of non-GP fundholding practices throughout the country.

Mr. Malone: I will certainly be dealing with joint commissioning in due course. May I say that I am delighted to see that the number of GP fundholders in the hon. Gentleman's constituency is rising. That is indeed good news for the people in Fife. There seems to be a remarkable connection, because when the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) was Opposition spokesperson on health, fundholding in her constituency rose to 87 per cent. It is not yet quite at that level in the hon. Gentleman's constituency—it is about 30 per cent.—but we all hope for progress. Similarly, we look for great strides to be made in Peckham in increasing fundholding.

The role of health authorities will be extremely important as we bring together district health authorities and family health service authorities to make a coherent whole. We must continue to develop our service with the new health authorities so that they have the confidence to deliver the services patients need. Fundholders do not lack confidence. We have seen their confidence to try out new ideas, to extend influence and to seize opportunities. That work must be supported by the new health authorities, which will be able to look at the needs of the population locally and more directly.

Not everybody is at the leading edge or sees the world in that way. With the new health authorities in place, we need to translate the enthusiasm of some into the willing commitment of all; that will be the most important task of the new authorities. For the first time in England, we shall have single authorities looking strategically at the whole range of primary, secondary and community services in their areas. They will be able to assist in the process of meeting the four aims: making services high quality and effective; giving patients the right services in the right way; ensuring services fit together; and getting as much as we can from the money available.

We have now set an agenda related to primary care for the authorities to follow; those on the ground now need to see, feel and believe in the benefits. I expect the new health authorities to work with all GPs and primary health care teams and to involve them in the process of delivering a primary care-led service. GP fundholders are at the forefront of the changes and health authorities must tap into their enthusiasm, their innovative ideas and their ability to get improvements in the care provided to all patients.

I am slightly surprised that the hon. Member for Fife, Central and the rest of the Labour party seem to think that joint commissioning is a great innovation; it became possible only under our health service reforms. It has happened to some extent on a voluntary basis, in different ways, and I welcome that. But joint commissioning is not a policy that has been rolled out in a comprehensive way, as fundholding has been. It is not a policy under which one can measure the benefits across the country as one can do with fundholding. Of course, I welcome the fact that the new health authorities will have a duty to consult all GPs about the commissioning of services.

The joint commissioning policy misses the fact that, under fundholding, it is the individual doctor who decides what is best for patient care. Commissioning is, perhaps, a bit of a revamp of the old system under which committees decided these things. Representatives of doctors were involved and the Labour party would probably like councillors to be involved as well. That is the way in which Labour wants to take the policy forward. They will not concede the important principle that what has driven forward the reforms and has made everyone try to catch up with the fundholders is the idea that the funds follow the patient and are secure in the hands of the GP fundholder.

I recognise that not all GPs will be fundholders; not everyone wishes to be one. However, a clear majority now do and they must be supported. Fundholding should be developed comprehensively so that we can take it forward even beyond the existing successes.

I find it extraordinary that the Opposition are pushing the supposed merits of GP commissioning over fundholding. We have always had some locality purchasing in GP commissioning, but the fundholding model devolves purchasing power from health authorities to GPs to provide greater sensitivity to patients at a grass-roots, practice-by-practice level and ensures that decisions best reflect the needs of individual patients and the local community.

The information that we get from those who participate in joint commissioning exercises is welcome and many of them have innovative ideas. However, joint commissioning is not evenly spread across the country. Giving power to the individual doctor is at the core of our policy and it clearly works. I believe that the Opposition finally recognise that fact.

Only a few weeks ago, the right hon. Member for Derby, South finally acknowledged the beneficial developments made by fundholders. She said at a conference:

> "We want genuinely to pay tribute to the role that you as fundholders have played in kick starting and developing innovative practice in both primary care and the acute sector. None of it has gone unnoticed and all of it is valued and is worthwhile."

Although those words may have been used to placate the fundholding conference she was addressing, the second half of the policy was missing: "We value you, but we are going to take your power of choice away by depriving you of your budgets." If the right hon. Lady had been entirely honest, she would have given that message. She went further and said that Labour proposed to keep the flexibilities introduced by this Government. Is this a signal of yet another change in Labour's position? We shall wait and see what the hon. Member for Fife, Central has to say.

We were told at first that Labour would end the fundholding scheme within the first 100 days of a Labour Administration. Then we were told—the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) developed this policy in a sub-fugue:

> "It is our intention to phase out fundholding over a period which may be as long as three years."

As fundholding rolled out and became more popular, the Labour party began, inevitably, to roll back from the argument and we heard that it was "individual practice fundholding" which would be phased out. I am not sure what that means, but I suppose that it sounds more comfortable than closing fundholding practices.

What further changes can we now expect? The truth is that the Labour party has now waved the white flag in terms of the rest of the improvements that the Government have brought to the health service. I suggest to the hon. Member for Fife, Central that Labour should complete the surrender and use this opportunity to make a fresh start, to move forward and to accept fundholding as it is. Such a step would be welcomed by doctors and patients.

The only changes that I am interested in making now involve looking at how we can spread the benefits further. Fundholding is and remains the Government's preferred option for involving GPs in purchasing. It is obvious that most GPs agree, as more than half are expected to have chosen that option by next April.

I turn now to the new opportunities for fundholding. The community option, which has been a great success for those who have taken it up, will take root soon. The community option gives GPs control of their immediate practice environment: the budget for their staff; community nursing services; the prescribing budget and direct access to diagnostic tests for their patients. All our expectations have been surpassed. More practices have chosen to enter community fundholding than entered the first wave of the scheme in 1991. There will be about 1,000 GPs in the community scheme alone.

Standard fundholding is not standing still either. It has been changed and developed, and it has been made simpler and more coherent. From next April, it will cover virtually all elective surgery and out-patient services. The changes to the scope of the scheme should resolve many of the bureaucratic problems reported by trusts which were caused by their not knowing which services were in the scheme and which were not.

The argument against the point that there is too much bureaucracy is simply this. We are happy to cut bureaucracy where we can do so. The White Paper "Putting Patients First" and the work that followed showed that we could relieve the burden of bureaucracy on GPs enormously. I am always happy to entertain suggestions about how we can do that. Under standard fundholding, everything will be included except emergency and urgent work, and the very rare and most expensive treatments.

In all, more than 3,000 GPs in more than 1,200 practices have applied to be fundholders from next April. That will mean that about 14,000 GPs, more than half of all the GPs in England, will have chosen to be fundholders. Between them, they serve more than half the population. I am confident that a similar story is emerging in Scotland, in Wales and in Northern Ireland. These are major developments, yet the Labour party would seek to put them in reverse.

I shall now say a word or two about total purchasing. From next April, GPs working at the 51 pilot total purchasing sites will have started purchasing all services for their patients. I have been especially impressed when I have visited the total purchasing pilots and seen all the work that is being done.

In Bromsgrove, GPs have employed nurses to visit patients admitted as emergencies. That has helped both the GPs and the health authority to understand better why some patients remain in hospital longer than others. It has also helped to ensure that patients are discharged appropriately into the community, and that the primary and community services are ready and available to receive those patients.

Other innovative work has been done there in bringing community midwifery forward. By ensuring that private nursing homes can be used to deliver respite care for their patients, GPs have helped to resolve many of the problems that the hospital had with beds being inappropriately used. Likewise, GPs in Runcorn have contracted for the secondment of midwives from provider units to their practice, to set up team midwifery and thus bring services far closer to patients.

All those projects are demonstrating how GPs involved in the direct total purchasing of care for their patients can help to introduce a radical culture change within a health authority. Under the old system, although there were committees that presided over all such matters, they probably gave more lip service than real attention to the needs of patients.

It was said that GPs were involved in purchasing under the old procedures, but if that was so, why is a system such as total purchasing, in which GPs have control, suddenly producing demonstrably better innovative services that under the old schemes were never thought possible?

That is a culture change of the most extraordinary and innovative sort. We seek to spread such culture across all health authorities, and when the new health authorities are up and running on 1 April next year we expect the new chairmen and chief executives to rank it among their top priorities.

The development of a primary care led NHS throughout the country means improving the links between primary and secondary care, and increasing the influence that GPs and their teams exercise over those services. It means giving GPs real power to influence the way in which services can best be shaped to benefit patients. It is about trusting GPs to listen to and reflect the wishes of the patients whom they see daily, rather than paying lip service to their good work and then depriving them of the means of carrying it out, as the Labour party wants to do.

That means real power, with real responsibilities and real money, not notional power, notional budgets and notional accountability. Only the Labour party would wish to

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reintroduce the endless committees, the centralised bureaucracy and the abrogation of decision making that was rife in the health service that we inherited in 1979.

What are Labour's plans for GPs and the primary health care led service that we want? What is its policy for primary care? What are Labour spokesmen saying when they tell GPs that they want to end fundholding? The truth is that they have no policies for primary care and no plans to use GPs' skills and abilities. Their message is a simple one: "Let's turn the clock back. GPs, go straight back into the box that you used to occupy. Stop fighting for what is best for your patients." In effect, Labour says, "Trust us, we know what's best; the old committees know what's best. We recognise that you GPs happen to have been developing services in a way that nobody could have anticipated—but too bad, we want you to stop, and we want to go back to the bad old ways."

I suspect that one reason why the Labour party is so determined to scrap fundholding is that it could not think of a way to rename it, as it has renamed the rest of the NHS. It will be interesting for my hon. Friends to hear how Labour has redefined the health service and its language, because the definitions are strange and marginal.

With some of the jargon words, Labour has made some really fundamental progress. What is now commonly known among professionals as the internal market, or the purchaser-provider split, Labour has heroically decided to rename; it is now called the "planner-provider split". What a difference that will make. Trusts will be changed fundamentally from their roots up; they will be called "local hospital services"—although I understand that trusts will not change their signs or letterheads.

Instead of the vile marketplace, which uses such disgustingly hard-edged words as "contracts", there would be "health care agreements". Labour strategists' problem is that they cannot find another word for fundholding, so it rather looks as though they are obliged to scrap it.

The difference between our parties is clear. GP fundholding and the move towards a primary health care led NHS have brought improvements in the provision of care, made services more accessible and provided a means by which GPs and their primary health care teams can have real power and responsibility, and can change the pattern of local health services to meet the individual needs of their patients.

I take the opportunity now to thank all those who have been involved in the pioneering of fundholder practices, including the health care professionals that GPs have brought into their practices, for the work that my colleagues and I—and, if they were honest and admitted it, Labour Members—see when we visit fundholders all over the country. The success of fundholding has exceeded the Government's expectations, and the people involved should be thanked for that.

Our policy is about levelling up; Labour's policy is about levelling down. Our policy is about giving doctors control over funds for patient care; Labour's is to patronise them and take that real power away. We have built an NHS that will meet the challenges of the 21st century, and today we have an excellent opportunity to debate the policies of the Labour party, which seems determined to destroy it.

10.15 am

Mr. Henry McLeish (Fife, Central): I am pleased that the Government have selected fundholding to debate today.

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): Delighted.

Mr. McLeish: We shall wait and see the delight develop in the next few minutes.

It is important to accept the fact that a primary care-led health service is what Labour wants and supports. There is no distinction between us and the Government there. GPs' role in that process is, of course, vital, but it is also important that we register our support for and applaud the work of every person who works in the NHS. Far too often in the House we have a knockabout over issues, principles or structures, but we in Britain are fortunate in having some of the most dedicated and skilled personnel working in all aspects of the health service. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] That, at least, is a point that unites the House at this early stage in my speech.

It is important to talk about the political context of the Government's approach to health care. I do not want to destroy the morale of Conservative Members, but I hope that most of them have read *The Daily Telegraph* this morning. Probably because the Government do not listen, do not evaluate and do not care much what ordinary people think, the Conservatives are now 40 points behind in *The Daily Telegraph* poll.

I am quite happy for the Conservatives to plummet to historical new depths of unpopularity, but there must be a link between the unpopular policies for which the Government are famed, and electoral support. It is instructive that Tory party strategists in Smith square want to bury the issue of health. It is a weak issue for the Government. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why are we here, then?"] That is what I want to find out. It is important to know, because it may represent a change of tactic by the Government. They are 40 points behind in the opinion polls, but now they think that health may be a winner. Is that right?

Mr. Malone: I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman has given way to me. The sort of news that we do not want to hear about the health service is the false news peddled by the Labour party. That is what John Maples, my successor as deputy chairman of the Conservative party, was talking about. Conservatives want to hear the truth about the new NHS that is delivering proper health care. On that issue we can be strong.

I had hoped that the arrival of a new health team on the Labour Front Bench would stop the peddling of untruths about the health service. However, the first instance arose at Question Time earlier this week, when the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms Harman), in order to make a clear political point, made the accusation that people in Winchester—my constituency—were having to wait more than 18 months for admission to hospital for orthopaedic surgery. After Question Time, I checked and found that that was simply untrue. I have written to the hon. Lady to ask her to withdraw her allegations, but I have yet to receive a reply. We do not want to hear untruths about the health service. We want to hear about what is happening.

Mr. McLeish: I am delighted that the Government are to engage in discussions on the NHS in the run-up to the general election. If they do so, I am convinced that the Opposition's 40-point lead will be increased.

The Government do not like certain concepts being discussed in their presence—for example, the two-tier health service that they have dismissed in relation to fundholding. In *The Independent* on 19 October, the new Secretary of State for Health said:

> "fundholding certainly empowers the GPs in a way that makes it easier for them to improve services available to their patients."

If that is not a comment about a two-tier health service, what is? *[Interruption.]* The Minister may mumble, but even the Secretary of State has acknowledged that GP fundholders who receive preferential contributions will inevitably and instinctively use them for the benefit of patients. That is not the issue, however. The issue is whether this country should have a two-tier health service.

Mr. Malone: The clear implication of the hon. Gentleman's argument on two-tierism is that all GPs should become fundholders and share the same benefits. That would get rid of the problem by levelling up, and not levelling down as the hon. Gentleman wants.

Mr. McLeish: I am happy to engage in discussions on levelling up, and the Opposition will give more detail on that in our commissioning proposals. But the Government cannot wriggle off the hook. The Secretary of State for Health acknowledges that the current system empowers GP fundholders to get a better service than non-fundholders.

It was instructive that the Minister did not spend more time in his speech on other activities in primary care, despite the fact that I asked him to do so. He did make a grudging and passing reference to those involved in commissioning, but we should not have a particularised view on what is good for primary health care. It is evident that the Government are obsessed with GP fundholding virtually to the exclusion of anything else that is happening in primary health care, especially in the multiplicity of commissioning options.

Mr. Mans: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the present system also empowers health authorities—as well as GP fundholders—to get a better deal for their patients?

Mr. McLeish: That is a fair point, and I shall discuss that issue in detail shortly.

Mr. Jenkin: May I remind the hon. Gentleman that he welcomed the opportunity of having this debate, the proposed subject for which is

> "Fundholding in a primary care-led National Health Service"?

The hon. Gentleman can hardly blame my hon. Friend the Minister for discussing fundholding when it is the subject for debate.

Is the hon. Gentleman proposing that the fundholders' advantages should be spread to all other fundholders, or that those advantages should be removed? Will he address that point?

Mr. McLeish: Conservative Members are rightly anticipating what I shall be saying in a minute, but I give the hon. Gentleman an assurance that he can intervene again if I do not return to that point.

A two-tier health service is a prominent part of the Government's agenda, as is private health care. In *The Observer* on Sunday 6 August, the Secretary of State for Health—who has been making soothing noises about the NHS—confirmed that he has private health care as a "safety net", and added:

> "My commitment as Health Secretary is to ensure that the service provided by the NHS is sufficiently good".

That is an admission that we may be on the verge of a safety net service under the NHS.

Mr. Malone *indicated dissent.*

Mr. McLeish: The Minister shakes his head, but we are used to that. The Government simply do not like the suggestion that their agenda is very different from the agenda of the British people, and, I believe, from the agenda of most GP fundholders, about whom the Minister waxed so eloquent today.

The Government are obsessed with GP fundholding to the exclusion of all else. An interesting letter appeared in *The Guardian* on 12 July, with the Minister being the subject of the discourse. The letter suggested not only that the Minister was obsessed with fundholding, but that he was making sure that his managers clocked up enough GP fundholders in the system so that they could get their bonuses and satisfy the Government's political objectives.

Mr. Malone: No.

Mr. McLeish: The Minister disagrees from a sedentary position, and I am willing to leave the matter there.

The Government will not come clean on their true intentions for the future of the NHS in the next century. Despite all the Government's concerns about primary health care, we have no doubt that, first, we have a two-tier health service and the Government are willing to continue to develop it; secondly, the Government are preoccupied with private health care as their first priority and the safety net NHS as their second priority; and thirdly, the Government will use every endeavour—above and below the table—to ensure that their political targets for fundholding are achieved.

Mr. Malone: I wish to put the Government's commitments firmly on record again. We are committed to the NHS as a tax-funded service that is free at the point of delivery. We are also committed to developing that service in the best way possible, something that the hon. Gentleman does not seem keen to do.

To suggest that there is some sort of private agenda is bizarre. The hon. Gentleman may like to ask some of the trade unions about private patient care, as they deliver private care as a benefit to some of their members. By talking about hidden agendas, the Labour party is getting into a bizarre world. I understand that the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) recently became so excited about hidden agendas that she accused me of a having a hidden agenda of abolishing fundholding after the next election. However, I am glad that the right hon. Lady thought that I would be at this Dispatch Box after the next election.

Mr. McLeish: I have no vision at all of the Minister being at that Dispatch Box after the next election. Whether that cheers him up is up to him.

The Labour party is looking at primary health care and at the contributions made by GP fundholders and those involved in commissioning projects throughout the country. As politicians, we must build on the best. As politicians, we should want a service that provides for all patients and all doctors and in which exists the pluralism that the Government often talk about but never want to discuss in detail.

[Mr. McLeish]

We must address the many issues that the Government will not tackle, two of which are the equity of access to primary health care and the equity of funding. Labour's approach is based upon and will be informed by a vigorous debate about equity of access and equity of funding. The Government's greatest weakness on that matter is to assume that because between 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. of fundholders are providing a preferential service, they can simply forget about the 60 per cent. who are involved in other types of health care.

Mr. Mans: The hon. Gentleman has made an important point about equity of access. Does he agree that equity of access inevitably allows someone to have something only if everybody else has it at the same time? Does not that effectively mean that there will be a levelling down to the lowest common denominator, not a levelling up?

Mr. McLeish: I do not want to narrow expectations or narrow horizons. Why do Conservative Members always refer to levelling down?

Mr. Jenkin: Because of the Opposition's policies.

Mr. McLeish: That is a matter of debate.

The Opposition are talking about levelling up and building on the best that is currently available. To finish this part of my speech, I wish to raise a matter with the Minister. In Britain, we are seeing the Government putting in the building blocks for the privatisation of the NHS.

Mr. Malone: No.

Mr. McLeish: The Minister disagrees, but trusts and fundholding are the building blocks for future discussions on privatisation. That is in sharp contrast to the Opposition, who believe that we should be boosting a blueprint for the renewal of the NHS. I hope that those outside the House will understand that there is a fundamental divide between the Labour party and the Government on the future direction of the NHS. We say that the Government are not seeking to develop any part of the NHS for patient benefit. Instead, they have a long-term strategy to dismantle and disaggregate what has been built up over many years.

The Minister talked about fundholding and my constituency. Earlier this year my wife died suddenly. My GP practice is fundholding. There is an excellent bunch of doctors doing an excellent job. My wife's GP suggested that because she could not get a scan, she should go to hospital in Edinburgh. He said that as he was part of a fundholding practice, that could be delivered. I had no problem with that and neither did my wife. She was at the front end of an extremely serious illness.

My wife had a scan. When she went for it, she was completely healthy. Two weeks and five days later she died. I appreciated fully this year the benefits that GPs provide and the benefits that my GP practice was providing. But whether it was a fundholding practice or anything else, it was all too late for my wife. I appreciated the qualities and the benefits that the practice delivered. With great respect to the Minister, I do not need lectures from him. My passion and compassion are focused on trying to ensure that the very service that my wife received is received by all.

Why should the service that my wife enjoyed not be available to and on offer by every other GP practice in my constituency? My approach to the health and primary care service is that we should build on the best. My wife and I had the best. She had the best in hospital. In her case, however, it was not enough. It is often useful that during our knockabouts in this place there is informed comment that is based on personal experience. I hope that the Minister accepts the spirit in which that comment is made.

Much has been said already about GP fundholding, but there are 95 groups and nearly 7,700 GPs serving 14 million patients by means of various forms of commissioning. We must take on board the problems, the issues and the innovations that come to light each day. The Labour party's approach is to build on the best of fundholding and commissioning. We are not saying to GPs in fundholding practices that important rights and important benefits for patients as well as important responsibilities for GPs should be discarded. Instead, we must focus on how best we can take things forward by combining the best of commissioning and of fundholding in a primary health care system.

I am sure that we, the Government and the Opposition will disagree on what the future should hold. The Conservative party should accept, however, that there is an alternative approach.

First, the benefits that have flowed to patients from both fundholding and commissioning should be recognised as constituting the important issue. Secondly, we, the Labour party, acknowledge the freedoms of GPs. It is their skills, commitment and dedication to the health service that motivate the entire system and produce improvements. That understanding must be acknowledged and embraced in any new programme. Thirdly, we must tackle unresolved problems. Fourthly, we must find a way forward that combines the two essential principles that fired the debate on 26 April 1948 in this place, which preceded the setting up of the NHS. Those principles were equity of access and of funding. Those core principles are applicable to the entire health service and to its continuation into the next century.

We, the Opposition, are putting forward a series of propositions. First, we say that the first priority of a Labour Government will be to develop commissioning proposals. We believe that they will prove attractive to all GPs. Secondly, GP fundholders will be absorbed into a new framework. Thirdly, GP fundholding will be eventually replaced by a new commissioning framework. Fourthly, we shall consult in detail with GPs about a realistic timetable for commissioning. That policy provides something that the Government's approach does not, and that is an opportunity for all GPs, whether fundholders or not, to participate in a system that ensures by means of a levelling-up process that the perceived benefits and freedoms of fundholding are available to everyone.

Mr. Malone: The crucial question is who will control the funds.

Mr. McLeish: With commissioning goes a number of other considerations that the Government sometimes ignore. First, we need collaboration among health authorities. It is—*[Interruption.]* The Minister has turned away from me. I have obviously satisfied him by fully meeting his question. I shall continue, however, for the record.

We are talking about commissioning, collaboration and partnership. The Government may not like those words, but it is obvious that those three approaches will be essential if we are to tackle some of the unresolved issues.

Mr. Jenkin: The hon. Gentleman has confirmed that in his commissioning framework he will remove the crucial advantage that fundholders have, which is exclusive control of the funds that they are allocated. The system in which he obviously passionately believes, bearing in mind what he has told the House, must embody fundholding control. Would it not be better for the hon. Gentleman to accept that we should be trying to extend that crucial control to all GPs rather than removing it and reducing what GPs can do for their patients?

Mr. McLeish: I fundamentally disagree with both the premise of the hon. Gentleman's argument and the conclusion at which he has arrived. If we are to have a detailed dialogue about the process that will enable us to have a commissioning framework, we must consider budgetary implications. It is important to recognise that the Government argue that all the benefits that have flowed from GP fundholding stem from budgetary control. In future, however, we must examine budgetary implications. We do not want to lose anything in the commissioning process that is of benefit to the patient and the doctor, and of benefit to the system generally. We propose to build on the best and to remove some of the excesses.

We, the Opposition, are confident that our policy will be a commonsense way forward. That will be the basis on which dialogue will take place. A recent speech by the Secretary of State for Health suggested that he is beginning to see things differently. When speaking to the Conservative political centre summer school in Cambridge, he said:

> "There is no single blue print, nor has the government ever suggested that there should be. The important commitment is that there should be a determination to see the continued development of the family health services."

We agree.

The right hon. Gentleman talked about no preconceptions and no closed minds. We agree. We agree also that there should be no rejection of ideas because they were not invented by us. Instead, as he said, there should be

> "a clear commitment to strengthening and developing the role of the family doctor."

I do not think that I have said anything with which the Secretary of State could disagree. If his speech at Cambridge signalled a change in the substance of the Government's policy, I welcome it. If it signalled merely a change of style, the right hon. Gentleman has much further to go before he arrives at where the Opposition are.

Let us take up the issues that were not mentioned by the Minister, which to me are inextricably linked to the future of primary health care, whether it is a GP fundholding system or the system that we are advocating. We have already trawled the issue of equity, so I shall not discuss it in great detail. I am willing to accept that comments in the press by Ministers agree with my view that a two-tier mentality is developing. The Government may say that that should act as a push to go on to something else. We argue that at no stage should there be a two-tier system where people who live in one street get the benefits of a service, but people who live in another do not.

We need to ensure that Britain is not divided into GP fundholders versus the rest or divided on the basis of geography. The analysis of the location of fundholding practices shows that they are to be found in some areas, but not in others. There is a geographical bias. There is also the question, upon which I do not want to dwell, of the sorts of patients whom fundholding practices may want to have or avoid.

The second issue that we need to consider is equity of funding. There is not equity of funding. That is a fact. Fundholding practices get better financial contributions than do other practices. Nobody is arguing against that. We need not dwell on the matter. If I were a GP and did not want to be a fundholder but wanted to do the best that I could for my patients, I would think badly of a situation that heavily discriminated against me and in favour GP fundholders. There is no logic or fairness in that system.

Mr. Mans: The hon. Gentleman says that there is no dispute, but what about the comments of Professor Glennester in his study of fundholding practices? He says that it is difficult to support the contention that, nationally, GP fundholders were systematically overfunded compared with what a national formula would have given them in the early years of the scheme.

Mr. McLeish: A trawl of his further comments would show that the professor simply does not know, because one of the key weaknesses of the Government's effort has been that there has been no proper evaluation of what has been happening.

Mr. Malone: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. McLeish: The Minister should wait until I raise that issue. If he thinks that some objective evaluation has been done, he must be the only one in the medical community who does.

The third issue is that of equality of opportunity for GPs to participate not only in what the Government would call purchasing of care but in dealing with providers. There is still dialogue in each area about what is provided, but it is clear that the GP fundholding model sets up difficulties for and barriers between the purchasers and providers of care.

Mr. Malone: Let me deal with evaluation. The hon. Gentleman says that nobody knows of any evaluation. He may not have heard of the National Audit Office report on fundholding, which went into the matter in some detail. It states:

> "The direct involvement of general practitioners in health care purchasing has led to improvements in the services provided for their patients and made fundholders more aware of the cost implications of their spending decisions."

It went on to recommend to the NHS executive board that it

> "should endeavour to ensure that the benefits of general practitioner involvement in purchasing, as demonstrated through the introduction of fundholding, are extended to all patients."

If the hon. Gentleman were prepared to travel in that direction, I could find more common ground with him.

Mr. McLeish: The Minister has opened up a hornets' nest because I am going to deal in a big way with the reports of the Health Select Committee, the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee. They make some pretty damning statements on the lack of information upon which proper evaluation can be based.

[Mr. McLeish]

The fourth issue that I want to stress is the strategic input of the health authorities. It is crucial in any primary health care system that the health authority and the providers are involved in the care that is being provided and in the purchasing of treatment. In the public interest and in the interest of value for money for taxpayers, it is ludicrous that long-term contractual obligations can be severely undermined by a system of GP fundholding that often operates in isolation from wider concerns such as spot contracts.

Mr. Malone *indicated dissent.*

Mr. McLeish: The Minister shakes his head, but the fact is that, where GP fundholders exist, there are major problems in that respect. It is one of the problems about which the Government are, again, blinkered.

The GPs have budgets; let them purchase care with spot contracts if they wish; but with such a myriad of contractual relationships developing, what about the providers? In Health questions this week, one of the Minister's hon. Friends, the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key), raised the question of the destabilisation of hospitals.

We should be interested not only in GPs being able to commission or purchase care but in the quality of providers. A primary health care system cannot work effectively when hospitals are destabilised to the extent that they can run out of cash and, more importantly, have no long-term future because they are not part of the particular privilege that has been given to GP fundholders.

Mr. Malone: I am sorry to disappoint the hon. Gentleman, but before he extends that argument too far, he should take into account some simple facts. For example, there is the accountability framework that has been published, ensuring that GP fundholders must take into account the implications of the possible service dislocation to which the hon. Gentleman referred. That includes the lodging and approval by the health authority of practice plans.

If there is going to be dislocation for a provider—the precise point that the hon. Gentleman was dealing with—practices have to give due notice, so that the provider unit at the hospital can adjust accordingly. The very points that the hon. Gentleman is illustrating are dealt with in the accountability framework in the fullest possible way.

Mr. McLeish: That does not square with the question of the hon. Member for Salisbury on 31 October.

Mr. Malone: My hon. Friend was wrong.

Mr. McLeish: Does that mean that anyone who criticises the Government has to be wrong? The question of the hon. Member for Salisbury stated:

> "However, will he now look at a problem that has arisen and advise my national health service trust? Where that trust literally runs out of money, it is beyond doubt and political banter that patients suffer because non-fundholders cannot have equal access to the national health service trust."—[*Official Report*, 31 October 1995; Vol. 265, c. 90.]

That was a Conservative Member. The Minister can accuse us of being politically prejudiced and a bit biased, but that was one of his hon. Friends. The Minister cannot continue to rubbish the comments of his colleagues and dismiss key issues about the strategic input of health authorities in the development of primary health care. Of course, that problem leads to another issue.

The Government always come to the Dispatch Box and lecture everyone on value for money. The Government have a problem, because value for money is often equated with least cost, but value for money is entirely different. The increased bureaucracy involved in certain aspects of primary health care surrounding GP fundholding means that a lot of money is being tied up in pushing paper.

Does the Minister accept the logic of the Secretary of State for Health who, after his Government have created an explosion of management, wants to cut it back? What are the Government doing to ensure that investment in management in GP fundholding is not done at the expense of patients? If, throughout the country, every GP fundholder has a budget, where is the accountability and the value for money?

Mr. Malone: In the framework.

Mr. McLeish: The Minister says that it is in the framework, but, in a sense, it is getting further and further away from real accountability and moving more and more towards the market model. The Minister is not unhappy with that, because that is his agenda. We are unhappy with that, because it means that taxpayers' money may not be spent to the best advantage.

There is also the matter of the long-term future stability of GP fundholders themselves. The Minister may want to answer this question: if every GP practice is a fundholder, how will they be funded? At present, the GP fundholders' budgets come from the health authorities' overall funding. There is currently an obvious discrimination in favour of fundholding practices, but if all practices were fundholders, would the Government plough in huge sums?

Mr. Malone: That is ridiculous.

Mr. McLeish: The Minister says that that is ridiculous. I wait with some anticipation for him to return to the Dispatch Box. Is there to be more money if preferential treatment is to be given or will money be taken away from GP fundholders and spread, levelling down, to use a phrase, to the non-GP fundholders?

Mr. Malone: There is no magic in this. Extra funds are given to GP fundholders because they exercise an additional management function that non-fundholders do not exercise. Non-fundholders have that function exercised by health authorities. If everybody were to become a fundholder, it does not take a flash of genius to understand that the function at present exercised by a health authority would then be replaced by the function at fundholder level. That is precisely what would happen.

Mr. McLeish: That has illuminated an issue for us: bureaucrats will simply be shifted out of health authorities into GP fundholding practices.

Mr. Jenkin: What a predictable comment.

Mr. McLeish: It is predictable, but predictable comments often make sense, especially given what the Minister said. He knows, and GP fundholders will appreciate it in the long term, that the financial stability of GP fundholders will ultimately not be what it is now.

Ms Hodge: If bureaucracy were transferred from one health authority to a large number of GP fundholders, would not that inevitably lead to an increase in the amount of resources spent on bureaucracy at the expense of patient care?

Mr. McLeish: That, too, was a predictable comment, but it was brilliantly penetrating in terms of the issue at stake and of what the Minister just said.

Mr. David Rendel (Newbury): Is it not also true that, if bureaucracy is transferred from a health authority to the doctors concerned, GPs who have been heavily trained at great expense to the public to become doctors will then be used as bureaucrats?

Mr. McLeish: That, too, is a valid point. The deep disquiet within the health service is all about the financial nexus being pushed between patient and doctor. That is another example of what could happen in the future.

Mr. Jenkin: May I just thank the Opposition for expounding the Stalinist theory of public administration?

Mr. McLeish: That comment does not even rise to predictability, and I shall not waste the House's time in answering it.

Earlier, the Minister focused on one of the issues that we want to raise, when he made one of those comments that the Government liberally make about the benefits of GP fundholding. It is widely appreciated that benefits have flowed to patients, and it is clear that freedoms have been enjoyed by doctors. But whereas the Minister talks about objective evaluation, the same Audit Commission report that he quoted earlier says in its preface:

> "There is a dearth of factual information about the scheme which has grown and changed at a very great rate. It has not been evaluated systematically and, although there are a small number of published studies, most tend to be based on comparatively small samples and have relied on fundholders' own assessments of their achievements."

The Lancet of 28 October said:

> "Our knowledge about fundholding is rudimentary. Many important questions remain unanswered."

It then goes on to say:

> "Even the scant results we do have must be interpreted cautiously."

The question that we must pose is: on what basis do the Government make extravagant claims about the benefits of GP fundholding? The Minister has been energetic enough to rise to intervene in past exchanges, but I suspect that the Government have no interest in properly evaluating this exercise. Regardless of whether patient care is improving, the political benefits from the exercise are overwhelming. In the run-up to an election, it would be daft for the Government to evaluate what is happening objectively, in a scientific or non-scientific way.

Although the issue concerns the public purse, because the Government have invested much time and money in this development, they are now acting irresponsibly. They will not initiate research with a sensible methodology, which would give the House and the country a proper basis on which to evaluate the claims that have been made.

Mr. Congdon: I have listened carefully to the points that the hon. Gentleman makes. Earlier, he said that we have a two-tier service. That implies that fundholders are doing their purchasing better, so if the hon. Gentleman wants an audit of fundholders as he described, the searchlight should be on the poor purchasing of health authorities.

Mr. McLeish: That point carries no weight because, in a sense, privileges conveyed financially allow GP fundholders to exercise purchasing rights on behalf of patients. It is self-evident. The issue is not about fundholders and non-fundholders exercising different skills in terms of quality of care, which would be a different debate.

The Government cannot continue to parade those benefits before the country unless and until they have information on which that is based. They can do so in a political knockabout debate, but I hope that the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee will soon examine why nearly 8 per cent. of the health service budget—£2.8 billion—is tied up in an experiment that has not yet been evaluated.

As a fellow Scot, the Minister may like to say why he took a much more cautious approach in Scotland, where he piloted projects that could be evaluated. If pilots have been carried out in Scotland, why are they not good enough for England? The Government are behaving irresponsibly and the Minister is silent because he knows that he does not have the information to make such ludicrous statements about achievements.

How can we have a partisan embrace of GP fundholding to the total exclusion of the other 50 per cent. of the country? I have already mentioned the figures. Are we to pretend that the treatment given to 40 million patients is of no significance to the Government? Are we to believe that 7,730 GPs are operating outwith Government approval because they have not yet had the guts to buy into GP fundholding? Or are we to believe that the 95 commissioning groups throughout the country are not doing a good job?

Does not that illustrate why the Government are so fundamentally unpopular? They hook into a certain obsession and relegate anyone who dares criticise it or does not come forward to be involved. The Minister cannot continue to conduct business in such a sensitive and vital area as primary health care with such a dogmatic attitude. Although I asked him, in his contribution, to discuss GP commissioning in its variety of forms, I had no response.

If one wants to build on the best, one must see what is happening in the various exercises throughout the country. Naturally, the Minister wanted to discuss GP achievements. Why, then, does not he go to north Cumbria and look at the alliance there, where group-negotiated funds for open-access exercise electro-cardiograms for all GPs have transformed access to cardiology for all patients? Why does not he look at the Blackpool, Wyre and Flyde GP advisory group's surgery-based dietetic service? There are lists and lists of good news stories.

Mr. Malone *rose—*

Mr. McLeish: The Minister may now want to rescue his position, but he has simply ignored a huge swathe of innovation, activity and excellent things happening in the health service.

Mr. Malone: That was a bad example for the hon. Gentleman to choose. He may understand that, when party conferences are held in Blackpool, Ministers sometimes feel constrained to remove themselves from the winter gardens. I visited the commissioning practice of which he speaks and spoke to its members for an hour about what they do. I found that, although they have an innovative

[Mr. Malone]

practice, they had had the utmost difficulty in getting the local health authority to agree to it, because they did not have purchasing power. They also came up with a list of proposals so that they could be given expensive management costs to carry out joint commissioning. That undermines the hon. Gentleman's point about it being a cheaper option.

Mr. McLeish: That contribution does not take away the fact that the Government are simply not interested in what is happening outwith GP fundholding.

I do not want to go on and on with other examples. It is a question of balance. Given that the Government are 40 points behind in an opinion poll conducted by a paper widely read by themselves, is it not time that they listened to those who do not embrace or applaud some of what they are doing in government? After 16 years, they simply do not care. That is the conclusion that you must reach, Mr. Deputy Speaker, after hearing the Minister's responses.

The Government have given no answers on a range of issues that are important for the future of primary health care, which is not developed in a vacuum. They include access, funding, the strategic importance of health authorities, equal access by GPs to providers in terms of dictating quality, and evaluation and objectivity in making claims. All those issues have been neglected. One cannot have a system of GP fundholding or GP commissioning that ignores in large measure the implications of those issues.

Worryingly, at a time when the Government have been partisan and particular, they continue to want to ignore some of the issues that I mentioned. I hope that, specifically, the Government will now initiate, arising from the debate, a series of far-reaching studies into GP fundholding and some of the other innovations that are taking place throughout the country.

We started the debate by saying that there was a fundamental distinction between what we, Labour, wanted to achieve in health care and what the Conservative Government wanted to achieve. Considering the Government's strategy logically, one recognises the classic signs of a process that was recently imposed on the railways, and is now being imposed on the health service—fragmentation, contractorisation and commercialisation. If the nation gave the Conservatives a fifth term, they would move to privatisation.

Mr. Piers Merchant (Beckenham): Absolute nonsense. We do not want privatisation. It is not a possibility.

Mr. McLeish: To use a phrase much quoted this morning, the hon. Gentleman's response is very predictable. The Government are very uncomfortable when one says something that they want to keep hidden. Is not that true? It is true. As far as I am concerned, the partisan approach that they have adopted this morning to primary health care merely reinforces our belief that the Government do not care about the national health service but do care about that four-step process towards the marketplace.

Mr. Jenkin: It is evident that the hon. Gentleman and the Labour party do not want to campaign on the issue of what we have achieved in the health service. They want to campaign on what they pretend that we might do in future, which they know to be untrue.

Mr. McLeish: I have heard much better interventions from the hon. Gentleman. Perhaps, because I am reaching the end of my speech, Conservative Members are reaching the end of their concentration. I do not believe that that comment required a response.

The exclusivity of the Government's approach will be evident to all who witness the debate. However, the Government are failing to tackle other problems, which we cannot go into today. Morale in the primary health care service is not good. There are major problems with recruitment and work loads and problems with early discharges and emergency admissions.

We are in the ludicrous position, which affects the Minister's constituency among others, where nearly £100 million of surpluses from GP fundholders is sitting in the health authorities' bank. I cannot believe that we have a million people on waiting lists and we have £100 million sitting there. The Minister should take seriously the issue of whether that will be ploughed back over four years into GP fundholding. Or is it the Government's tactic to dip into that bank budget and spend it on reducing waiting lists? People will find extraordinary that conflict between a million people on waiting lists and £100 million stored in a bank and not being used. It is a scandal.

We shall be in government within 18 months. We now have an important task to speak to GPs and to consider the new era that will open up for them. We shall start doing so early in the new year. I am confident that the policies being proposed by Labour will mean one national health service, a policy for all patients and a policy for all doctors. We shall reduce that partisanship, that particularisation of GP fundholding, by building on the best and taking the whole system forward.

Ms Hodge: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Have you heard whether the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) is intending to make a personal statement on the Government's decision not to privatise the harbour at Dover, especially because he appears to be the only person in Dover who supports such a privatisation?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Geoffrey Lofthouse): I have no such information whatever, and it is not a matter for the Chair.

11.4 am

Mr. David Congdon (Croydon, North-East): I listened carefully to the speech of the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish). Initially, he tried to make a thoughtful speech and I believed that he would avoid the temptation to engage in party political banter. However, my hopes were not fulfilled, especially near the end of his speech, when we had the usual canard that the Conservative party, which has invested so much in the national health service and been responsible for its stewardship during most of its time since 1948, has a hidden agenda of privatisation.

If there is a hidden agenda, it must be well hidden. If the Government were intent on privatising the health service, why have they invested 22 per cent. extra in real terms in the national health service since 1990—an enormous sum? Many commentators say that not even a Labour Government would have had the ability to deliver such an excellent amount of extra resources to the NHS. That canard should be dismissed for what it is. It does not help the debate. We also had the usual canard about morale being bad. Someone said recently that morale has always been bad in the national health service. I do not accept that it is any worse now than it has ever been.

First, I should like to place the debate in context. Debates about the NHS have usually been about hospitals and there have been four or five debates in the past year or so about the health service in London. One of the reasons why debates have tended to focus on hospitals is that that is the glamorous side of the NHS, where doctors carry out high-tech interventions and receive much publicity when they do a heart and lung transplants and the like. As a result, the opportunity to debate the importance of primary care is lost.

Undoubtedly, primary care is becoming much more important because of the changes in secondary care—changes in the way that hospitals work. There is much less invasive surgery and much more day surgery. There is much more surgery which does not involve surgeons having to open up a person to find what is wrong, discover that there is nothing wrong and stitch them up again, having done a great deal of damage in the process. They are now able to find out what is wrong without doing that.

That leads to much shorter stays in hospital. It also leads to people who have had operations being discharged much earlier, which places more pressure on primary care services. That is why primary care services have rightly been forced to change, and will have to change much more during the next decade and as we enter the next century.

We are also witnessing the proper implementation of community care, which is leading to much more long-term care in the community, which also places pressure on those primary care services. However, significant changes to the configuration of hospitals, especially in London, have provided the opportunity for £85 million to be invested in primary care developments in London. Many have been in the north of the borough of Croydon. I am privileged to represent one of the constituencies in Croydon. There has been significant investment in GP surgeries in the north of our borough, providing much better care and facilities for the people of Croydon than in the past.

I note that yesterday a further £35 million was announced for various initiatives to help single-practice GPs in London. I am sure that other London Members will join me in welcoming the Government's initiative in that respect.

Mr. Malone: Does it not shoot down the Opposition's case that the Government are interested only in developing fundholding practices when, as recently as yesterday, I made that announcement, which means that single-handed practitioners, most of whom are not fundholders in London, will receive the benefit of flexibility payments to improve services for their patients, too? On equity, of course we are sensitive about allowing other services to develop where possible.

Mr. Congdon: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I should say at this point, in case I create a different impression later, that I am primarily interested in primary care services delivered by GPs and their staff. I do not care whether they are fundholders or non-fundholders, but I do care that they should have the opportunity to deliver the best possible care for their patients. I happen to believe—in my view the evidence is strong—that when one gives the budget to GPs they are better able to decide where the money should be spent.

We should put the issue of GPs in context. I mentioned the extra pressure that GPs are under. There have been changes in the way that they work. There has been a significant growth in the number of GPs since we came to power in 1979. The numbers have risen from 21,000 to 26,000—an increase of 22 per cent. Doctors often say that they have a heavy work load, and I do not dispute that. But their list sizes have decreased from 2,300 to 1,900—a drop of 16 per cent.

Perhaps the most incredible change is in the number of practice staff. How many of us remember when we used to go to our GP and were lucky to find anyone else on the premises? The number of GP practice staff has risen from 20,000 to 54,000, which means that we can receive many more treatments at our GP surgeries without having to go to the local hospital for tests. That is why a primary care-led NHS is so exciting.

According to a recent MORI poll, nine tenths of patients are satisfied with the services provided by their GPs. GPs have always been the gatekeepers to other health services: they decide whether a patient should go to the hospital for a test or to see a consultant for further investigation. But until the reforms that introduced fundholding, GPs were gatekeepers with little power to exercise on behalf of their patients. They used to have to try to negotiate with consultants at the hospital, and it was a matter of which consultants they knew best, and perhaps even whether they went to the same golf club. That was not a transparent system of negotiating health care on behalf of patients.

Mr. Malone: The relationship between GPs and consultants can perhaps be encapsulated in a remark that I heard from a GP fundholder in London recently. He said that, five years ago, he used to send a Christmas card to a hospital consultant, but now the consultant sends him one.

Mr. Congdon: I congratulate my hon. Friend on that remark—he must be telepathic and is perhaps in the wrong occupation, as that was my next point. There has been a significant change in the relationship between GPs and consultants which has fundamentally changed the balance of power in the health service for the good of GPs and, more importantly, for the good of their patients. GPs now negotiate on behalf of their patients; they are not negotiating on their own behalf to protect or spend their budget. They use the power that their budgets give them to negotiate on behalf of their patients to obtain the best possible care for them.

The evidence is clear: GPs are able to negotiate better care for their patients. They have also been able to negotiate to ensure that more treatments are carried out in their surgeries. There are cases of GP fundholders negotiating with consultants and persuading them to come to their surgeries to carry out a clinic. What better way is there to run a health service?

It was alleged that GP fundholders would spend far less on drugs because they had control of the budget. The hon. Member for Fife, Central did not refer to the Select Committee on Health in his speech, but it carried out an investigation into the drugs budget. GP fundholders spend less per capita on drugs than non-fundholder GPs. More interestingly, the average value of the prescriptions that they give is higher than for non-fundholders. Significantly, they issue fewer prescriptions. The inference to be drawn must be that they prescribe more effectively.

[Mr. Congdon]

Many doubts have been expressed and there have been many debates on the effectiveness of GP fundholders, as we heard some from the hon. Member for Fife, Central today. One source that has not always been a friend of the Conservative Government—the King's Fund—has acknowledged GP fundholding as one of the major successes of the health service reforms. We should give weight to its views.

The evidence is that fundholders manage to buy care far more effectively than health authorities. The question for Opposition Members to ask is why. There is no evidence that fundholders have been given more money for patient care than non-fundholders, but because they are much closer to their patients they manage their budgets more effectively. In many respects, that is not surprising. We all believe that we manage our financial affairs much better than the Government do on behalf of taxpayers. Large organisations do not necessarily manage budgets and other matters better than at local level. The challenge now is to put pressure on health authorities to exercise their purchasing power more effectively and to bring themselves up to the standard achieved by fundholders.

I wish to deal head on with the question of a two-tier service. Before fundholding was introduced, the charge from the Labour party was that it would lead to a two-tier service—but not the two-tier service that the Labour party describes today. The Labour party's idea of a two-tier service was that GP fundholders would have a pot of gold, which they would be so determined not to spend that they would deny services to their patients. The net effect would be that fundholder patients would receive poorer quality patient care than non-fundholder patients.

Mr. Rendel: The hon. Gentleman has just told us proudly that GP fundholders make fewer prescriptions for their patients than other GPs. He used that argument to show that they were more efficient. He now tells us that it is not true that fundholders provide less for their patients, and that they in fact provide better care. I cannot see how the two arguments fit together.

Mr. Congdon: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman cannot understand the subtleties of the important point that I am making. Fundholders are given the same pot of gold as the health authority on a per capita basis; the important question is what they do with that money. Health authorities spend the money on behalf of GPs; fundholders spend it on their own. Fundholders spend less money on drugs than non-fundholders. They undoubtedly spend more money on some things than non-fundholders, and less on others. The net result is that there will be differences in the care provided.

It is my contention, and that of many others, that fundholders buy care more effectively. As a result, fundholders' patients are sometimes seen earlier than those of non-fundholders. That does not mean that there is a two-tier service, but that the fundholders buy a different pattern of care. The question that the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. Rendel) must ask is what the health authorities are spending the money on and why they are not achieving the same success as fundholders.

The Opposition cannot have it both ways. If they say that there is a two-tier service, the logic of their argument must be—I make no apology for repeating it—that all GPs should be encouraged to become fundholders. The argument involving a two-tier service—if it is valid—would then disappear. There would still be differences within the service, because different GP fundholder practices would buy different patterns of care to meet their patients' needs.

The important question is whether we level up or down. Conservatives believe that, by introducing fundholders, we have improved standards, and we want all GPs' standards to be levelled up to the standard of the best. Opposition Members believe that there is a two-tier service and that the only way to achieve the end that they desire is to level down. I am sure that hon. Members will join me in rejecting that.

I am pleased that fundholding is spreading at a fast rate. Some 41 per cent. of GPs are now in fundholding practices and next year the figure is likely to be more than 50 per cent. To date, the figures in my borough have been disappointing, but I am pleased to learn that many practices are to become fundholders from next April. I am confident that they will reap the benefits of fundholding.

I have never been particularly wedded to one standard model. I accept that the needs of one group of GPs can differ from those of another. I therefore welcome the fact that we now have three possible varieties of fundholding: community fundholding for small practices which do not have the ability to buy a wide range of services; standard fundholding, which is being extended to include most elective surgery, out-patient services and specialist nursing services and—perhaps the most exciting development—total fundholding, where fundholders are responsible for buying all care.

I understand that emergency services are also included. There is a need to ensure that there are no gaps in the loop. There have been allegations that fundholders could have an incentive to delay treatment so that patients present themselves at accident and emergency units. There is no evidence to support that, but one solution is to give fundholders total responsibility for all aspects of their patients' care.

In developing and extending fundholding, we need carefully to examine transaction costs in the NHS. In that context, I welcome the publication in June by the NHS executive of the efficiency scrutiny into bureaucracy in general practice. I hope that all the proposals in that document are implemented. I shall mention one or two that are particularly important.

The implementation of the new NHS number is crucial in terms of being allocating costs back to fundholding and non-fundholding practices. That must go ahead quickly. The report states on page 14 of the summary:

> "On present plans the software specification for standard fundholding does not cater for electronic data interchange.".

I urge my hon. Friend to address that aspect, as it could play a key part in reducing the volume of paperwork which flows between fundholders and providers.

There is also a proposal to implement an NHS-wide clearing system from April 1996. At present, there is a big invoicing process between providers and fundholders. Unfortunately, on current plans, fundholders will not be included from April 1996. Will my hon. Friend address that, as it is important to reduce the need for paperwork going backwards and forwards in this age of modern technology. I could raise other points, but I simply urge my hon. Friend to ensure that the recommendations in that report are dealt with properly.

Let me turn briefly to Labour's so-called joint commissioning. I listened carefully in order to understand exactly what that would involve, and I have to confess that I am none the wiser. I know that it will not be real fundholding because the GPs will not have funds, so what is the difference between what the Labour party is proposing and what exists today for non-fundholders?

Health authorities are empowered and cajoled to engage GPs and GP fundholders in dialogue about what should be in their purchasing plans. There are collaborative plans, but how much say do GPs have in that process and how much say would they have in the joint commissioning process? Professor Howard Glennester says:

> "Many GPs that have participated in that sort of activity get very frustrated by it . . . they are asked their views and then nothing happens and it just causes frustration and irritation."

In other words, there is consultation and collaboration and then the bureaucrats in the health authority do what they thought of in the first place. That is why the proposal for joint commissioning is no more than a half-baked idea.

Another alternative that the Labour party thought up, but did not mention this morning, is shadow budgets. I am not sure what a shadow budget is. Presumably GPs would not actually have the money, but there would be a notional account and if they were lucky the right amounts might be credited or debited. We would need more details before we could consider such half-baked proposals.

Labour's arguments for joint commissioning do not stand up. There have been a variety of allegations about what is wrong with fundholding and mention has been made of two-tier services here and there, but when the allegations have been investigated, most of them have been proved false.

In future, of course, the links between doctors—fundholders and non-fundholders—and health authorities have to be very good and clear, but when I listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Fife, Central I was struck by the fact that he was living in a time warp. He implied that fundholders were given a pot of gold and could do exactly what they liked with it regardless of the strategy of the health authority and the needs of the locality.

The reality is quite different. My hon. Friend the Minister referred to the framework document, which sets out the role of the health authority. The health authority has to assess the health needs of the population in its area. It has to prepare a strategy in line with the overall objectives of the national health service. It then has to purchase care for GPs who are not fundholders in line with that strategy. It also has to ensure that the plans of fundholders are in line with that strategy.

It is not a matter of GP fundholders getting together on a rainy afternoon to cobble together some plan that threatens their local general hospital and suddenly implementing it without anyone knowing about it. If they wish to make significant changes to their purchasing plans, they have to submit them six months in advance to the health authority which has a clear and direct role in the strategy, albeit that it does not purchase health care directly for fundholders. Opposition Members too often neglect that point.

I am firmly convinced that fundholding is the right way ahead for the health service. At last it has put the money close to the patient. Ideally, the money should be in the hands of the patient, but that is not realistic. Fundholding is a good second best and is achieving excellent results. I hope that we can build on those results because the system is so responsive to patient needs.

If all GPs cannot become fundholders—there will be problems in that respect, for reasons that we all understand—or at least community fundholders, we must find ways of giving a surrogate power to the residue of GPs unable to participate fully in the scheme. I want all GPs to benefit from the advantages of GP fundholding. I certainly do not want to turn back the clock, as advocated by the Labour party.

11.28 am

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield): I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the important debate this morning. I begin by commenting on the excellent speech by my hon. Friend the Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) from the Opposition Front Bench. It was his debut at the Dispatch Box, and he made a commendable speech that clarified Labour's position on GP fundholding while totally exposing the Government's current position. All hon. Members will agree that my hon. Friend courageously raised certain points that were drawn from personal experiences.

One reason why I decided to return to the Back Benches is that, over the past three years or more, I have felt somewhat inhibited in raising detailed concerns about specific developments in my constituency in debates on the health service. When I was at the Dispatch Box, the last thing Back Benchers wanted to hear was detailed concerns from a Front-Bench spokesman about his own constituency.

As the Minister is well aware, I want to spend some time today on the detailed implications of GP fundholding for my constituents in Wakefield.—*[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member for Croydon, North-East (Mr. Congdon) cares to listen, he will hear evidence that clearly shows that some people are deeply concerned that fundholding has created a two-tier system. I shall not only give examples, I shall name names. I can show Conservative Members letters that I have received—I have already shown the Minister some—that demonstrate clearly the effects of a two-tier system on my constituents.

Mr. Congdon: I am happy to accept the hon. Gentleman's examples in the spirit that they are given. If what he says is true, is not that evidence of the health authority not exercising its purchasing function as well as GP fundholders exercise it?

Mr. Hinchliffe: If the health authority was here, I think it would say that we should be examining the money available to fundholders compared with that available to non-fundholders and the health authority. The hon. Gentleman points a finger at the health authority, but it was set up by the Government, and its chairman was appointed by the Government. They cannot blame the very people whom they put in place. It is the system that is wrong, as I shall show throughout my speech.

Mr. Malone: Before the hon. Gentleman does that, we must be clear that the implication in what he has already

[Mr. Malone]

said, and in what the hon. Member for Fife, Central said, is that there is some huge disparity in funding for patient care. I want to put the basis of funding for patient care clearly on the record. Fundholders get a fair share of NHS resources, which is calculated by the historic use of services that their patients made of them before they became fundholders, and which is now modified by movement to a local capitation benchmark. It is a fair allocation system.

I hope that the hon. Gentleman will distinguish between the funds that are allocated fairly for patient care, which fundholders manage, and the funds allocated to carry out the management function of fundholders. It is clear from what Labour Members have said so far that the two points are being thoroughly confused.

Mr. Hinchliffe: I shall give way to the Minister later if he will put on his thinking cap and find a reason for underspent resources within fundholding practices in Sheffield, while non-fundholding practices are unable directly to obtain health care purchased by the health authority in exactly the same specialisms in the same hospital. The two-tier system is not just between different areas: it is within the same district general hospital.

Before going into detail about local issues, I want to make one or two broader points of relevance to the debate and to reinforce the eloquent comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Fife, Central, who outlined the Labour party's belief in primary care. I have been very closely involved with the health service at local level over many years. I worked in local authority social services and therefore dealt with GPs and hospitals on a day-by-day basis. In fact, at one point I was practice based with a GP, so I worked very closely with a primary care team.

I recall a time before 1974 when I worked in the same building as district nurses, health visitors and midwives. The model that operated then, especially in respect of collaboration with child protection services and community care, was fundamentally better than the present model. That much better system was scrapped by a Conservative Government in the early 1970s. The Minister talks about looking forward to this or that development. I look back on the many positive elements that existed some time ago, which his party wrecked in the 1970s.

For many years, the power in the NHS has been primarily in the hands of hospital consultants. I do not think that there is any difference between me and Conservative Members on that point. I accept that moves have been made to enhance the power and status of general practitioners. That is simple common sense; anybody wanting to develop an effective primary care system would do that. I also accept that fundholding has enhanced the powers of certain GPs. Indeed, I have personal friends who are fundholding GPs. I also know some local GPs who became fundholders not because they believed in the system, but because they saw it as a way to obtain more money and to queue-jump their patients—something that many people find unacceptable. I do not blame them for fighting for their patients; I blame a system that has created two-tier health care.

I accept that effective general practice is fundamental to a properly run health service. As has been said, it is the linchpin, and has been from the word go. However, we have never facilitated general practice in a way that would allow it to play that crucial pivotal role, so obviously I welcome any moves in that direction. My party recognises the need increasingly to examine ways to improve primary care because that is fundamental to improving the health of the nation.

I served on the 1990 Standing Committee that considered the National Health Service and Community Care Bill. I privately felt that we had failed to understand that fundholding was potentially a greater threat to the central principles of the NHS than the purchaser-provider split and trust status. I felt strongly that the Government were taking a huge leap in the dark by introducing fundholding without any attempt at a pilot scheme, any sort of experimentation or any evaluation of different models. Instead, they went straight in at the deep end. Now, unfortunately, in my area and other areas, including the Minister's constituency, we are having to pick up the pieces of the Government's failure to consider the possible results of fundholding.

We could all describe personal and practical experiences. My hon. Friend the Member for Fife, Central mentioned a few. The hon. Member for Croydon, North-East referred to equal funding. The Minister, when he intervened, made it clear that a great deal of money is thrown at GPs to encourage them to become fundholders. Many of them have spent lavishly on their premises—money that some might argue could have been better spent on patient care. We could argue all day about equality of funding, but the simple question is whether the system for allocating funds is the best use of scarce public resources. I am not the only one to ask that question.

Mr. Malone: Before the hon. Gentleman goes too far in denigrating doctors and the way in which they spend any savings, I want him to understand that the savings that fundholders make have to be audited and schemes upon which they spend any savings must be approved. The hon. Gentleman referred to improvements in surgery premises. Surely he should welcome those improvements, which often mean that other health professionals can be included in new premises, thereby giving standards of patient care that are not available in the old-fashioned, clapped-out premises that are being replaced.

Mr. Hinchliffe: If the Minister cares to visit God's own county of Yorkshire, I will take him to a city not far from where I live, where there are some very innovative uses of fundholding money. One practice—the hon. Gentleman probably realises that I am talking about Sheffield—set up a private hospital and referred patients from its practice to its hospital. The doctors were making a large amount of money.

I am sure that the Minister will accept that, in many areas, an objective analysis of fundholding has raised serious questions. I am not denigrating fundholding GPs who have genuinely attempted to improve their service at practice level. I do not suggest that all fundholders are necessarily bad. As I said, I know a number of fundholders and, as a shadow Minister, I recently addressed the Yorkshire fundholding group. We had a very interesting dialogue. The group understood where I and my party were coming from and some of our reservations about a system that creates the anomalies that I shall describe in a moment.

Ms Judith Church (Dagenham): Like my hon. Friend, I represent an area in which there is great inequality in health care. I have met local fundholding and non-fundholding GPs to discuss the effect of fundholding on inequality. Do GPs in my hon. Friend's area think that fundholding is doing anything to reduce inequality? In Dagenham, they think that it serves merely to widen inequality in health care.

Mr. Hinchliffe: I shall outline in a moment exactly what non-fundholding GPs think that fundholding has done. They think that it has increased the inequality that already exists. I shall illustrate my point with reference not to my views but to those of GPs who have set out in their own words what they think about the current position.

I have listened many times to Conservative Members saying that the market will resolve any problem. With the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990, we introduced the market into primary care. The idea that competing, thrusting GPs would fight on behalf of their patients, and that practice would fight against practice, to get what is best for their patients is absolute nonsense.

As the Minister knows, right from the word go fundholder cartels were established. The Wakefield metropolitan district fundholders immediately appointed someone to work on their behalf and block contract purchase. Straight away, there was a complete monopoly of purchasing. I heard in Committee and in the Second Reading debate on the 1990 Act that the competitive, thrusting market would somehow enhance patients' rights and their access to treatment, but from the start we saw the establishment of block collaborative purchasing by fundholders. That happened not only in my area but across the country. Block purchasing is worth examining in its own right, because it has implications for the planning of health care.

Mr. Malone: The hon. Gentleman mentioned what is happening in his area. In fact, 81 per cent. of the population there are now covered by fundholding practices. A large fundholding project has resulted in savings of £820,000 to be spent on patient care. Those uncaring fundholders have also returned to the health authority £217,000 worth of savings for general spending. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman's own area is an ideal example of the benefits that fundholding has provided.

Mr. Hinchliffe: The Minister used the term "uncaring fundholders". That is his term, not mine. I hope that he will be as happy to intervene when I have spelt out my concerns about what is happening in Wakefield. I have already raised my concerns with him and the Secretary of State, and did so with him again this morning. I am getting a little impatient because I am not getting answers to questions that are directly relevant to the meat of this debate.

Before I go into detail about my locality, I shall make one or two further points on the wider issues that need to be examined. I have mentioned the collective purchasing by fundholders. Important questions need to be asked about what collective, collaborative block purchasing means for local health planning.

Mr. Stephen: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hinchliffe: With respect, I have taken a number of interventions and still have some very important points to make.

I believe that local health planning is being wholly undermined by the collective purchasing power of fundholders. It is a simple fact that their collective purchasing power increasingly renders the planning role of local health authorities redundant. Fundholders have the power to shift contracts and, effectively, to close hospitals. They have the power to close key local services. To whom are they accountable?

Health authorities and trusts at least have a token accountability. If one looks through one's local newspaper, one might, if one is lucky, find a notice stating that the local trust or health authority is having a public meeting. Usually, only about three people turn up, because few know about it or know what the trust or health authority does these days. However, there are at least token meetings.

Who can influence the decisions of fundholding blocks? Where is the public accountability? Where can my constituents go to ask why fundholders have decided to shift a contract from hospital A to hospital B, with the resulting implications for services at hospital A? Such issues are fundamental to our belief in a national health service that offers people equality of treatment. Frankly, that framework has gone by the board. The Government did not think through these issues, which are increasingly coming home to roost in areas such as mine. People who can spend millions of pounds are completely unaccountable to the public. How can my constituents influence fundholding practices?

Mr. Malone: Before the hon. Gentleman accuses me of not rising to deal with that point, I should point out that I shall deal in great detail with the accountability framework and what it implies when I wind up the debate.

Mr. Hinchliffe: The hon. Member for Croydon, North-East mentioned the tie-in between general practice and community care, which is an important point. I had Front-Bench responsibility for community care policy and travelled around the country, talking to many people about the implications of fundholding on community care, child protection and the services that work alongside general practice.

I hear worrying tales from people working in mental health who are responsible for implementing the new supervised discharge order. They say that it is nonsensical that local GPs are bringing in community psychiatric nurses from outside the area who are not involved in the local collaboration process. GPs are also purchasing health visitors and midwives, people directly involved with the nitty-gritty of child protection. Those people have no relationship with local social services.

That undermines completely collaboration on key issues such as child protection. I fear that, before very long, when something has gone badly wrong, we shall be hearing of yet another inquiry into child abuse. I predict that one issue that will arise from that will be the fact that fundholders are buying services from outside their immediate area and that that undermines proper local collaboration.

Mr. Merchant: The hon. Gentleman referred to the buying-in of services by GP fundholding practices. Surely GPs take decisions in the interests of their patients. He betrays a lack of faith in GPs if he believes that they cannot make the best choice for their patients in these circumstances.

Mr. Hinchliffe: I have a great deal of faith in GPs. The essence of what I am saying is that I want them to be

[Mr. Hinchliffe]

given more power. General practice has a crucial role to play, but we need to think through the consequences of fundholding for community care and personal social services.

I am told by community psychiatric nurses that fundholders do not understand their role. One CPN told me recently that it was sad that, instead of being brought in to deal with seriously mentally ill people, CPNs were being asked to deal with those described as the worried well, people who have various neuroses of a not very serious nature and do not need the skills that CPNs have. The Government have not even started thinking about such problems.

I focus now on an issue that I mentioned in an intervention on the Minister and which has been bandied across the Chamber—the two-tier system created by fundholding. My fundamental objection to fundholding is that it completely undermines what I felt was a cross-party belief in the equity principle of the national health service, which has been there right through from the 1940s: the belief that if people pay into a system, they have a right to expect equal access to that system and that they can get the same treatment as others in an area. That has been blown out of the window by general practice fundholding.

Mr. Mans: Does the hon. Gentleman believe that that equity principle applied in practice during the past two periods in which there was a Labour Government? Was there equal access across the country to medical facilities, as was suggested in 1948 when the NHS was founded?

Mr. Hinchliffe: One of the issues that we have had to address right through from the very brave decision of the Labour Government in the 1940s has been that of equity across the country. Of course I concede that there is different access in different parts of the country. I understand that. Indeed, Government after Government have had to address such issues. We had the Resource Allocation Working Group. Now there is the reverse of RAWG, whereby inner-city areas in the north of England have been robbed of funding to shunt it to the opulent south of England where there is less pressure on the health service.

I travel around the country and see many people. I accept the fact that there have always been differences, and successive Governments have attempted in their own ways to address them. But there have not in my experience been differences in the same hospital between patients living in the same community, served by that hospital. That scenario has arisen, and I shall spell out in some detail how it applies in Wakefield. The equity issue has been raised with me by my constituents who want to know why they are denied treatment that their next-door neighbours can get on the basis of which practice they happen to be registered with.

Over considerable time, anecdotal evidence of the two-tier system operating in my constituency—it depends on the status of a person's GP—has been given to me. In July, a constituent came to see me. All the constituents whom I am about to identify have given me their permission to mention their names and their circumstances. If the Minister wants, I will show him the correspondence in each case—it is with me today—which spells out their feelings in their words.

In my surgery in July, I saw a Mrs. Doreen Armitage, who lives in Alverthorpe, Wakefield. She is a 65-year-old widow who, along with her late husband, spent many hours raising thousands of pounds for Pinderfields hospital from charity work. Some time ago, that lady was injured in a road accident. She broke her neck and fractured her femur and, as a consequence, needs a hip operation. She was told after an X-ray at Pinderfields hospital on 15 December 1994 that her operation would take place between four and six weeks later and that she would be "admitted on a phone call". That was later amended to four to six months and, later still, her daughter was told that the operation would be at the end of June or in July.

Mrs. Armitage rang the hospital again in mid-July and was told that the operation would definitely take place in August. That was amended again because—she was quite clearly told this—her GP was not a fundholder. She was told that the operation would take place in December at the earliest. That lady is in acute pain to the extent that she cannot function on her own and has had to leave her home in Wakefield to live with her daughter in Scunthorpe.

In September, I had a letter from a Mrs. Mary Parkin of Thornes, Wakefield. This lady is a 79-year old widow and happens to be the mother of somebody who was in the same class as me at school. I have known her for many years. She is of my parents' generation. She is awaiting a hip operation in pain and discomfort. She is also a patient of a non-fundholding GP. After writing to the chief executive of the Pinderfields hospital trust, she received a letter from the chief executive dated 15 September, which said:

> "Pinderfields is in negotiation with Wakefield Healthcare over the funding of operations from non-funding GPs in Wakefield. Problems have arisen in recent months as the hospital has carried out all the operations it has been contracted for".

That is no real comfort to Mrs. Parkin, who is in great pain.

In October, I was contacted on behalf of a constituent, Mr. Robert English, who lives in Eastmoor, Wakefield. He is a 54-year-old man who has been suffering from a painful hip condition for more than a year. It was initially diagnosed as arthritis, and because of his concern, he ended up, as so many people have to nowadays, paying privately to see a consultant, who diagnosed a fractured hip.

That man has been in considerable pain while waiting for the operation that he requires. When he rang the secretary of the hospital consultant concerned, he was asked whether he was the patient of a fundholding GP.

This week, I was contacted on behalf of a Mr. David Garlick, a 77-year-old man who lives in Wakefield. He has been treated since 1991 for a painful hip condition. His GP told him in 1991 that he required a hip replacement operation. His consultant told him in December last year that he was on the waiting list, and that an operation would be carried out before May 1995. He was told in July that the operation would go ahead in August. In late August, Mr. Garlick was told that the operation could not go ahead until after Christmas due to a shortage of funds. His GP is not a fundholder.

Mr. Reynolds, from Flanshaw, Wakefield, was a miner for 28 years and after that worked as a hospital worker. He is suffering from osteoarthritis of the hip. He was referred to hospital in October 1994. He was seen by the consultant after that referral on 19 April 1995, told that a hip replacement operation was needed and that he would have to wait two months. He is still waiting. He has been told by his own GP that the delay is because his general practice is non-fundholding.

Mr. Stephen: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hinchliffe: If the hon. Gentleman would let me finish my point, I will give way later.

I would like to finish the point by giving my opinions. This morning I received a copy of a letter sent on 31 October by the Wakefield non-fundholding practices, representing the various surgeries in Alverthorpe, Chapelthorpe, Church street in Ossett, and Grove and Kirkgate in Wakefield. Most of them are in my constituency and represent 36,370 patients—most of whom live in my constituency—including, by the way, myself, my wife and my children, because we are very happy with the service provided by our non-fundholding general practice.

The letter sent to the chief executive of Wakefield health authority is quite lengthy and asks a number of important questions. It makes the following point:

> "We understand that our patients who are already on Waiting Lists will not receive Elective Surgery in ANY speciality, because the budget has been spent. We also understand that the Budget was £2 million less than the last financial year.
>
> We are very concerned that our patients are not receiving the same standard of care from Pinderfields Hospital Trust as patient from Fund-holding Practices."

The letter goes on to ask eight questions, and I shall mention one. It said:

> "We have been led to believe that the Fund-holding Practices are financed to the same level as the Non-Fund-holding Practices. If this is so, why have the Fund-holders not run out of money?"

I have raised the matter with the Secretary of State in writing. I have a letter sent to me by the Minister on 16 October, in which he says—he probably has a copy of it with him which he might be able to fish out—that he was sorry to learn that my constituent, Mrs. Armitage, the first one who came to my notice, has been asked to wait. He said that he understands that, in relation to the case, Wakefield Healthcare issued a statement confirming its policies to treat patients according to clinical priorities and that that is in line with national policy. He mentions joint guidance and also says that the statement

> "refers to additional funding, which I understand amounts to £800,000 for Wakefield, made available to reduce the length of time which people have to wait."

I welcome that additional funding; I am not grumbling about that. I am asking why some people can get treated and some cannot; that seems fundamentally wrong.

The Minister writes:

> "I understand also that in mid-September the Wakefield Fundholders' Group, which represents a number of local GP fundholders, wrote to Pinderfields Hospital NHS Trust reaffirming that treatment should be given to their patients and others on the basis of clinical need."

I am not arguing that the fundholders in Wakefield want a two-tier system; I do not believe that they think it acceptable that some people are winners and some are losers, any more than I do. I do not blame the fundholders; I blame the system, and the Minister will have to respond to that point.

The Minister writes:

> "I hope this information helps to reassure you that both Wakefield Health Authority and GP fundholders in the Wakefield area aim to ensure equitable treatment for all patients based on clinical need and clinical priority."

What the Minister does not do is answer the central question. We have a two-tier system; the Minister knows it, and I know it. The Minister will not answer my question.

Mr. Malone: The hon. Gentleman has had a 20-minute backswing before coming to this point in his argument. I checked the record of the letters I received about these cases. I received one letter that related to the case of Mrs. Armitage; the hon. Gentleman has quoted the reply. I have learnt from experience never to comment without the fullest information on cases such as those which the hon. Gentleman has quoted to the House today. On a previous occasion, I was told of somebody who had not been able to get an operation because it had been cancelled. I discovered that the patient had pushed off to Greece and that that was why the operation had been cancelled. One has to have a care when looking at these issues.

If the hon. Gentleman writes to me about all the cases that he has raised on the Floor of the House today, I shall happily look at them and ensure that the actions taken have accorded with Government policy. In general terms, I ask him this. Is he saying that none of these patients has been treated on the basis of clinical priority? Is he saying that none of these patients has been treated within the terms of the patients charter? What does he have to say on those two general points?

Mr. Hinchliffe: In a moment or two, I shall tell the Minister exactly what I am saying. What I want from him is an answer to the central question. He has dodged the point. In my letter, I asked him to explain why fundholders' patients could get access to treatment whereas people such as Mrs. Armitage and the others could not. Those people are being denied treatment and that is the issue.

The Minister was here on Tuesday when I raised the specific points with the Secretary of State. Why should people be asked, when they ring a hospital, whether they are the patients of fundholders or non-fundholders? What difference should that make? They are ringing a hospital about their needs. Why should their status make a difference to their treatment? It clearly does, and we can prove that it does.

Mr. Stephen *rose—*

Mr. Hinchliffe: The answer given by the Secretary of State—

Mr. Stephen: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is the hon. Gentleman refusing to give way to me on the ground that I am not a fundholding Member of Parliament—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. When the hon. Gentleman rose to his feet, he knew full well that what he was about to say was not a point of order. It is for the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) to decide whether he gives way, and the hon. Gentleman knows it.

Mr. Hinchliffe: I have not been exactly ungenerous in giving way. I am making a point, and I think that the hon. Member for Shoreham (Mr. Stephen) understands that.

I am losing my patience with the Government on this issue, because they will not give me an answer to my question. I do not know how much further I need to take the matter. I spelled out my question to the Secretary of

[Mr. Hinchliffe]

State on Tuesday and I spelled it out to the Minister this morning. The answers I get are not a response to my question.

I want to know why we have a two-tier system and what the Government intend to do about it. Quite simply, the answer is fundholding and the Minister knows it. The problems are a direct, logical consequence of the system that he and his colleagues have introduced. We have an internal market, with winners and losers. The people who come to me are the losers. Incidentally, they would love to be able to go to Greece, but most of them could not walk to the taxi to get there. I can give all the case files to the Minister this morning. I hope that he will then give me an answer.

On Tuesday, the Secretary of State said that the Government had a commitment to treatment on the "basis of clinical need". That sounds very nice, but that commitment does not seem to apply in my constituency. Why have fundholders' patients been treated in the orthopaedic department at Pinderfields hospital when non-fundholders' patients have not been? If that is not a result of a two-tier system, what is the reason?

If the Minister does not believe what I am saying, will he look at the operating list at Pinderfields hospital? Will he check who the patients' GPs are? Will he tell me how many of those treated recently came from non-fundholding practices? I should be interested to know. I know for a fact that the money has run out for non-fundholders' patients. They cannot be treated because there is no money to pay for treatment. The money is not there. We see the two-tier system that we have predicted in all its glory. How sad it is that people have to suffer to prove the point.

We have been told that there is no district health authority funding for orthopaedic operations. I am aware of an underspend in certain fundholding practices in our locality. That is our money—taxpayers' money, as the Government would say—and not the GP fundholders' money. Why could that money not be used to fund people like Mrs. Armitage, Mrs. Parkin and Mr. Garlick? If we have a logical system and if there is equity, the money should be used to obtain patient care, instead of being stuck in GPs' bank balances.

My constituents want answers from the Minister. I do not blame the Pinderfields hospital trust; it can treat only the patients it is paid to treat. I do not blame Wakefield Healthcare trust because I know that it has fought for and obtained more money to address the orthopaedic problem. I learned late last night that Mr. Garlick has received a letter asking him to go into hospital because it now has more money. Mr. Garlick, however, is a victim of the two-tier system; he has been waiting since 1991 and he should have had his operation a long time ago. As a non-fundholder's patient, he has been cast aside like the others. There are probably many more cases of which I am not aware.

I do not blame Wakefield Healthcare. I blame the Government for introducing a system that creates two tiers, winners and losers, and a fast track and a slow track. The Minister may blame my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms Harman) for raising what has happened in his constituency. My hon. Friend simply repeated what was in the national press. I read the articles with interest and thought that the Minister might sympathise with my situation in Wakefield. Let us get back to addressing the real issues of equity.

I was impressed when my hon. Friend the Member for Fife, Central described models that would enhance the role of GPs and the role of primary care. We do not have to create a two-tier, fast track and slow track system to achieve those ends.

12.7 pm

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): I am pleased to speak in this health debate. It is the first time that I have had the privilege of speaking in a health debate for more than five years. The hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) will not agree with many of my remarks, although we do have one thing in common. We have both recently returned to the Back Benches, which allows us to speak our minds in our different ways.

During my five years in the Department of Health as a parliamentary private secretary, I saw the latter stages of the planning of the reforms, the initiation of the reforms and their subsequent progress. I was also involved in evaluating the results of the reforms. My hon. Friend the Minister set out clearly the advantages, in terms of the number of patients treated, that the reforms had allowed—over and above the extra resources, in real terms, that have been provided by the Government since 1990.

I make that point because we must bear it in mind when we are discussing fundholding or any other issue involving the NHS as we see it today, Over the past five years, there has been an increase in real terms in the number of patients treated in the health service, at least part of which can be explained only by the fact that the service is running more efficiently as a result of the reforms.

There has also been a dramatic decrease in waiting times. Yes, the overall waiting list as such may have increased, but all that that shows is greater demands on the NHS. Many of the people on the list are waiting only a matter of days or weeks, or in a few cases months. What is important is the fact that we have brought the total waiting time down for people who require hospital treatment.

That applies to patients both of fundholding and of non-fundholding practices throughout the country. I would like there to be more evaluation so that we could see, on a health authority by health authority basis, how much better the health service is now than it was five years ago. The Minister knows that I pressed that point several times when I was a parliamentary private secretary.

I should like to see exactly what is happening now in my area, Fylde, compared with what was happening five years ago. If we had more such information, we could draw comparisons between different parts of the country so that we could see where things were right, and where we had the right procedures.

Ms Church: I know that the hon. Gentleman has a background in health and in management, and I support his request for proper information and evaluation, especially as between fundholding and non-fundholding GPs, the service that they provide for their patients and the contribution that they make to reducing inequalities. Can the hon. Gentleman explain how the Government can make claims about GP fundholders and improvements in the health service, when they have carried out no studies? Indeed, as my hon. Friend the Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) said earlier, the Audit Commission report greatly regretted that no proper systematic studies had been carried out. What is the point of making claims when there is nothing to base them on?

Mr. Mans: The hon. Lady makes a good point in terms of the amount of information that should be made available at district level. But I also disagree with her, in that there is already a fair amount of information available at national level, in the figures published by the Department of Health. Those show that, at a macro-level, there has undoubtedly been an increase in the number of patients treated over and above the extra resources made available to the NHS since 1990 and before.

Where the hon. Lady and I might agree is—

Ms Hodge: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Mans: May I finish my first answer?

I believe that, as we get further into the reforms, we should have more detailed information at district authority level, so that we can see which authorities are doing things more efficiently and treating more patients satisfactorily, and where lessons can be learned across the country.

Ms Hodge: The point about the statistics kept is that they relate to patients treated in hospitals. They have nothing to do with the efficacy and efficiency of GP fundholders in providing services for their patients, especially in comparison with non-GP fundholders.

Mr. Mans: If the hon. Lady will bear with me, I shall deal more specifically with fundholders and non-fundholders later. I was trying to make the overall point that I would like more detailed information to be available at district level across the board, as is available at national level, so that we could see what I believe to be true, and what the apocryphal evidence in my constituency supports—that people are being treated more quickly and are more satisfied with the health service now than they were a few years ago.

What partly explains the extra number of patients being treated is the fact that our reforms have empowered people throughout the NHS to make decisions for patients and to take responsibility for those decisions. Decisions can no longer be blamed on someone else in a location remote from where patients are treated. Trusts are responsible locally, and health authorities are more responsible too, because they have the resources in their budgets. GP fundholders are also responsible, because they too have funds.

As for the so-called two-tier system, the image offered by the Labour party is that before the reforms there was a single-tier system. Everybody who has used the health service knows perfectly well that that was never the case. We had what one could depict as a multi-tier, opaque system. People did not know whether they were waiting longer than other people down the road or in the next county. They did not know what was going on at all.

Waiting time may have depended on who one's GP was, and who he trained with, or whether he knew a particular consultant in a certain part of the country to whom he could refer one. The idea that the reforms have created a tiered system of health treatment that did not exist before is utter rubbish.

Mr. Timms: The tone of Conservative Members' comments on the two-tier system now seems different from what we have heard in the past. Does the hon. Gentleman accept that there is now a two-tier system in general practice?

Mr. Mans: If the hon. Gentleman will bear with me a little longer, I am trying to explain what I believe the position to be today. I am pleased that Opposition Members agree that we did not have equality of access or a single-tier system before the reforms, but an opaque system, in which nobody even knew whether they were waiting longer or shorter times, or when they would get treatment.

I shall now give what many people might describe as a petty example of how the GP fundholding principle is improving health care. It is petty in that it does not involve health care. Right at the beginning of the reforms, a story was repeated many times; I do not know how true it is, although I suspect that there is an element of truth in it.

Apparently, a fundholding practice negotiated a contract with its local hospital stipulating that any of its patients who had to wait more than 20 minutes to be seen by a consultant had to be given a cup of tea. That is precisely what happened. I do not know exactly how it happened, but I imagine a lady going down the line of people waiting to see the consultant and asking, "Are you from Dr. Smith's practice?" Those who were, got the tea, and those who were not did not. *[Interruption.]* Opposition Members may laugh, but there is a serious point here.

What happened next? There was an outcry and the hospital simply said, "That GP fundholding practice asked for that, so we gave it to them. The health authority has only to ask for the same and it will get it too." As a result, I have no doubt that in that hospital everybody gets a cup of tea.

Opposition Members may think that that is a ridiculous story, but that "silly little example"—it could be depicted as such—shows that, as a result of fundholding, there was a levelling-up process. That point has been more seriously and authoritatively put by Professor Glennester, in the book that I cited in an earlier intervention:

> "To argue for the abolition of fund-holding on this ground [two-tier service] is . . . perverse. It is akin to the philosophical paradox that equality in human needs can best be achieved by starving everyone. Equality is best pursued by seeking to maximise opportunities, not to minimise them—levelling up not down".

To me, that is the main argument in favour of keeping fundholding practices. The examples that the hon. Member for Wakefield gave a few minutes ago, concerning many of his constituents who, he submits, were denied treatment, give the wrong impression, because the hon. Gentleman assumes that they were denied treatment simply because of the existence of fundholders. They were not. Without fundholders, there would not be that so-called "spare cash" in the budgets that the hon. Gentleman mentioned and those patients would not have been treated any sooner. The existence of fundholders makes no difference to the time it takes to treat patients of non-fundholding GPs.

Ms Church: There are a number of points on which I am in agreement with the hon. Gentleman. The Opposition support a levelling-up process, but where is the evidence of that levelling up? No study has been done

[Ms Church]

on whether fundholding is making any contribution to reducing inequalities in the health service. Are the Government ashamed to carry out a study? Do the Government not believe that a study would prove that the system is so good?

Mr. Mans: I shall not dwell on that point, although I do agree with the hon. Lady up to a point. I know that some studies have been done, and I hope that others will follow to prove my point.

Mr. Malone: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for allowing me in a sense to intervene on the intervention of the hon. Member for Dagenham (Ms Church). I say to him and to her that I shall be dealing with the issue of evaluation thoroughly in my winding-up speech. I take my hon. Friend's point, but I am sure that he agrees that the formation of unified health authorities as from 1 April next year gives us an opportunity to look at how the reforms are operating on a district level.

Mr. Mans: I am pleased that my hon. Friend will deal with that matter in his winding-up speech. There is a fair amount of information on the success of fundholders.

It is worth making the point that, in 1990, the Labour party was convinced that fundholders would fail. The hon. Member for Peckham (Ms Harman) predicted that the patients of fundholders would suffer because of the limits on fundholders' budgets. Labour cannot have it both ways. It criticised the initiative in the first place because it said that fundholders' patients would suffer. It is now criticising the system because fundholders are clearly succeeding. Labour is now arguing that people who are not the patients of fundholders are suffering as a result of that success. I have stated that that is not true, because there has been a levelling-up process.

Opposition Members have suggested that health commissions were the way forward. That is interesting, as those locally initiated health commissions—which I commend—have been set up as a result of the spur that they received from GP fundholders. A group of doctors have got together in my area, and my hon. Friend the Minister went to see them when he was up at the party conference. That group would never have got together had it not been for the fact that GP fundholders existed.

We constantly hear from the Labour party—we have heard many more examples this morning—examples of patients who have not been treated because they were not members of GP fundholding practices. Labour suggests that that is the fault of the GP fundholders, but it must address its remarks to the local health authorities. Labour must ask the authorities how they cannot stretch what are effectively the same resources as far as GP fundholding practices do.

The fact that GP fundholders have money left at the end of the financial year—and certainly two thirds of the way through the year—is an example of how resources can be used efficiently. Health authorities can learn from the experience of fundholders, and can treat more of their patients the following year within their budget.

Mr. McLeish: The hon. Gentleman is making a thoughtful speech. I wish to tackle the issue of evaluation, although I know that the Minister has stated that he will deal with it when he winds up. The much-quoted Howard Glennester submitted a paper to a market research seminar in March 1995, which looked at the impact of GP fundholding from various points of view. On equity, Professor Glennester said that the data were of such poor quality that he could not make a judgment. On efficiency, he said that the details were unknown, while there was not enough information to judge the effect on the quality of care.

Mr. Malone: So why is the hon. Gentleman making a judgment?

Mr. McLeish: The Minister asks why I am making a judgment in that case. Extravagant claims are being made—not by the hon. Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans), but by Ministers—about the benefits of GP fundholding. Why do the Government not set up proper evaluation techniques with proper methodologies to look at both GP fundholding and non-fundholding? What do the Government have to hide? I am sorry that my comments are addressed not to the hon. Member for Wyre, but to the Minister.

Mr. Mans: The hon. Gentleman must wait for my hon. Friend the Minister to answer his questions at the end of the debate. I have been surprised at the tone of some of the interventions, because an Opposition Member—it may have been the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish)—said earlier that we must "build upon the best". Implicit in that is the belief that the patients of fundholders seem to be getting a better service. Is the hon. Gentleman assuming that some of the best techniques available are being pioneered by GP fundholders?

Mr. McLeish: Building on the best implies that we can have best practice in developments in non-GP fundholding, as well as in fundholding. We are looking for a level playing field. Building on the best should not mean the particularisation of the benefits flowing from GP fundholding to the exclusion of the other 50 per cent. of patients who are served by some form of health authority, GP-commissioning framework.

Mr. Mans: I agree with that point, as we must obviously build upon the best—wherever it is. It is clear from Opposition Members' remarks that GP fundholding is working in the sense that the patients of those fundholders seem to be getting treatment sooner than other patients. That shows that some of the best practice is available in GP fundholders' practices as a result of them holding their own budgets. That is the key to the discussion.

If we take away GP fundholders' empowerment and their ability to make decisions and live with the financial implications, we shall reduce the amount of innovation and we shall find that the best practice is levelled down on the altar of equality of access. As a result, fewer patients will be treated in an attempt to make certain that there is more equality of access for those who are not the patients of fundholding practices.

We have dwelt long enough on that point; I shall make a couple of other points before I finish. We hear a great deal from Labour about the amounts spent on administration. As far as I can understand, the Opposition want to spend more money on evaluating the results of the reforms. In no way can that money be directly related to patient care—an argument normally put forward by Opposition Members when money is spent on information technology or computers.

I believe that good use is made of NHS money. Services are moved forward. For example, information technology is used dramatically more nowadays than five years ago. It is surely odd that many Labour Members decry that use of NHS money, yet suggest that we should use IT increasingly in schools and elsewhere. If we are to have a modern health service, we must embrace IT. We must employ people to collect all the data that Labour Members want to ensure that the health service is more efficient.

Labour Members cannot have it both ways. If they accept, as the hon. Member for Dagenham (Ms Church) is by nodding her head, that that is not possible, I hope that she and others will not complain in future about the moneys that have not been spent on patient care.

Ms Church: We are not concerned if money is spent on proper and systematic research into the effect of the huge changes that were introduced in one fell swoop throughout England without pilot studies being undertaken. Of course there should have been—*[Interruption.]* I would ask the Minister and other Conservative Members to allow me to continue. It is—*[Interruption.]*—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Janet Fookes): Order. There is a recurrence of seated commentaries and interventions. From whichever side of the Chamber they come, I deprecate them.

Ms Church: The changes to which I was referring were introduced by the Government throughout England without any pilot studies being undertaken. There was no proper opportunity to monitor the progress of the changes, to ensure that the system would work and would meet the Government's objectives. The Government's approach was not scientific and was managerially wrong. Indeed, it was incompetent.

Now, in the run-up to the general election, the Government have decided that they want to spend some money to ensure that it is "proved" that their system has worked. Of course, we—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Lady's intervention is much too long.

Mr. Mans: I shall try to answer some of the questions that the hon. Lady posed. First, as I understand it, there were pilot studies of GP fundholding. Secondly, as I understand it—*[Interruption.]* I hope that the hon. Lady will listen to the answer or answers that I am trying to give her. As I have said, there were pilot studies of GP fundholding before the scheme was introduced. I think that I am right in saying that a fair amount of evidence was compiled before the purchaser-provider split and trusts were introduced in 1991.

It could be argued that GP fundholding was introduced voluntarily and thus was an evolutionary process. Only a practice that felt that it could cope with the burden of fundholding was allowed to go ahead. Experiments took place that built on what had gone before. As a result, we have a system that is being reformed as it proceeds. I believe that it is highly successful.

Fundholders have been much more successful than was anticipated. I have been surprised by the innovations and new ideas that have flowed from the ability of doctors to decide that they want to do something on behalf of their patients and then to act because they have the necessary financial resources. Labour Members tell doctors that they want them to have new ideas, but at the same time they say, "You won't have any money to implement them." They want to give authority to others, to those who are further away from the problems that GPs are trying to overcome and less knowledgeable about them.

Much has been said about bureaucrats, managers and administrators in the health service. We spend too much time studying inputs, and more time should be spent examining the number of patients treated. There has been an awful lot of comment in the Chamber about having too many administrators and bureaucrats. It is right that we should ensure that there are not people in the health service who carry out work that is not absolutely necessary. However, we should not cut arbitrarily the number of administrators or bureaucrats; we have to relate such cuts to the effect that they would have on the number of patients treated.

I am not desperately worried about the ratio of doctors and nurses to other people working in the health service. What is important is that, whatever the ratio in a particular area may be, it maximises the amount of patient care that is possible.

Mr. Rendel: The hon. Gentleman may have failed to recognise that the Secretary of State announced in Blackpool just such an arbitrary cut in bureaucrats.

Mr. Mans: The hon. Gentleman does me a disservice. I most certainly heard what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said. The Secretary of State made the specific point that he wanted that cut to increase the number of patients treated. My point is that we should not consider administrators in isolation and say that the fact that their numbers happen to have gone up at a certain time demonstrates how inefficiently the health service is operating.

To take one example, many GP practices, fundholding and non-fundholding, have practice managers. I strongly advocate that as a good move. The number of administrators will have increased as a result of that move, but the number of patients being properly treated will probably have gone up as well, because GPs will be able to devote more time to treating patients and less to filling in forms.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that we already have a fair amount of information available at national level to show that the reforms over the past five years have been very successful. More patients have been treated and that cannot be explained only by the extra resources that the Government have put into the health service.

We have to embrace information technology and ensure that medical advances are used increasingly to make certain that we get the maximum benefit from the money provided by the taxpayer for the health service. That process will happen increasingly in the primary rather than secondary care part of the system. The driving force behind innovation and the use of new technology and techniques has been the GP fundholding initiative. I want it to be developed further. I am certain that that points the right way for the health service.

12.37 pm

Mr. David Rendel (Newbury): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in this important debate. I have a personal interest, in that my wife is a GP in a practice in Newbury. The House will not be surprised to hear that I

[Mr. David Rendel]

am a strong supporter of the pre-eminent place of primary health care in the health service in looking after the health of the nation. There are several reasons for that.

First, prevention is surely better than cure. Primary care is the main arena for preventive medicine. Secondly, and this is a connected point, it is a national health service—I stress the word "health", because we should never forget that that is what it is all about. Primary health care gives the best opportunity to work towards good health promotion.

Thirdly, it is primary care, on the whole, in which patients have the greatest say. Most patients find it easier to talk to their GP than to a hospital specialist, who may talk in a strange and idiosyncratic language and find it more difficult than a GP would to explain to patients the details of what is involved.

Cynics will ask about the Government's real aim in supporting the pre-eminence of primary care in the health service. There is no question that many people would answer that the Government are after cost-cutting yet again. People cannot be blamed for assuming that that is the Government's main aim when one considers what has happened over such issues as care in the community. We have all accepted that care in the community is the right way to go, but we have seen what has happened as it has been introduced.

Although care in the community may be the right policy, it does not work unless it is backed by the right funds. In exactly the same way, making primary care the pre-eminent part of the health service may be the right policy, but it will not and cannot work unless it is supported by the best resources.

Mr. Malone: On care in the community, does the hon. Gentleman agree that, while funds are important, implementing proper practice is also important? In some authorities where the care programme approach has been implemented it works successfully, but in others where it has not been implemented it does not. Although funds are important, they are not the sole explanation of why the policy works well in some areas but not in others.

Mr. Rendel: I should have thought that implementation of the policy would depend heavily on the amount of resources allocated to it, so the two issues interact closely.

In practice, if we move more resources into primary health care, we may save some hospital costs. The danger, however, is that we would do so at the cost of greatly increasing GP work loads if there is no corresponding increase in funds for primary care. Moreover, if we move more effort into the primary care sector, that will lead in some cases to greater need being identified. That is another reason why, if we are to go down that route, we shall need greater resources to manage the greater needs that are then identified. How does that fit in with the Government's hospital closure programme?

Let us examine in more detail how the Government want to move extra resources into primary care. They want to base the move almost entirely on fundholding. I hope that the rest of this debate will not concentrate on fundholding, as it has until now, and that some hon. Members will concentrate instead on primary care.

I do not deny for a moment that fundholding can bring some benefits. In particular, it has tended to teach some GPs about the importance of taking care with regard to drug costs. It is not a question of prescribing less—that would be the wrong way to look at the matter, although that point has been made by some Conservative Members—but of prescribing, where possible, alternative but equally effective drugs which may cost less. That important change has sometimes been brought about by fundholding.

However, that change could have taken place without the introduction of fundholding. Had GPs gone about matters in the right way, and had more pressure been put on them to bring down their prescription costs, that change could have been made without fundholding. Fundholding has, however, pointed the way for some GPs, even non-fundholders, to bring down their drug costs.

Fundholding can help to bring some services closer to patients. Cases have been well advertised in which physiotherapy services, for instance, have been brought into the GPs' surgeries and thus brought closer to the patients who need them.

There are, however, several disadvantages to fundholding and it is important to mention those as well as the advantages if we are to have a clear picture of what is happening.

A constituent of mine had the misfortune, some years ago, to be involved in a car accident in Wales. He hurt his back severely and was out of work as a result of the pain. He was sent to various different hospitals until at last he found a specialist who could deal with his problem. That specialist cured the pain, and my constituent was able to return to work. He then moved into my constituency and, several years later, the pain recurred. Once again, he had to leave his job, at a considerable cost to the community as a whole.

He was by that time with a fundholding practice in my constituency, and he visited his GP and asked to be referred back to the one specialist who he knew had been able to treat the problem in the past. The specialist being in Wales, however, that fundholding GP did not have a contract with him and refused to send the patient back to him. He tried all sorts of other specialists with whom he did have contracts; none of them worked, but he insisted to the patient that those specialists were every bit as good as the man that he had seen in Wales. No doubt that was true, in general terms, but they did not work for that patient.

Those of us who know anything about medicine realise that the psychological effects of visiting a doctor whom one trusts and who one believes can bring about a cure are often extremely important. Only when, after a series of letters from me, the GP was in effect forced to allow the patient to be referred back to the man whom he had seen originally, was the man cured of his pain once again and enabled to return to work, with all the savings that that implied for the taxpayer. That is an example of a way in which fundholding certainly does not work.

I agree with the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Timms), who intervened earlier, that there has been an interesting change in the Government's line as to whether fundholding implies a two-tier system. When the Minister was questioned about that earlier, although he attempted to deny it, in practice what he said was not a denial of the idea that there is now a two-tier system. He admitted that, in effect, a two-tier system had been introduced deliberately, but said that it was only in the marginal aspects of medicine and not in the centre.

The Minister went further, saying that there was now and always had been a two-tier system, in that, in different regions, patients receive different levels of service. It is true that that always has been the case, and it is one of the scandals of the health service that that has not been corrected in the past. It should be corrected now, but fundholding does not help the problem.

There is undoubtedly unequal funding of fundholding practices and non-fundholding practices, perhaps especially in information technology equipment. Two years ago, the British Medical Association made proposals to the NHS executive to introduce equity and high standards of computerisation. The executive said that it would respond, but for two years it has failed to do so. Will the Minister tell us today what his response is to that initiative? He must surely want to respond that there will be a levelling up of funds for IT equipment for non-fundholding practices.

Far from being popular with GPs, in practice fundholding is very unpopular, even with most fundholders. It is nonsense to say, that because people take on fundholding duties, it follows that they must like it and prefer it to the old system. As a result of all the extra administration involved, most of the fundholders object to it. I say that from personal experience, because, as I am married to a GP, my wife and I know a great many GPs from both fundholding and non-fundholding practices.

As was briefly mentioned, fundholding has undoubtedly brought about a major increase in emergency admissions—by fundholders because in many cases it is a way of getting their patients treated without it coming off their budgets, and by non-fundholders because it is often the only way they can ensure that their patients are treated. Whatever may have been said by Conservative Members, the evidence clearly shows that the huge increase in emergency admissions must mean that people are either being held back until they are emergencies or going into hospital as emergencies when previously they would not have been counted as such.

There are alternative ways of obtaining the advantages of fundholding. That is what is wrong with the present move towards greater fundholding. Locality purchasing, joint commissioning or whatever one likes to call it, would unquestionably bring about much of the increased command that GPs have over the way in which their funds are used without involving them in the extra administrative burden that they so much abhor.

Locality purchasing is to fundholding what the local management of schools is to the grant-maintained system. It is wrong that the Government refuse to encourage locality purchasing. They are perfectly happy about the local management of schools, and I wish that they would do more to encourage locality purchasing. Do they not do so because the equity of funding combined with locality purchasing would lead not to fundholding being abolished but to its withering on the vine? They do not seem to like that idea. It is unnecessary to make fundholding the basis for a new emphasis on primary care in the NHS. Is it now possible, as I would like, for primary care to take on that expanded role?

There is a huge danger in the desperately low morale of the GP service. We have been told today that morale is no lower than it has ever been. That shows how out of touch some hon. Members are. I have been familiar with the health service scene since I first met my wife in 1969, and I have never seen morale in the health service so low as it is now, particularly among GPs.

There are many signs: recruitment is desperately difficult, especially in many inner cities, the number of applicants per post is falling and some jobs often have to be re-advertised, perhaps more than once. A recent report showed that, in Yorkshire, 78 out of 300 training posts remain empty. In Wales, the figure is 40 out of 80, and in the west of Scotland there are now 27 posts lying empty. In Yorkshire in 1989, there were 30 applicants per vacancy; by 1992, the figure had dropped to just five.

Another sign is the number of GPs who now take early retirement. It is difficult to find a GP who retires later than the earliest moment at which his or her practice agreement allows that to happen. That never used to be true; GPs used to continue into their 70s or even 80s. That was not necessarily a good idea, but it was possible and some GPs were keen to do it. One could not find a GP now who wanted to continue in practice for longer than was absolutely necessary.

What are the reasons for the low morale? Patients are becoming more knowledgeable, which is a good thing, and are therefore becoming more demanding. There is nothing wrong with that, but the GPs' work load is increasing as a result. There are more elderly patients and, as we all know, the elderly are not only ill more often, but their illnesses are often more severe. Patients are discharged from hospital earlier and return to their GP's care at a time when they would previously have remained in hospital.

We must never forget that doctors are not in the job for the money. They do not enter GP work or primary care for the money, but because they want a job which allows them to express their care for other people in the community. As has been, there is a culture change in the NHS, but that change is not welcome to the GPs or to any of the medical staff. They are uncertain about their future and about whether the NHS will survive in anything like its present form. They work desperately long hours.

This important point is not contradicted by list sizes, which have been reduced. As each patient requires more than before, the overall level of work has increased. A survey of west country GPs, which was discussed in the House recently, showed that more than half of them are working more than 64 hours per week and many are working more than 80 hours per week—70 per cent. of them thought that the hours they work are putting their patients at risk. There can be no doubt of that risk when doctors are on duty all through the night and possibly through the next day as well.

Long hours are caused not least by an increase in administration, form-filling and budgeting. In Blackpool, the Secretary of State made a great proclamation that was welcomed widely by his audience. He said that he was cutting the number of forms to be filled in by GPs by 15 million per year. That sounds marvellous until one realises that it means merely that each year each GP will be filling in one form fewer per three patients—a minimal drop in work load.

Finally, there is the huge burden on GPs of the present complaints system. It is cumbersome and lengthy, and leaves GPs in uncertainty for long periods and it is hugely stressful. I have known GPs having to drop out of work for a while because of stress caused by the complaints system. It would be much better for patients and doctors if we could introduce once and for all a no-fault compensation system. The only people who might suffer are the lawyers, who would no longer get the work involved in taking lengthy medical cases through the courts year after year.

[Mr. Rendel]

In principle, it is right to increase our reliance on primary care, but I have deep concerns about how the Government have chosen to do it. First, they should have resolved the huge problems currently facing primary care, which find their expression in the appallingly low morale of most GPs but which arise from the hugely increased work load for which GPs have been given no increased resources to enable them to cope. Secondly, the Government should not have chosen to rely on the deeply flawed fundholding ideology. Whatever benefits it may have brought, it has undoubtedly led to a divisive two-tier system while destroying the trust between doctor and patient which is such a crucial part of the healing process.

As usual, the Government have succeeded in so mismanaging what started as a good idea that they have lost its entire value. When that happens with something as precious to Britain as our national health service, it is not just a shame—it is a tragedy.

12.56 pm

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): I preface my remarks by expressing a welcome to the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish), albeit in his absence, on his Front-Bench debut. We listened with interest to what he had to say, and the whole House listened with particular sympathy to his account of his personal experience of the health service earlier this year. It cannot have been easy for him to discuss that matter in public. He said that all his constituents should be entitled to the best possible service, and, of course, we all share that wish.

We shall study carefully what the hon. Gentleman said about Labour party policy on fundholding. He made several references to the desirability of common ground, which clearly we would all like to feel that we occupy, but it seems to me that he and his party still do not understand the philosophy behind GP fundholding and certainly he does not understand how it works in practice. I was a little surprised by his criticism of my hon. Friend the Minister for what he described as a partisan approach. If anybody, having started on what appeared to be common ground, finished by being very partisan, it was the hon. Member for Fife, Central.

The subject of our debate is

"Fundholding in a primary care-led National Health Service".

Of course, the NHS is and always has been essentially primary care-led, but it is becoming even more so. Not only is the general practitioner the so-called gatekeeper to services, but increasingly GPs are actually giving treatments which in the past would have been given in hospitals. If they do not actually give the treatment, they may provide accommodation within the practice premises for visiting consultants or, in the case of my own GP, from time to time caravans with specialist facilities have been parked outside for the benefit of patients.

Just as services are coming down the line from the centre to the individual GP, so should finance. Currently, the Department of Health makes grants to regions, which in turn pass money to districts. A district has a global picture of what is required in its area, and so can judge how resources can best be used. As general practitioners have even better knowledge of patients' needs, it is sensible that, if they so wish, they should hold the purse strings. That is surely what fundholding is all about.

We have heard, and will no doubt continue to hear, the inevitable comments about a two-tier service. My hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, North-East (Mr. Congdon) dealt with some of them in his speech. It is evident that, if resources are limited and contracts are made between providers and purchasers, in some circumstances a health authority contract for routine and straightforward operations may be exhausted and patients may have to wait until the next financial year, while GP fundholders may have organised their finances on a different basis and be able to continue to make that provision for their patients. That is bound to happen from time to time, and it would be hard to avoid it.

However, it is possible that the reverse may also be true. GP fundholders may have exhausted their contracts and therefore find themselves unable to arrange routine operations, while non-fundholding doctors, still being directly funded by the health authority, may not have exhausted their contracts and may be able to continue to arrange routine operations. It could be two-tier in both directions.

In fact, there is not much substance to the argument about a two-tier service, because the NHS has actually always been multi-tier. Provision has always depended on the part of the country in which one lives, one's doctor, the local hospital, the differing lengths of waiting lists, and so on. The claim about a two-tier service simply does not stand up.

Mr. Rendel: Can the hon. Gentleman give us examples of fundholding practices that have run out of money while the local health authority has had the money to continue to provide routine operations?

Mr. Sims: I cannot provide examples off the top of my head. I have certainly heard of such examples, but I accept that they are few, probably because GP fundholders know the needs of their patients and thus are better able to organise their finances than health authorities are generally able to do. In the past, everything was haphazard; now fundholders can arrange access to services according to pain and the severity of illness. It is no longer a matter of just adding a name to a waiting list.

Fundholding facilitates the co-ordination of services in the interests of patients rather than consultants; it brings together the budgets for primary, secondary and community care; it makes GPs and consultants aware of costs; it increases the range of services available to patients; it ensures the decentralisation of control and decision-making, and GPs can purchase the best service for their patients.

Whatever the Opposition may say, the fact is that fundholding is working. It is not perfect, because it is still at a relatively early stage, but a number of surveys have proved that it is successful. Several references have been made to lack of research, so I draw hon. Members' attention to an interesting document issued by the Institute of Health Services Management, written by Mr. Donald W. Light and entitled, "The future of fundholding". Mr. Light is an American, who brings an objective view to fundholding.

I advise hon. Members to read the document, which examines fundholding, warts and all. It mentions some of the shortcomings, but states that the advantages enormously outweigh them. We surely need to consider how fundholding is working and proceed with it rather than going back to where we were before, as the Opposition seem inclined to do.

My hon. Friend the Minister said that the scene is still changing, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has said that fundholding as it is at present is not to be the only model. One way forward is the introduction of the three levels of fundholding. The first is the standard level, and it is proposed to reduce the list size necessary to qualify as a fundholding practice. The second is community fundholding, whereby a more limited range of services would be available for fundholders with smaller lists. There is no doubt that that idea is attracting GPs in my constituency who have hitherto been hesitant about becoming fundholders. The third level involves fundholders who are already well into the process and may wish to take advantage of the proposal for total purchasing. The reaction to the pilot scheme suggests that that is likely to be successful.

Of course there are still variations in the extent to which fundholding has been taken up in different parts of the country, and there is concern about suggestions of tension, if not competition, between health authorities and fundholders. That should not and need not be the case.

I was also rather worried to hear what the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) was telling us about non-fundholders who reached the stage where they found it necessary to write a joint letter to the health authority. That seems to show a regrettable lack of co-operation, co-ordination and communication between the non-fundholding doctors and the health authority. I am not sure where the fault lies.

I should like to draw the House's attention to what is happening in Bromley, where a number of general practitioners—fundholding and non-fundholding—have been appointed to the health authority as clinical commissioning directors. Perhaps the House will allow me to quote from the document to which I referred and which states how that works—or rather, how it is intended to work as it is still in its early stages. It states:

> "The Bromley experiment, called Clinical Commissioning to indicate that creative purchasing will be done for everyone in the Bromley area, consists of appointing GPs (including fundholders) from sub-areas called 'locality patches,' as clinical commissioning directors. They will be paid for a session a week at BMA consultant rates to serve on a clinical commissioning board. They will go through a training programme, learn about overall commissioning and then decide how best to commission services and allocate funds. They will present the views of their part of the GP community and interact with them through a network of peer groups to learn their priorities, and to inform them about deliberation. At the moment, the scope is hospital and community health services, but general medical services could be and may be added. The aim of the Board is to reach consensus about decisions, but the Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility and thus makes final decisions."

The advantage of clinical commissioning is that it puts GPs, fundholders or otherwise, at the very heart of commissioning and gives them a say in the decisions. It means that they can work together, instead of being in conflict. Indeed, Claire Perry, the chief executive of Bromley health authority, said:

> "GPs are the best group to do overall commissioning because they have the best feel for local residents and can communicate best with consultants."

There are clear benefits from clinical commissioning, especially for patients. Clinical commissioning gives GPs more involvement, which means better quality services for the patients and better use of NHS resources. It is an opportunity for GPs to involve themselves in a new role which brings them right to the heart of the commissioning process. It also shares power—that is part of the object of the operation. Bromley health authority wants a real partnership with GPs and wants to actively involve them. It is an effective model, because it mobilises practice-based evidence to help us tackle the issues of service effectiveness and providers.

It seems that clinical commissioning is a logical development from fundholding. Indeed, it is likely, as more GPs become involved in it, that those who are not already fundholders may be attracted to fundholding status.

I welcome this debate as an opportunity to demonstrate the advantages of fundholding, to discuss how it can develop, and also—perhaps—to educate the Labour party in the developments. The right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett), in one of her last statements as the shadow Secretary of State for Health, said that she recognised the advances that fundholding has brought to many patients. Surely we all do, and we all want all our constituents to benefit from those advances. That, at least, is common ground.

1.10 pm

Ms Margaret Hodge (Barking): I want first to deal with some general points, and then turn specifically to the position in my constituency.

A number of Conservative Members have made the point that the reforms in relation to general practitioners with the introduction of fundholding were something to do with levelling up. It is strange to hear that Conservative Members and the Government are in any way interested in levelling up the health service. Their record is all one of levelling it down and of a lack of confidence and trust in their ability to run a national health service.

More importantly, we do not, as the hon. Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) suggested, level up by institutionalising inequality. All of us want to level up and improve the quality of health care in this nation, but we must do that hand in hand with ensuring equality of access. One of the strongest criticisms that Labour Members make of the introduction of GP fundholding is that it has institutionalised yet further inequality by bringing about a two-tier system.

We have been told that there has always been inequality; that we have always had a two-tier system. Indeed, there have always been inequalities in health care, but the purpose and role of any responsible Government must be to tackle those inequalities and disparities of access, not, by a deliberate act of Government policy, to further it and deliberately to strengthen it. The role of a responsible Government must be to introduce policies that lessen the differences, not heighten them. Labour Members' second general criticism of the Government is that they are heightening the differences through the way in which they have introduced the reform.

I am all for introducing and strengthening the role of general practitioners in commissioning health care—of course it makes sense. Our attack is on the way in which that has been done: partly to the exclusion of other interested parties in the commissioning process, but especially by introducing a two-tier service which disadvantages far too many people in Britain today.

Mr. Merchant: Is the hon. Lady saying, therefore, that, if all GP practices became fundholders, she would be happy?

Ms Hodge: I am saying that I would like us to revise, as we propose, the way in which we commission health

[Ms Hodge]

care, so that we involve not only GPs, but others who work in the primary care service—health visitors, midwives, district nurses and local authorities, which have a role in care in the community. I would like a system that strengthens that involvement in the purchase of health care. I do not believe that the way forward is through the current structure of GP fundholding; there are other mechanisms.

As part of the general thrust of our argument about primary care and GP fundholders, I make this point. I have with me some research that was carried out by York university on the allocation of resources. If the Government want to bring equity into the system, they must deal with the allocation of resources. The most recent research by York university on the North Thames region shows that the gainers have been areas that have the least need for additional health resources. North Essex has gained almost £23 million in capitation. At the bottom of the table, the East London and the City health authority and my authority have lost more than £23 million in health resources. If we want equity and equality of access to health care, we must shift resources to the areas that have the highest levels of deprivation. That is not what the Government are doing. Their policy institutionalises and increases inequality.

Mr. Malone: Is the hon. Lady suggesting that the formula for allocating resources for patients on an equitable basis, which has been informed by the York study and which has been refined so that it makes the allocation more responsive to local need, is defective compared with her ex-cathedra statements? She is embarking on dangerous ground if she pitches out the formula, which we have refined for some time and which, until now, has been common ground. If she wants her simple observations to replace it, we are in for an interesting time.

Ms Hodge: I simply make the observation that if, under the formula, a district with one of the sickest populations loses a further £14 million, it would appear to be common sense further to refine that formula. I hope that when the Minister looks at the statistics, he will take a similar view.

I am enormously concerned about the health service in general in Barking, and especially about GP services. I shall examine GP fundholding services in terms of what they are doing for GP primary care services in my constituency. I have said in previous health debates that I believe that east London is one of the areas whose health needs, and therefore health services, have been ignored for too long, even in the context of the health needs of the capital.

People in east London do not shout as loudly as those in other parts in London, as has been shown by the appalling closure proposals for Bart's and Guy's. In east London, we have lost an enormous number of hospitals. There is no longer a hospital in my constituency; there is no hospital in the borough. Many of my constituents have to travel 10 to 12 miles to attend a hospital. Public transport facilities are poor, and most people are too poor to afford a taxi. Almost half of my constituents—40 per cent.—have no access to a car. In the context of that absurd hospital closure programme, which clearly did not take into account the health needs of the people in my constituency, it is critical that there should be good access to high-quality primary care facilities if those people are to enjoy equality of access to a national health service.

Yet in my constituency the premises of many practices are of very poor quality. The quality of the practitioners themselves is often worrying, too, and, as the chair of the FHSA has said to me several times, the authority's ability to recruit high-quality practitioners is limited.

The people who live in Barking are the most in need, yet in my part of east London they are the ones furthest from a hospital. In my constituency I have the highest concentration of children under five, the highest concentration of the homeless and the highest concentration of elderly people, yet we are the furthest from a hospital.

Despite the distance from a hospital, we have a problem with poor primary health care. The statistics produced for "The Health of the Nation" are worse for Barking than elsewhere. For example, the instance of coronary heart disease is way above the national average, as is the rate of conception among under-16s. The rate of accidents to girls under 15 is three times the national average.

With that background, what are our primary health care facilities? The most recent data give a shocking picture: 81 per cent. of the premises that are supposed to provide the facilities that can no longer be provided by hospitals were classified as poor. Not one surgery in Barking was classified in the best category. In other parts of London where there are areas of deprivation—Lambeth, Lewisham or Southwark, for example—50 per cent. of surgeries were classified as poor. Yet in Barking the figure was 81 per cent.

Who are the GPs in Barking? There is a strong concentration of single-person practices, and many of the GPs are elderly. One in five is likely to retire in the next few years, and the FHSA will have an enormous task to replace them. When it advertises for GPs, the response rate is extremely poor.

Our premises are poor, we have an elderly cohort of GPs, and we have more GPs dealing with patient lists above the national average. The average patient list in my constituency is 2,175 per GP, and more than one in four practices in Barking have patient lists of more than 2,500. Those are large lists for single-person practices working in poor premises. Only 8 per cent. of GPs in England work in practices with patient lists of more than 2,500.

Other aspects of the profile of general practitioners in Barking are worrying, too. We have fewer women doctors than the national average. The number of support staff working in primary care is lower than the national average. One in 10 of the GPs in Barking has no practice nurse. There are hardly any training facilities in my constituency, and many of the GPs working there have to go as far as Basildon for their in-service training. In the entire district health authority and FHSA area, we would need as many as 30 additional GPs simply to reach the national average in relation to the ratio of patients per GP.

In that context, individual fundholding is irrelevant to the needs of my constituency. More money going towards administration costs does not help. I understand from the answer to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn) that the public subsidy towards management and computer costs in the NHS works out at £201.1 million. I would rather that that money was spent on recruiting more quality GPs for my constituency and improving the premises in which they have to operate to enable them to provide a better service to my constituents. I want money to go to premises, training and providing incentive payments to attract high-calibre GPs to east London. That money could be spent on the support staff necessary to provide a high-quality primary health care service in east London.

I wish to draw the attention of the House to some cases from my constituency. As a relatively new Member of the House, I have been astonished to note the number of people coming to my surgery each week with valid complaints about the quality of health care that they have received. What has shocked me is that, in barely a year as a Member of Parliament, I have had four cases in which people have died and in which, on the face of it, the death could have been avoided had there been an effective health service operating in my part of London. Two of the cases relate to the quality of service provided by GPs.

One case involved a young girl in her early 20s who had pains in her left leg. She visited her GP, and was referred to a hospital where she was placed on a waiting list for an arthroscopy. While she was waiting for that appointment, the pain became worse and she returned to her GP, who had no further advice for her.

On Christmas eve last year, the GP visited her home, and her father recalls that the consultation lasted for about one and a half minutes. The GP did not examine her knee, but did prescribe some mild painkillers. Her condition got worse during the Christmas and new year period, and her father tried to get the GP—a sole practitioner—to visit. He would not, and her father was unable to get an urgent appointment with a GP. On 24 January this year, the young girl collapsed and became unconscious. Her father rang the GP, who could not send a doctor. Soon after, Maria died in her father's arms.

Obviously, the family are pursuing the case through the appropriate processes, but I hope that there will be an inquest into my constituent's death. Maria was taking a pill that we have since learnt is one likely to cause a blood clot. It seems to me as a lay person that, with better-quality care from her GP, her death could have been avoided. I am deeply concerned that the Government's policies are not raising the quality of primary health care. Instead, they are motivated by Conservative dogma that the only way to improve anything is to try to introduce a phoney market.

The other case to which I draw the attention of the House involved a young man—he was 32—who had a wife and children. He first fell ill in May 1994. His GP prescribed antibiotics. Later in 1994, he was given more medicine because he had a stomach upset. He continued to feel ill and went to see his GP, who told him to see a psychiatrist. He managed eventually to see a specialist at King George's hospital. Within two days, he was diagnosed as having cancer. He died within days. That tragic episode is being investigated by the relevant committee. It demonstrates to me that there was poor practice at the first port of call for anyone who is in need of help from the health service.

The family health services authority in my constituency is doing its best to tackle what I consider to be inadequate primary health care facilities in the area. It is trying to work with the Government's irrelevant policies. I commend the authority because I think that it works imaginatively with the reforms. It is not in the business of establishing a GP market. Instead, it is using and manipulating fundholding and producing an example of how we can strengthen the capacity of GPs.

The FHSA has set up a multi-fund that brings together 34 GPs in 22 practices. It has probably added to the number of fundholders in the Minister's statistics. The authority does not think that fundholding is a good thing, but it is using the system to improve the capacity of GPs in my constituency and to provide them with direct support.

Thirteen of the 34 GPs represent single-handed practices and seven double-handed practices. The FHSA has found a way of collectivising commissioning within my patch. It is not a way of creating greater division, nor is it a way of introducing the market. Through the collective strength that is supported by the FHSA, we shall improve somewhat the quality of patient care.

It was absurd that Barking hospital was closed when my constituency was represented by the late Jo Richardson. She fought the closure vigorously. It is a scandalous story of a building, much of which was put up in the 1970s but some in the mid-1980s, and most of which is now empty.

A physiotherapy clinic was located there and the multi-fund GP fundholders have used that physiotherapy clinic to good advantage. The physiotherapy clinic was funded, in the complex health world in which we now live, by Redbridge Healthcare NHS trust, which runs King George hospital. The trust does not want the clinic. It has no interest in the well-being of people in Barking; it is concerned with people who live in Redbridge. The trust wanted to close the clinic and has given notice that it intends to do so.

However, now another health authority—Barking and Havering—through its purchasing and the GPs, through fundholding, will ensure that another lot of people are imported to retain the facility. X-ray equipment is going to be removed to one hospital from Barking hospital, while X-ray equipment is imported from another hospital to Barking hospital. How that makes sense, or demonstrates an effective and efficient use of resources, I am left to wonder. However, because the GP fundholders worked collectively—rather than individually—in a multi-fund concept, we have managed to retain a facility that is of benefit to my constituents.

The truth is that GP fundholding is not the answer for the people of Barking. It is typical of much of the Government's policy on the public services that if they cannot manage something efficiently they cop out and pass the buck to somebody else. The really difficult but important task is getting to grips with managing our resources more effectively so that we can improve the quality of the health service that we offer to all, not just to some.

My part of east London has been badly served by the Government's health reforms. Too many hospitals have closed; too little money has been invested in primary health care; and too little attention has been given to the real problems that face primary health care services in our part of London. We must improve the facilities; ensure that we provide the proper pay and incentives to attract high-calibre GPs to work in the poor areas of an urban capital such as London; and ensure that there are sufficient resources for the support services.

[Ms Hodge]

I will end with this story. I spend a lot of time in my constituency, which has many old people, going around the luncheon clubs that are provided by the local authority. I talk to those old people about the health service, which is clearly of huge concern to them as they reach the age where they will require the services of a high-quality health service.

I was shocked the other week to be in a luncheon club where we discussing the imminent closure of the accident and emergency unit at Oldchurch hospital. One woman told me, "I have given up. I don't bother any longer to go and see either my doctor or the hospital because it is too far away and I can't get there." I do not know what that will mean for that woman, but I know that if—when—there is a change of Government and we take control of the Department of Health and try to reinstate a truly national health service, we will ensure that the real problems facing real people in ordinary communities are tackled and stop the absurdity of dogma dominating how we run our health service.

1.39 pm

Mr. Piers Merchant (Beckenham): We have heard a great deal today from Opposition Members about equality of access and equity, but that issue is not the preserve of the Opposition. I believe in it just as strongly as Opposition Members do. I listened to the examples given by the hon. Member for Barking (Ms Hodge) and I sympathise with her and her constituents in wanting the best possible care at primary and other levels of the health service. The question is: how will that be brought about? I make no apology for saying that I believe strongly in the concept of GP fundholding. By extending that system by one mechanism or another to all GPs, we shall achieve exactly what the hon. Lady wishes.

There is an innate contradiction in the position adopted by many Opposition Members. They talk about a two-tier system, which implies that GP fundholders can offer their patients a better service—that may be true, and I believe that it is—yet when they are given an opportunity to extend that better form of treatment and administration to the whole sector, they back away and say that they want something else. I am a little uncertain about exactly what they want. They seem to accept that GPs should play a greater role in determining administrative matters at that level and in decision making, but they seem to want it by putting GPs on committees where they will spend their time arguing about decisions rather than doing what they should do, which is looking after patients. I hope to illustrate in a moment exactly how GP fundholding enables GPs to do that.

At the risk of sickening my hon. Friend the Minister, I refer to a GP practice in my constituency to which I referred earlier this week in Health questions, because it is a good example of how the system works. It is a long-established GP fundholding surgery, which has had time to settle in and develop exactly what the system can develop.

Since its establishment, Elm House surgery has been able to develop incredibly the service that it offers to its patients. I have been round the surgery a number of times and have seen it develop. It now offers an operating theatre for minor operations; its own purpose-built out patients consultancy room; its own nursing staff; and full administrative support. But GPs do not spend their time writing out records or calculating finances; they have been further freed to look after their patients. Nevertheless, because the decisions and administration take place on their premises, they can exercise an overview of them at all times, and can control and determine the direction in which their practice develops.

What really matters, however, is what the patients think. The patients are my constituents and I know many of them well. I have talked to them about the change in GP services that that fundholding practice has brought about, and they are absolutely delighted. They think that it is wonderful. Members of the public can be excused for not appreciating, understanding or knowing the intricacies of many aspects of the health reforms. After all, the average member of the public could be excused for not really understanding or being interested in the concept of providing and purchasing, with which we are well acquainted and which has achieved a great deal. They want good medical care from hospitals, but are not particularly bothered about how it comes about.

GP fundholding practices, however, are different because members of the public understand the concept and appreciate it. When they go to their GPs in those practices, they see that they are being offered a much wider range of services, which they really appreciate. Above all, people can often avoid joining a waiting list to go to the strange environment of a hospital, and can thus avoid the tensions and stresses that many people feel when they go to hospital for the first time or on a rare occasion. All that can be obviated, in many cases, because the GPs are now able to provide a service on the premises, under the supervision of the familiar face of the GP.

Ask any member of the public whom they prefer to visit if they have a medical problem. It is their GP, the person they know and have personal contact with—not a remote consultant, not a person in a hospital that they may never have visited before. All that can be provided by a fundholder.

That additional facility to see a consultant, if necessary, on the premises, is good, not only for the patient, but for the consultant and the GP. If a patient visits the consultant on the GP's premises and there is a problem, or the consultant wants further information or wants to tell the GP something, what does he do? He need not start some administrative process to write a letter, go to a hospital secretariat and go through all the complications of the administration. He simply goes up the stairs or along the corridor, knocks on the door and speaks to the GP who is sitting there. It is direct personal communication and contact—what medicine was originally about. We have gone back to a fundamental that is a very good fundamental.

Those are the significant benefits that patients receive from fundholding practices, and that is why those practices are so popular. They can blend in the operations there with some of the modern developments in medicine, such as day care surgery and evidence-based medicine. All those benefits of innovation, new technology and so on can blend in efficiently and effectively with GP fundholding practices.

In many areas, fundholders have expanded greatly the services that they provide. I shall not detain the House by listing all those services, but I can mention some. In addition to the procedures and minor operations that I mentioned, often fundholding practices can buy expensive heart and other equipment to monitor patients, to carry out diagnostic work, and to carry out glaucoma testing, even endoscopy, and in some cases X-ray services. All those can be provided on the premises.

I therefore believe that GP fundholding is a tremendous innovation. First, it is, above all, patient-driven. It depends on what is best for the patient and frees GPs to concentrate on the clinical side, but leaves them with administrative power. Secondly, it is driven by clinicians, not managers; by GPs, not remote administrators. Thirdly, it is driven by the clinicians who are closest to the patient—GPs—so it is primary-driven, and it is a devolvement of power, a decentralisation, down to local level.

Not only is GP fundholding achieving tremendous developments in fundholding practices, but it has a knock-on effect elsewhere because other GPs who are not fundholders see what can be done, and copy. It strengthens GP practices tremendously by providing a more comprehensive system of primary care and it is entirely possible for fundholding practices to work, as they do, in conjunction with local authorities and voluntary organisations—which the hon. Member for Barking suggested was important. I agree, and fundholders can do and are doing that.

GP fundholding also achieves improvements in hospitals because of the influence that GP fundholders have, not only as GPs, but as people who hold cash. The benefits are extremely wide.

Anxiety has been expressed that GPs who are not fundholders do not benefit. In my health area of Bromley, the health authority, Bromley Health, responding to the growth of popularity of fundholding, has felt obliged to tackle the problem of other GPs. That is quite right; there is no reason why that should not happen. I commend the authority for it. As a result, it has involved GPs in a system of commissioning throughout the area. I am keen that that should not in any sense erode or replace fundholding but, running alongside it, it shows the impact that fundholding has on the rest of the sector and that it innovates, generates ideas and forces new thinking, all to patients' benefit.

I am concerned about the spread of fundholding, which is uneven. The figures for the South Thames area on 1 April 1995 show that, in the Bromley health district, only 18 per cent. of the population is covered by fundholding, compared with 41 per cent. across the region. I am keen for that imbalance to be redressed. It is already being redressed to an extent, as the number of applications this year has greatly increased, and, from 1 April next year, the level will be much higher. I believe that, in the Bromley area, the figure will approach 40 per cent. In my constituency the figure will rise to about one third, which is an improvement, but still below the national average. I am keen that my constituents should not lose through being left behind. I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to help to solve the problem and to find ways of encouraging GPs who have felt inhibited from becoming fundholders to achieve that end.

The principal reason for the low percentage rate in my area is probably the large number of single practitioners. My constituency shares an historic problem with that of the hon. Member for Barking in that my constituency contains areas that are less well off than other parts. The less well-off districts tend, for historical reasons, to have single practitioners. I should like to see encouragement for the development of multi-funds, where single practitioners can get together, become fundholders and, perhaps, use common premises. My hon. Friend the Minister has visited Beckenham hospital in my constituency. It offers GPs, acting together as multi-fundholders, an ideal base in which to locate some of the enhanced practices that I described earlier. I should like that policy to be encouraged.

The benefits of fundholding are overwhelming. I do not want a two-tier system; I want everyone to benefit from the advantages that have flowed from fundholding. I predict that the Labour party will recognise the benefits of that policy. As with so many other policies, it is only a matter of time before the Labour party becomes convinced that the initiative is successful, exciting and, above all, popular. It will then perform one of its now characteristic 180-degree turns and, instead of condemning the policy, support it. I hope that the Labour party does that—I believe that it will, for the simple reason that the policy works.

1.52 pm

Mr. Michael Stephen (Shoreham): I am sure that the House will have been distressed to hear of the deaths of the two constituents mentioned by the hon. Member for Barking (Ms Hodge), but she must realise that the cases involved clinical judgment, or the lack of it, on the part of the doctors involved. Those issues will be investigated, and the hon. Lady has already told the House that the family is pursuing the avenues open to it.

The transformation of the national health service into a primary care-led service is one of the best of the many excellent reforms introduced by Conservative Governments since 1979. We now have a system that is driven by the requirements of general practitioners—by the requirements of those who are closest to the patients and who best understand their needs.

Before the reforms, in so far as the national health service was led at all, it was led by the union bosses. Only last week, I spoke to a lady who is now retired, who was a ward sister during the last Labour Government. She said that almost nothing could be done in her hospital without the shop stewards' approval. In those days, morale was at rock bottom. I am amazed that Opposition Members have the nerve to compare morale in the national health service today with the state of morale in those days, particularly in the winter of 1978-79, when cancer patients were not allowed into hospitals because the gates were being picketed.

Before we introduced our reforms, many doctors did not know and did not care how much anything cost. Their approach was, "It is our business to heal the sick; it is your problem to worry about the money." That was an irresponsible attitude, because doctors know as well as we do that resources for the national health service are not unlimited, and the service has to be cost-effective.

There never has been and never will be enough money to meet every need in the health service. It is perverse that the more money we put in, the greater the demand we create. There were no waiting lists for kidney transplants 10 years ago, simply because it was not possible to carry out a kidney transplant. Now that it is possible, there are waiting lists for that and many other wonderful

[Mr. Michael Stephen]

procedures that are now available because of the money that the Conservative Government and their predecessors put into the national health service.

The Labour party makes a great deal of fuss about the number of administrators employed in the national health service. In the old days, many doctors and nurses were employed in administrative capacities. They appeared on the records as doctors and nurses, not administrators. We have taken the sensible decision that it is better for administration to be carried out by administrators and not by doctors or nurses who may or may not be good at it.

The patients charter has been a great success and has improved the quality of service to patients. It is the mission statement of the national health service. It makes it clear to those in the service what is expected of them, and it makes it clear to the public what they can expect, but it is not a guarantee that the requirements of the charter will be met tomorrow. It is a long-term objective, a mission statement—something that we must all work towards—and we have made great progress towards meeting the targets set by the patients charter.

The advantage of a general practitioner-driven system is that GPs are local, convenient and flexible. Consistent with the Conservative party's general approach to devolution wherever possible, we are seeking to devolve real power and responsibility within the national health service to the lowest possible level—to individual GP practices in our constituencies. The Labour party is keen on devolution, but the only devolution to the localities in which it is interested is devolution to local political bosses on local authorities. We do not want that. We want to devolve power to the parents in the schools and to the doctors in the surgeries.

One example of the effect of devolving power to the GPs was given to me by a GP fundholder, not in my constituency but near it. In the old days, he found it difficult to get an appointment with a particular consultant in the hospital, but now that he is a fundholder, the consultant sends him a Christmas card. That is a classic example of the change in attitude.

Consultants are more responsive to GPs, as are the hospitals and the administrators who run them. The flexibility that GP fundholding has given our doctors—not the amount of funding—has changed the quality of service that they can offer patients. As my hon. Friend the Minister explained to the House, GP fundholders get no more per capita than any other doctor, although they get a little extra money to pay for the administrative costs that are not being paid centrally and are therefore offset. In addition, they managed to save £64 million in 1993-94 alone, which more than offsets the extra money that they receive for administration. The doctors do not do the administration; they are out with their stethoscopes treating patients. They have administrators and practice managers, whom they sometimes share with other practices.

In Sussex, 56 per cent. of the population are covered by fundholding practices, and by next April we hope that the figure will have increased to 66 per cent. Fundholding practices have been able to bring to the locality such services as physiotherapy. Patients no longer have to go to the local hospital to see the physiotherapist; the physiotherapist comes to the surgery two days a week. The same applies to chiropody and dermatology services and asthma treatment. In respect of the latter two treatments, consultants visit surgeries and carry out procedures with the GP watching. GPs are learning on the job, and many of them are now carrying out those procedures without having to call on the consultants, and their patients do not have to go to hospital for treatment.

The fact that so many more treatments can now be carried out at GPs' surgeries means that there are shorter hospital stays, which must be good for everyone. Because of the £64 million that has been saved, GP practices are able to buy expensive endoscopy equipment and obtain pathology results more quickly. That also benefits non-fundholders in the area.

Labour Members say that it would be easy for fundholders to close a local hospital by changing their purchasing decisions. As my hon. Friend the Minister has explained, that can be done only within the accountability framework. Anyway, why would GPs want to close a good local hospital that was providing a good service to their patients? Surely they would want to close a hospital only if it was not good and they wanted to transfer their patients to a hospital where they would receive proper treatment. The signal being sent out by doctors exercising their freedom sharpens up hospital administrators and consultants, and forces them to provide a better service.

Doctors are now able to challenge hospital practices. Previously, they would have been listened to politely and then shown the door. Administrators no longer do that because they cannot afford not to listen to GP fundholders. In an area near mine, two hospitals providing parallel orthopaedic services, and therefore effectively competing with each other, were told by local GP fundholders, "That is not the right way to proceed. You must amalgamate and provide us with a greater range of options for our patients." In the old days, the hospitals would have said, "That is all very interesting," and then done nothing about it. Now, they have to do—and, indeed, have done—something about it.

All those benefits could have occurred in the old days under Labour, but they did not—just as British Steel could have made a profit, but never did, and British Airways could have been the best airline in the world, but never was until a Conservative Government privatised it and put responsibility where it would do some good. The Labour party said that the doctors could not cope with the administration involved in fundholding, and that they would all go bankrupt. It is one of Labour's scare stories that has not come true, and its reputation as a clairvoyant has received a nasty dent.

Remarks have been made about paperwork. No one wants paperwork in the health service, but sometimes it is necessary. I have spoken to doctors about the reports on prescribing that they have to complete. They think that they are very useful. They look at the reports four times a year and ask why one practice is prescribing more of a certain drug than the practice next door. Sometimes there is a good reason for that, sometimes there is not; but at least it focuses their minds. That shows that sometimes the paperwork is necessary and that the doctors want it.

To talk as if there was no paperwork prior to fundholding can hardly be reality. Doctors were always scribbling notes to consultants and filling in forms about their patients. Paperwork is nothing new. However, the Government have focused on the problems associated with form-filling and are reducing the number of forms by 15 million in the first tranche. I hope that they will then reduce the number even further.

This is a transitional period, with some practices being fundholding and others non-fundholding. Therefore, there is bound to be a difference in the quality of service being provided by the two groups. That is not to say that the quality of service will always be better when delivered by fundholders than by non-fundholders—sometimes it will be one, sometimes the other. The way to obtain the benefits that undoubtedly come with GP fundholding is to extend the system to all GPs. It is wrong to say that, just because, at the moment, we cannot all benefit, no one should benefit—that is absolute nonsense. It is what the Labour party says about the education system. It is absolute nonsense.

The Labour party says that joint commissioning is a great idea and that it is the way to proceed. It sounds very good, but it simply amounts to GPs having their say and nothing further being done. That is not the case when GPs have the money under their control.

Of course, the Labour party consistently rubbished everything that has been shown to work. For example, it rubbished the idea of the purchaser-provider split,but now accepts that it is the right way to run the health service. It rubbished the idea of NHS trusts, but now accepts that it is an extremely good idea.

What does the Labour party say about fundholding? On 13 September, the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) said, "We oppose GP fundholding," but on 17 October—the same year—she said:

> "We understand and welcome the advances that fundholding has brought to many patients."

Mr. Hinchliffe: Read the full speech.

Mr. Stephen: I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman has the nerve to try to intervene, given the lack of courtesy that he showed me during his speech.

In a 1992 paper, which was rather strangely entitled "Restoring the Nation's Health", the Liberal Democrats said:

> "There is no case for GP fundholding".

Since 1992, they have changed their minds, which, of course, they are entitled to do and frequently do. In 1994, they said:

> "GP fundholding does seem to have brought benefits. By holding a part of the hospital service's budget, GPs are now able to demand a better deal for their patients, resulting in a turnaround time for tests being vastly improved and services becoming more personal."

That is the Liberals for you.

It is amazing that the Labour party should claim that we have destroyed the national health service. It is even more amazing that anyone believes it. Indeed, it is a sad reflection on the mood of the press and the broadcast media. An old lady who spends 10 minutes on a trolley makes the front page of our local newspapers, whereas all the wonderful things that are done in the health service every day of the year go completely unnoticed in the local papers, and certainly never reach local television.

I am very angry about that, because the Conservative party has put an enormous amount of money into the health service—more than 50 per cent. more in real terms than the Labour party—yet Labour has the effrontery to say that we are destroying the NHS, and the media have the effrontery to assist it to mislead the public. It is perhaps a very good example of the notion that if a lie is big enough and told often enough, people believe it. I sincerely hope that when the general election comes, people will not believe it, because to hand control of the national health service to the Labour party would be an appalling tragedy.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Before I call either of the Front Bench representatives, I remind them that they will need the leave of the House to speak again.

2.7 pm

Mr. McLeish: With the leave of the House, I shall speak again briefly.

I am pleased to follow that rather spirited, but simplistic, contribution made by the hon. Member for Shoreham (Mr. Stephen) in defence of what the Government are doing to the NHS. I should not wish you to get me wrong, Madam Deputy Speaker; I am happy for tea to be provided for patients who have to wait, and I am also partial to receiving a Christmas card from my GP.

In essence, the hon. Gentleman was saying that the NHS is a bit like British Airways and British Steel—it is simply a matter of introducing market techniques and privatising a major service, and all will be well. I am not even sure that the hon. Gentleman believes that, but he was nevertheless keen to say it.

What was extraordinary was that the hon. Member for Shoreham should blame the messenger. He said, in effect, that there was nothing wrong with the message. Why are the Conservatives 40 percentage points behind Labour in the opinion poll in *The Sunday Telegraph*? It must be because of the press and the Labour party. We do not mind him blaming us or the press, but there should be no slight on the judgment of the people who have shown, in opinion poll after opinion poll, that the Government's health policies are not wanted.

Our approach has been to build on the best, which is a common-sense point of view. In few, if any, of the contributions made by Conservative Members did we hear anything about the innovations or good ideas coming from non-fundholders. Why? It is hard to escape the conclusion that that particularised approach basically means that the Government have closed their minds to any option other than GP funding.

Even if—and we have conceded it—benefits flow from GP funding and non-GP funding, why are the Government not simply saying to 50 per cent. of patients and 50 per cent. of GPs, "You are part of our future"? Some distress is being created because the Government will not accept the fact that, outwith GP fundholding, much good work is being done. Labour Members have established that point.

The second point that we have established today is that there is a two-tier system. Lurking behind the comments of most Conservative Members was an acceptance of that. Of course, they wanted it to be removed by the expansion of GP fundholding, but there was a tacit—in fact, more of a direct-acceptance that two-tier funding and two-tier accessing exist. That breaches the fundamental principles on which the NHS was based.

It is interesting to note and worth putting on the record that in the debate on Second Reading on 30 April 1946, when the national health service was being established,

[Mr. McLeish]

172 Conservatives voted against the setting up of the NHS in the form that was being devised. It seems that, almost 50 years on—I do not want us to be discussing old Labour/new Labour—it would be useful for Conservative Members to go to the Library and read that debate. They may notice some particularly germane comments—

Mr. Congdon: I was not born then.

Mr. McLeish: Nor was I. Nevertheless, I am sure that Conservative Members can read.

I shall dwell briefly on two issues that have not been given sufficient attention. One concerns morale and recruitment in primary care services. Conservative Members will be aware of the report prepared by the British Medical Association, published in September 1995, on those issues. One paragraph about recruitment says:

> "The Health Department is aware that there is a recruitment problem but so far it has failed to define its parameters."

I am sure that that is a euphemism for saying that the Department of Health has done very little about it.

It continues:

> "It needs to be persuaded that action is urgently needed to tackle the causes of the decline in recruitment. We are probably facing a serious long term manpower crisis."

Those are the words of the BMA—not the Labour party or the organs of the so-called supporters of the Labour press. It is important that the Minister should address his comments to that point.

On morale, page 8 of the report says:

> "GPs have also been angered by the continual denial of 'two-tierism' in the NHS".

Obviously, after today's debate, the BMA will know that the Government have caved in on that point. The report continues:

> "it has become apparent that non-clinical considerations are determining where and when patients are treated."

It is quite clear that, although the Government might not own up to questions about access and funding, other organisations, which know a great deal more about the health service than the Government, are doing so. That is encouraging, because it informs the debate, but a little depressing in relation to the lack of comment from the Government Front-Bench team.

The other issue which has not received attention is how the debate is taken forward. I quoted earlier some of the Secretary of State's more soothing comments about the fact that there is no one model. It is interesting that, given the fact that enthusiasm was lacking for the first two or three waves of GP fundholding, the Government are involved in a little experimenting themselves. In addition to standard fundholding, we have community fundholding, multi-funds and total fundholding.

Part of our argument is about the development of a concept. I would like the Minister also to address his comments to why, indeed, there is community fundholding and why there is multi-funding. Does that not illustrate the point that we are making, that what we need is to take the best out of the two systems that are operating and ensure, based on the principles of equity of access and funding, that we have the best primary health care system possible? If the Minister reflects on that, he will see the merit of what we have said.

The Government will be uncomfortable about my next point. The bigger agenda item is whether they can show the nation that they genuinely want the type of national health service that Labour wants to be developed into the next century. The public see through the step-by-step approach. We have seen fragmentation, contractualisation and commercialisation. A fifth term in power for this Government will mean privatisation of the service. I hope that the Minister will reassure me that that will not happen. More important, I hope that he will address himself to the fact that we still do not have a primary health care system that has equity of funding and equity of access at its core.

2.15 pm

Mr. Malone: By leave of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker. I hardly need to give a reassurance. I intervened in the opening speech by the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) to give precisely that reassurance about the Government's commitment to the NHS. I happily give it again: we are committed to a taxation-based system which will be free at the point of delivery. I do not know how we can make it clearer.

Instead of engaging in the issues of the debate and the qualities of GP fundholding, the Opposition, astonishingly, attempted to obscure the issue by suggesting that there was a hidden agenda. We have had a clear agenda for the health service, which we have rolled out since 1990 when the new health service took shape.

I thank all my hon. Friends for their contributions. In view of the short time left to me, they will understand if I do not recognise them individually. They will also understand that I have to deal with several important matters of principle which were raised by Opposition Members.

The hon. Member for Fife, Central tried to open a fresh debate about GP manpower issues and morale in his winding-up speech. I can deal with that simply. We take the issue extremely seriously. Manpower requirements throughout the service are taken seriously by my Department and by the profession, and we address them as a priority. That is why my right hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley), the then Secretary of State for Health, announced earlier this year that we would create 500 more student places in medical school, and that is why I referred earlier to the increase in the number of medical students since 1979. Of course we take these matters seriously.

If there was clear evidence that there was difficulty in GP recruitment, we would be concerned. In practice, when GP posts are advertised, more people apply than there are posts available. The same is true for trainee posts across the country.

Mr. Rendel *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Malone: The hon. Gentleman shakes his head. I assume that he is implying that there is a general difficulty. There is not.

I want to take head on three points that have emerged from the debate. I found it extraordinary that Labour Members, having set out to say how all the good things that GP fundholding had achieved were bad and that it was unfortunate that the good things were not being extended to others in the health service, said that they did not know whether GP fundholding was good or not because there had been no proper evaluation. My hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) made a specific point on this, as did the hon. Members for Newbury (Mr. Rendel) and for Dagenham (Ms Church) in a number of interventions.

There are two sorts of evaluation, of which the first is peer group evaluation. As my hon. Friends rightly pointed out, it was not a question of the Government forcing GPs down the fundholding route. Fundholding is a process that has rolled out through six waves of GP fundholding. As peers have watched what their equivalents have been able to achieve in GP fundholding, many of them, who were often highly sceptical at the outset, have evaluated what is happening and moved forward. There is also much independent research into fundholding; the suggestion that there is none is nonsense.

A national centre for primary care research and development has now been set up at Manchester university, and it will be an important resource for taking forward primary care research and the associated agenda. I opened the centre this spring, and I was delighted to do so. It will cost £1.5 million per year for a 10-year period to develop a sustained programme of work to explore a range of primary care issues. That will include watching fundholding develop. In addition, £500,000 is being spent on total fundholding evaluation, and that is already under way.

Other work is taking place at a more local level, and evaluation is being carried out by the National Audit Office. The Public Accounts Committee has already worked on the subject, and no doubt will return to it. It is nonsense for Opposition Members to say that there is no evaluation, and that we are introducing the system to ensure that no one will find out what is happening, and we cannot measure the benefits. There is a comprehensive programme in place.

Accountability was another issue raised by Opposition Members, especially by the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe). We all sat with bated breath as he announced that he was about to reveal to us why he had left the Front Bench and returned to the Back Benches. I am almost obliged to ask him: is that it? If so, we look forward to his return to the Front Bench as quickly as possible. However, at least the hon. Gentleman has the ability to deliver miserable facts with a cheerful face, which is a great benefit compared with the attitude of many of his hon. Friends.

The hon. Gentleman asked about accountability. Of course that is fundamental, and it is dealt with in the accountability framework that we debated at length during the passage of the Health Authorities Act 1995. The purpose of the framework is to balance the requirements of public accountability within a centrally funded service, with the need to minimise the administrative work load on general practices and health authorities.

The policy will be implemented nationally in several ways. Any major shifts in purchasing intentions will have to be published six months in advance, just as health authorities are obliged to publish their intentions. Fundholders will be in the same position. The idea that Labour Members put about during the debate, that there will be great changes and dislocations in services across the country, is absolutely untrue.

Mr. McLeish: That is already happening.

Mr. Malone: I find it surprising that the hon. Gentleman should say that. The purchasing power that fundholders have at their discretion is inevitably a small proportion of the activity in any provider unit. The point about exercising the power of the budget is that it makes provider units think in a different way. Practices that are not fundholders readily accede that they also benefit. When fundholders get better services, they follow, and the whole system is uplifted.

As well as the publication of purchasing intentions, an annual practice plan will have to be given to the health authority. Practices will also have to produce a performance report, and review performance regularly with the health authority.

That illustrates the fact that there will be a firm framework to make GP fundholders truly accountable, as they should be—ultimately to Ministers, who have custody of the policy. The framework will come into effect in the course of next year, and already many of its elements are being put into place. Local workshops involving GPs and others are taking place all over the country to explore all the issues arising from it. It is entirely wrong to suggest to the House that there is no accountability for GP fundholders, yet that was one of the main planks on which the Opposition rested their case.

Another issue raised was equity. Despite Opposition Members' attempts to suggest that there has been some sort of admission that a two-tier health service exists, that is not the case. I find entirely incomprehensible the persistent misrepresentation by Opposition Members of a self-evident fact about fundholding.

Let me reiterate the Government's position. Equity in funding comes from the allocation of resources which are given to health authorities. These resources are allocated on an equitable basis to fundholding practices. The fundholders then derive extra value out of the equitable resource and spend it on behalf of their patients. That is what the Opposition cannot stomach.

Mr. Hinchliffe *rose*—

Mr. Rendel *rose*—

Mr. Malone: I will not give way, as I have only six minutes in which to conclude.

The hon. Member for Fife, Central asked about the benefits from joint commissioning, but misrepresented what I said. I clearly remember saying that there are benefits, but they are sporadic and cannot be relied upon, as they are spread across the country.

The hon. Gentleman referred to those involved in joint commissioning, and cited the practice at Blackpool. But such people find it very difficult to persuade the health authorities to go along with the plans they put forward. The reason for that—this is at the centre of this debate—is that those people do not exercise purchasing power.

[Mr. Malone]

Joint commissioning groups can be talking shops with GPs, but they will make no progress if they do not exercise their financial muscle.

Mr. Hinchliffe: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Malone: I will not give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Hinchliffe: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I assumed that, in winding up the debate, the Minister would respond to the points that have been made. I have made serious allegations about health care in my constituency—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. That is not a point of order for the Chair. If the hon. Gentleman who has the Floor does not give way, other hon. Members must resume their seats. That is a well-known and established rule.

Mr. Malone: I dealt with the hon. Gentleman's point during his speech. I told him that if he submitted all the cases he was talking about to me, they would be examined in full, and he would get a response.

Mr. Hinchliffe: I want answers.

Mr. Malone: The hon. Gentleman will get answers, but not from me at this Dispatch Box unless I know all the facts. I shall be happy to respond to the hon. Gentleman on that basis.

The hon. Member for Barking (Ms Hodge), who has apologised for not being in her place for the winding-up speeches, made some interesting suggestions about the Government's general policy of equity and fairness. She said that her constituents were being done down because there was less cash in Barking.

Although I did not have the precise details during the hon. Lady's speech, I am pleased to say that I have them now. Barking and Havering is 1.7 per cent. behind the target fixed by our fair allocation process, so—contrary to what the hon. Lady said—resources in her constituency and health authority area are set to increase as it moves towards the target. When one gets suggestions from the Labour party, it pays to treat every single one of them as if it had a health warning.

I ask the Labour party—which Government introduced deprivation payments for general practice? The present Government did. Which Government introduced the new health authorities which, at a far more local level, will set out the priorities for health care? The present Government did that, and we now have the framework firmly in place.

Much was made by the Opposition of their belief that there was no wish among professionals to have GP fundholding, but the opposite is the case. It has been a success, as a survey of fundholders by the Association of Fundholding Practitioners has shown.

Mr. McLeish: Surprise, surprise.

Mr. Malone: The hon. Gentleman might say that, but he should bear in mind that the vice-chairman of that organisation is Dr. Mike Armstrong, a member of the Labour party. This is not a partisan point, and I would have hoped that the results of the survey would suggest that fundholding has been successful and that patient care has benefited as a result.

Dr. Mike Armstrong has a warning that the hon. Member for Fife, Central should heed: he has said that, if Labour is to appease fundholders, it will have to offer more than a mere advisory role—that is what the hon. Gentleman has offered today—and will have to concede some budget responsibility.

At the end of an important debate, we get back to that central point. Improving health care driven by primary carers means that some budget responsibility must follow. We have noted that the hon. Member for Fife, Central was not prepared to concede that point, and GP fundholders and others in the country will have noted that as well.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at the sitting on Monday 6th November, the Speaker shall:

(1) put the Questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on the Motions in the name of Mr. Tony Newton relating to Conduct of Members, Employment Agreements, Standards in Public Life (General Recommendations) and Standards and Privileges not later than three hours after the commencement of proceedings on the first such Motion, or Seven o'clock, whichever is the later; and

(2) put the Questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on the Motion in the names of Mr. Tony Newton and Mr. A. J. Beith relating to the Commissioner for Standards not later than one hour after their commencement; and

the said Questions shall include the Questions on any amendments to the said Motions which she may have selected and which may then be moved; and the said Motions may be proceeded with, though opposed, after Ten o'clock.—*[Mr. Wells.]*

Ordered,

That, at the sitting on Tuesday 7th November, the Speaker shall put the Questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on the Motion in the name of Mr. Tony Newton relating to Select Committees related to Government Departments not later than one and a half hours after their commencement, such Questions including the Questions on any amendments to the Motion which she may have selected which may then be moved; and the said Motion may be proceeded with, though opposed, after Ten o'clock.—*[Mr. Wells.]*

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That this House do meet on Wednesday 8th November at half-past Nine o'clock.—*[Mr. Wells.]*

Badgers

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Wells.]*

2.30 pm

Sir Jim Spicer (Dorset, West): We all know that a Friday afternoon Adjournment debate is not well attended, because, by the time it is announced the previous week, most Members have already made their arrangements. Attendance is therefore thin this afternoon. However, I have received letters from 11 of my colleagues telling me that they are as concerned as I am about badgers and bovine tuberculosis.

I am delighted that you are in the Chair for this debate, Madam Deputy Speaker, as we all know that animal welfare is close to your heart.

It is time for us all to face facts and to accept that the badger is neither in danger nor endangered. Without doubt, it is the most protected mammal in Europe, especially in the United Kingdom. Badger numbers are increasing dramatically. An exact count has not been taken, but best guesses are that the minimum number of adult badgers is 250,000, with 105,000 cubs being born each year.

If we make a rough estimate that half of those cubs are killed in the first year of life, we are still left with an explosion in badger numbers. My extremely rough guess is that there will be about 750,000 badgers by the year 2000. That is a frightening prospect. We all know that bovine TB is endemic in badgers and that the spread of the disease is clearly linked to the species, although as yet methods of transmission are poorly understood.

Most Members are jacks of all trades and masters of none, and I am no expert on badgers and bovine TB. As a result of my concern, however, I have attended two seminars organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; the first was two years ago and the second was last month. I left those seminars—I cannot believe that any other person who attended them did not do likewise—with the certainty that badgers are a cause of bovine TB.

All too often, people say, "We must preserve every badger, so we must have a vaccine." It is my understanding, however, that we shall not have an effective vaccine before the year 2005, at the earliest, and that it is more likely to be 2010—and then only if enormous resources are made available and there is the closest co-operation with other countries in the meantime.

We must take action now because of the greatly increased number of herds to have tested positive in the past five years, especially in the south-west. I will give some examples. In Cornwall, there were 38 outbreaks in 1990 and 106 in 1994. In Devon, there were 26 in 1990 and 75 in 1994. Hereford and Worcestershire had one in 1990 and 12 in 1994. That shows that the disease is moving up the west line to the Welsh border. In Wiltshire, there were two cases in 1990 and 21 in 1994. I do not have any figures for Wales, but I know that there is increasing concern there about the spread of tuberculosis in badgers and about bovine tuberculosis.

My county of Dorset, for some inexplicable reason, has been lucky. It seemed that we were set on an upward curve for three or four years, but suddenly it seems to have levelled off. I would want to touch wood if I were to say that that will not change, in view of the vast increase in the number of badgers.

Each of the figures represents not only a slaughter of cattle but personal tragedy, financial loss and enormous stress for the individual farmers. I will give the House two examples—three, in fact, because I have added another only this afternoon.

First, there is Robert Bowditch, who is a friend and near neighbour of mine and farms at Netherbury. He writes:

> "Our main problems started in 1988 with eight beef cattle at Brimley Coombe. In 1991, seven cows from Knowle dairy went down and one steer from Brimley. In 1993, two cows from Knowle dairy were taken out. Then last year two steers were taken out from Laverstock. This year we had a clear test, thank goodness."

Behind those figures lies a story of heartbreak, concern and stress for the farmer. Mr. Bowditch continues:

> "I will now try and explain some of the management and financial problems when a TB outbreak occurs. When you have a TB reactor it is necessary to retest every 60 days until you go clear—therefore no cattle movements. Each time we test 4 men and 2 full days work is required. You can't mix units where a reactor has been found and one that is clear of TB. This becomes a major problem when you need to get in calf heifers from a TB closed area into a TB clean dairy herd!
>
> If restrictions continue for months, as is often the case, major cash flow problems can occur. You nearly always miss the peak of one trade or another. There is also the constant personal worry when a test is due—one needs to plan stock numbers, sales and finances accordingly to protect yourself if things go wrong.
>
> The speed of MAFF badger men coming on to reactor farms is very slow which means disease is still being spread. 25 per cent. of badgers caught last time were positive. Also three cows from Knowle had TB lesions in the neck which is frightening."

Behind that short account lie months of agony and heartbreak for everyone on that farm.

Another, smaller case involves the Fooks brothers of North Porton. They had TB movement restriction from April to September this year following the identification of four reactors. This prevented bull calf and beef animal sales, and they were not able to buy in any cattle. They are four brothers who farm together. They have 120 cows, and they farm beef, sheep, cereals and maize. This year, they have had an especially difficult time quite apart from the horrendous problem of bovine tuberculosis.

The problem involves badgers and the maize crop. The brothers planted 30 acres for winter feeding and estimate that one third of that has been a complete loss—destroyed by badgers. Some might say that the brothers should have protected their crops with electric fences. They did, but they did not work. Their wheat crop was also badly affected by badgers moving into ripening wheat and just crushing it down. It is difficult to put a figure on such damage, but the cumulative effect on an individual farm on top of a bovine TB problem must be dreadful.

There is one other case which has been drawn to my attention. We know that a large number of people believe that there is no clear link between bovine tuberculosis and badgers. After this debate, I am bound to get dozens—hundreds—of letters saying how disgraceful it is that I should make that allegation.

Another example involves Tyneham in south Dorset. Starting in 1966, that area experienced huge amounts of TB and in the five years between 1966 and 1971, 800 cattle had to be slaughtered. People do not realise the

[Sir Jim Spicer]

slaughter that follows an outbreak of bovine tuberculosis and its effect on people in the farming industry. In 1973 and 1974, badgers were gassed, and in 1976 all the badgers were taken out. Since then, the area has been re-inhabited by badgers and there has not been a single case of TB in the area since the clearance. That is proof positive, and it is borne out by tests that have taken place in the Republic of Ireland.

Many more tragic cases have occurred all over the south-west, which prompted the National Farmers Union to commission a study into the problems associated with badgers and bovine TB, and the effects of the badger population on the environment and agricultural operations. That excellent paper makes clear the need for better management of the badger population, not only in the interests of farming and animal health but for the long-term welfare of badgers. The foreword to the NFU study spells out the background.

The study was undertaken following reports of concern among farmers about the link between bovine tuberculosis and badgers in certain areas of the country, particularly the south-west. Although the vast majority of farmers wish to see healthy badgers in reasonable numbers, some are anxious about the increase in numbers and their effect on the natural environment, to the extent that it has a knock-on effect on agricultural operations, including hazards to humans and machinery. More than 90 per cent. of the farmers surveyed felt that badger numbers should be managed where appropriate. While I acknowledge and appreciate the concern of wildlife groups, their desire totally to protect badgers is likely to expose the creatures to an endemic infection with bovine TB.

The NFU believes that clear, objective thinking is needed, supported by facts, and that solutions must be found—that is the aim of the study. The study makes a number of recommendations, which I know my hon. Friend the Minister and her team will consider carefully. She knows only too well that the farming community wishes to support the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in all sensible measures.

The report makes it clear that MAFF is in a difficult position, not least because of public ignorance of the facts, and an instinctive desire among the general public and certain hon. Members to regard badgers as a special category and to find any excuse they possibly can for not taking action which we all know in our heart of hearts must be taken. That ignores the massive problems that are created not only for farmers and public health but for the badger population as a whole.

I cannot stress strongly enough that we are not in the business, as someone said this week, of disposing of the badger population or removing their protection. But where badgers have TB, something must be done, and it must be more than is currently being done. We can all help to get information through to the general public. The president of the NFU should circulate the study paper to Members of Parliament and to all candidates in rural seats, asking them totally to support its recommendations.

It is not that I have a suspicious mind, but it might be helpful if that support were given to the president of the NFU in writing rather than orally, so that we may avoid point scoring on party lines and be able to work together to solve a major problem which can only grow and become more dangerous for all our rural communities in the years ahead.

As we all know, the vast majority of people are far more attracted to and concerned about badgers than about cattle and the welfare of our agricultural industry. As we are only 15 or 18 months away from a general election, it is only natural that people should try to hold back from committing themselves to a course which they know to be right. Anyone who attended the seminar so kindly arranged by my hon. Friend the Minister the other day, where all the evidence was given by people who were experts in their field, who tried not to bamboozle or persuade us into a course of action but to deal with facts, will have been left with no doubt that there is a clear link, and it is somewhat disreputable for anyone to back off afterwards from any commitment to more positive action.

I hope that the Minister—and the NFU—will continue to urge all of us to take whatever action is necessary in the coming months to ensure that the present awful trend is reversed. If we do not, and if we go on for another five years at the current rate, our dairy herds will be decimated and there will be not 250,000 but more than 1 million badgers and the large number infected might then become a cause of genuine concern to every person in the country.

2.44 pm

The Minister for Food (Mrs. Angela Browning): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, West (Sir J. Spicer) for initiating this debate on a subject in which I know he takes a strong interest.

Although it is obvious from the figures that the disease has increased in recent years, it has stabilised, and fewer new cases were reported in south-west England to the end of September 1995 than in the same period in 1994.

Sir Jim Spicer: I apologise for intervening so early, but might there be a direct link between the drought this year and that fall-off in numbers? We know that most people would expect, and do believe, that the disease is transmitted through urine on grass.

Mrs. Browning: My hon. Friend is right to mention that. During our studies of that matter, especially in the south-west, we shall try to take account of all factors, including my hon. Friend's suggestion, when considering the overall trend in those figures. I was simply describing the position as we consider it to be this year.

It is incorrect to say, as some people have, that the disease is out of control and that there is a continuing acceleration in new cases.

However, I am worried about the impact of the disease, which is why I have started a series of informal consultations to explain the range of action that we are taking and to help us consider whether there is anything more that we can do. That began with a seminar, which my hon. Friend mentioned, for Members of the House with a specific constituency interest in the disease. I followed that up with a meeting with the National Farmers Union, which has presented me with the very useful document that my hon. Friend mentioned, setting out its ideas on the problem, which I am now studying.

We are trying to bring together everyone who is genuinely interested in the subject to discover whether any further measures may be taken to make us more effective in the way in which we tackle the problem that my hon. Friend rightly brings to the Floor of the House.

As a Member of Parliament representing a constituency in the south-west, I am aware of the serious problems that confront many farmers when they have outbreaks of disease. However, there is public anxiety in many quarters about the Ministry policy of trapping and killing a protected species, the badger.

I make two important arguments. First, there is clear scientific consensus that the badger plays an important role in transmitting tuberculosis to cattle. That is the opinion of scientists in the United Kingdom and in the Irish Republic who have studied the issue. In places in England and in Ireland where badger clearance operations were undertaken, there is a marked decrease in TB in cattle. My right hon. Friend rightly identified that in his part of the country.

Despite suggestions to the contrary in the media, many of our critics who are active scientists in that field accept that badgers can infect cattle. What they criticise is the effectiveness of our current control policies to break that link.

I must tell hon. Members of the House who have associated themselves with the opinion that badgers are innocent victims of cattle TB that science is not on their side. I am sorry that there is no representative of the Labour party or the Liberal Democratic party in the Chamber. Labour Members have put their names and signatures to early-day motions that do not recognise the science of the subject. Liberal Democratic Members of Parliament in the south-west have rightly felt it necessary to bring that subject to the House of Commons, but then have gone away and tried to sit on the fence—neither fish nor fowl—not saying what future action they prefer or even acknowledging the science as we have presented it.

The second important point that I should like to make clear, and which my hon. Friend also mentioned, is that we do not have a policy of killing badgers. We have a policy of removing the source of infection of bovine tuberculosis, which is a very serious disease of cattle, and indeed of people, although the general population is not now at risk from bovine TB, because of milk pasteurisation and meat inspection. The Government cannot ignore the problem; we must take action to eliminate infection in cattle, and in some cases, particularly in the south-west, that cannot be done unless the related source of infection in badgers is tackled.

We hear a great deal about the killing of badgers, and I regret that it is necessary, but to put the matter in perspective, I should say that, last year in Great Britain, we killed 2,773 cattle because of TB. My hon. Friend mentioned Tyneham, where cattle had to be slaughtered in large numbers. The figure of 2,773 cattle compares with the killing of 1,683 badgers—considerably fewer. The interesting statistic for those who may think that the badger is an endangered species—it is not—is that, over the same period, considerably more badgers will have been killed in road accidents in Britain, out of a total population estimated at around 250,000. We estimate that about one quarter of the British badger population resides in south-west England, and we recognise that important regional aspect.

Badger control operations are undertaken only after an exhaustive epidemiological investigation by a veterinarian has implicated badgers in the breakdown. In areas where there is no recent history of badger-related TB, no action is taken against badgers unless it is specifically sanctioned by an independent sub-committee of the consultative panel on badgers and bovine tuberculosis, which considers the evidence in each case before reaching a decision.

We do not take action against badgers lightly, but only where there is a clear link. I have made that point at some length, because I believe that the stringency of the examination before any action is taken against badgers is not always well understood. Equally, it is not always well understood just how devastating the impact of a TB breakdown on a farm can be. My hon. Friend mentioned several cases in Dorset that have been drawn to his attention and, as a west country Member of Parliament, I have seen at first hand just how serious the problem can be.

I am not talking simply about loss of profit and economics: I am talking about families being subjected to severe and sustained stress over a long period, particularly when the herd breaks down for a second, third or even fourth time.

I bow to no one in my desire to protect and respect wildlife, but I wish that those who are concerned about the taking of badgers were also concerned about the anguish—I make no apologies for using that word—of the farming families who are hit by the disease. I would find it difficult to walk away from the problem, as those who would support a cessation of badger control seem prepared to do.

I made it clear at the beginning of my speech that I was in the middle of a consultation period. I do not want to pre-empt that consultation by making any firm commitments today, but we did introduce, on a trial basis in 1994, a new policy based on the use of a serological test—the "live test"—for TB in badgers which was developed following a recommendation of Professor Dunnet's report in 1986. That test allows us to identify setts in which badgers test positive for tuberculosis; thereafter, we kill the badgers from those setts only.

In the trial using that test, we are extending the badger control area beyond the farm with the disease breakdown to the neighbouring area, to include the whole territory used by the particular social group of badgers involved. We are assessing the impact of that wider programme against the current policy which is based on the trapping of badgers only on the breakdown farm. It was made clear at the seminar for hon. Members in 1993, which was organised by my predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames), that it would be a five-year trial.

The new policy was introduced in the winter of 1994 after a number of pilot projects earlier that year. Therefore, we are only in the early stages of the trial. I have to put it on record that I entirely reject the suggestions from some hon. Members, especially the hon. Member for North Cornwall (Mr. Tyler), that the new strategy has already failed. I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman is not here today, as he has expressed an interest in the subject. However, his response to what is being done was extremely negative, and certainly did not move in any way towards finding a solution to the problem. His statement showed only a complete lack of

[Mrs. Browning]

understanding of the issues. In Cornwall in particular, it is a matter of extreme concern to the farmers affected.

While the trial is in progress, we are continuing to apply the old interim strategy on farms outside the trial area or not eligible for the trial where there is a badger-related outbreak.

The long-term solution to the TB problem may lie in the development of a vaccine for badgers. My hon. Friend was quite correct to say that, although we are conducting a great deal of research into the matter, we are a long way from finding a solution.

Obviously, in respect of a wild animal species, it is not simply a matter of finding a vaccine that works; one has also to consider the method of delivery in the wild and make sure that one targets the right species so that something beneficial to one species in the wild will not be harmful to another. Developing such a vaccine will necessarily be rather a long haul, but we are putting resources into research and we are working hard to find a vaccine capable of being delivered in the field. That may take some 10 or 15 years.

We are consulting. We are concerned about the effect on the farming community whose herds have a breakdown of bovine tuberculosis. I intend to listen carefully to all interested parties. I hope that I shall have the support of all hon. Members who have personally experienced in their constituencies the devastation that the problem can cause.

As my hon. Friend rightly pointed out, we are all used to the cut and thrust of party political debate in the Chamber, but there are some issues—and I believe that this is one—where we need to address the science and find practical solutions to a difficult problem. I hope that all parties will unite in their support of what we are doing to seek a solution, to help the farming community and address a difficult problem.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at three minutes to Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Monday 6 November 1995

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

SOCIAL SECURITY

Incentives to Work

1. **Dr. Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what incentives to work will be included in his reforms of unemployment benefits. [39682]

The Secretary of State for Social Security (Mr. Peter Lilley): A key theme of my reforms has been helping people to move back into work. I recently introduced an extra £10 per week in family credit for those working 30 hours or more and I have announced the jobseeker's allowance, the back-to-work bonus and the pilot earnings top-up scheme to make work more worth while for unemployed people without dependent children and with limited earning power. The eight areas in which we plan the pilot are published today and the draft rules of the scheme have been placed in the Vote Office.

Dr. Spink: I welcome my right hon. Friend's announcement of the areas in which he intends to pilot the earnings top-up scheme. Will he use pilot schemes whenever possible, as they represent an excellent way to introduce new schemes? Will he contrast the Government's excellent and very measured reforms in social security with those of Labour and with Labour's announcement this week that it will consider reforms at any cost? Will he reflect on what that cost might be?

Mr. Lilley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his welcome for the earnings top-up pilot and for the principle of piloting. He is right to say that we have been reforming the welfare state systematically, spelling out our principles and our policies, testing them in practice and inviting public debate. That is in clear contrast with the Labour party, which if today's news reports are to be believed—we await confirmation from the Opposition Front Bench—has torn up its entire stance on social security for the third time—a triple U-turn on the part of the Leader of the Labour party.

Mr. Frank Field: Does the Secretary of State accept that he is now the main recruiting sergeant to the dependency culture against which the Government so often rail? Does he appreciate that, by limiting the jobseeker's allowance to six months, he is providing an incentive for the wives of the unemployed to join the dole queue as well? And does he agree that the most important way of helping people back into work and ensuring a more equal household income level in Britain would be to reverse that reform which so penalises working wives that they find it profitable to give up work and join their husbands on the dole?

Mr. Lilley: No, I do not accept the hon. Member's point, if only because we are extending from 16 to 24 the hours that partners of unemployed people can work so as to give them added incentive to stay in work. Family credit often acts as a bridge when one partner is out of work. All the studies show that many people leave family credit because they are unable to stay in work during that period. The spouse then returns to work, so both partners are working.

Mr. Jenkin: Does my hon. Friend agree that the introduction of incentives to help people off benefit is among the most important tasks of his Department? Will he also reflect on the fact that, unless those reforms reduce the overall cost of social security, we shall still be moving in the wrong direction, and that the Labour party's determination to tear up the report of the Commission on Social Justice and go further can mean only that Labour is determined to spend more money than ever?

Mr. Lilley: We are awaiting clarification from the Labour party. The Commission on Social Justice proposed £7 billion additional spending financed by an equivalent amount of extra income tax raised through the abolition of allowances. We are now told that that was not radical enough, but we are not sure in what direction. My hon. Friend is right to say that helping people back to work is a key part of what we are doing and one of the Government's great success stories.

Widow's Payment

2. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security in what circumstances the widow's payment will be uprated. [39685]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Social Security (Mr. Oliver Heald): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State continues to keep the level of the widow's payment under review.

Mr. Flynn: Why is the widow's payment, which replaced a payment that was uprated annually, still stuck at £1,000, when, if it had been increased in line with earnings, it would now be £1,881? Why is the maternity payment still £100, when it should be £141? Meanest of all, the additional payment to pensioners over the age of 80 should by now be £3.55, but it is still a miserable 25p. Will the Minister make it clear that any handouts to the super-rich in the Budget will be paid for by continuing to cheat the poor, the elderly, the sick and widows?

Mr. Heald: As the hon. Gentleman knows, I do not entirely accept his figures. The widow's payment is a tax-free lump sum, paid to help widows to adjust to new circumstances and, importantly, it is payable immediately. It complements the widow's pension and widowed mother's allowance, which have been uprated annually.

The Labour party seems to be having another look at welfare and social security issues. The hon. Gentleman, who is a senior Back Bencher, once said that, when he became Prime Minister, things would change in a very different way. Perhaps he would like to give his advice to Labour Front Benchers. As it would cost £1.7 billion to implement the upratings that he wants—equivalent to a penny on income tax—perhaps Labour Front Benchers will tell us whether this is the latest move in the Labour party's abandonment of sensible economic policy.

Charitable Donations

3. **Mr. Charles Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will review his policy in respect of the withdrawal of benefits from people in receipt of charitable donations. [39686]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Social Security (Mr. Roger Evans): As with all policy, the treatment of charitable donations when calculating entitlement to an income-related benefit is kept under continual review.

Mr. Kennedy: I thank the Minister for that reply. He will be aware that my question is prompted by an earlier written question to him, transferred to the Benefits Agency, concerning an adjudication made in respect of a local charity, the Chelsey Austin appeal fund. That has now been satisfactorily resolved, and I pay tribute to the local newspaper, *The Press and Journal*, for the important role that it played in drawing attention to the unfairness involved. As there are implications for Scottish trust law and for the calculation of capital for charities of this kind, will the Minister confirm that such information will be made widely available throughout Scotland, so that such an error does not recur?

Mr. Evans: The simple answer to the last part of the hon. Gentleman's question is yes. Unfortunately, in the case that he raised there was a technical defect: the adjudicating officer had not noticed that Parliament has passed an Act this Session altering the requirements for a Scottish trust to be in writing. We value the special provisions relating to charitable arrangements when calculating entitlement to income-related benefits. The trust to which the hon. Gentleman refers is a classic example of special arrangements, made locally, to provide medical and other special equipment.

Benefit Take-up

4. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what efforts he is making to encourage the take-up of benefits. [39687]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Social Security (Mr. Andrew Mitchell): The Department is involved in a wide range of national and local initiatives to ensure that accurate and accessible information is available. These are often undertaken in conjunction with local interest and advice groups, including in the hon. Gentleman's constituency.

Mr. Banks: I am obliged to the Minister. I am as opposed to social security fiddling as anyone in this House, but I am equally opposed to income tax fiddling—some of which takes place not a million miles from this House. Will the Minister explain why, according to the Department, a total of £2.73 billion-worth of benefits went unclaimed in 1992, including £12 million-worth in my borough alone? What is the Minister doing to ensure a proper take-up of social security benefits by those entitled to them? And why do we have figures only for 1992? How much was unclaimed in 1994, and what is the Minister doing about it?

Mr. Mitchell: The hon. Gentleman should bear in mind the scale of the figures: £9 out of every $10 is claimed. It is the Government's job to provide benefits and to provide information about them. That is done in a variety of ways—including, as I said, in the hon. Gentleman's constituency, where a video has been made to encourage benefit take-up. It was launched in July and I had the opportunity to watch it last weekend. It is helpful and is being requested by benefit offices all over the country. We put information about benefits across in a wide variety of ways and spend about £26 million per year advertising them.

Asylum Seekers

5. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement about social security payments to asylum seekers. [39688]

Mr. Lilley: I have put forward proposals on social security payments to asylum seekers and to other persons from abroad. The proposals are intended to reduce the number of unfounded asylum applications made in the United Kingdom, and to ensure that those entering this country on the understanding that they will not be a burden on the taxpayer cannot gain access to the benefit system just by submitting an asylum claim. Those proposals are with the Social Security Advisory Committee which, following public consultation, will report with recommendations in December.

Mr. Marshall: While everyone in this country welcomes the assistance given to genuine asylum seekers, many people are appalled at the way in which this country has become the soft touch in Europe. Does my right hon. Friend accept that at least £300 million of taxpayers' money goes to asylum seekers—such as Mr. Abdelkader Benouif, who is helping the police with their inquiries into a mass bombing campaign in Paris? Should not such individuals be sent packing from this country instead of being subsidised by the taxpayer?

Mr. Lilley: I confirm my hon. Friend's point about the scale of expenditure on would-be asylum seekers. I cannot comment on individual cases, but under the changes that I propose it would no longer be possible to extend one's stay in this country almost indefinitely by making appeals against refusal to grant asylum. After a rejection, any further appeal would have to be made without resort to benefits—in the same way as a British citizen who is refused income support does not continue to receive that benefit pending the appeal.

Mr. Gerrard: As the law gives a right of appeal, is it sensible to put people on to the street? Appeals can take a year or 18 months to be heard. What are people supposed to live on during that time? If an appeal is successful—and people do win appeals—will the benefit be backdated to the point at which it was withdrawn?

Mr. Lilley: The hon. Gentleman cannot have been listening. In respect of appeals, we are putting asylum seekers in the same position as British citizens who are refused benefit—who do not continue to receive benefits while appealing against refusal. It would be odd to continue the present situation indefinitely. I look forward to hearing whether the Labour party intends to oppose our changes. So far, Labour has refused to reply to my letter asking for its position on that issue.

Benefit Fraud

6. **Mr. Nigel Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what initiatives have been taken to target those who fraudulently claim benefit. [39689]

Mr. Lilley: I announced in July my new strategy to move from detection to prevention and deterrence of fraud and abuse. The plan includes extra checks on benefit claims, matching of information on the Department's computers and the introduction of benefit payment cards in place of order books and giro cheques, starting next year. Over a five-year period, those activities will shift the focus of anti-fraud effort from detection and investigation to prevention and deterrence.

Mr. Evans: Does my right hon. Friend agree that stealing and fiddling benefits are appalling acts which cost the country hundreds of millions of pounds? The country will welcome my right hon. Friend's initiatives—particularly those which use new technology, the benefit payment card and the fraud hotline. When I visited the social security office in Preston a few months ago, I met someone who was working hard to crack down on fraud in my constituency. Will my right hon. Friend take the opportunity to pay tribute to all staff throughout the country who are dedicated to cracking down on benefit fraud, sometimes at personal danger to themselves?

Mr. Lilley: I certainly pay tribute to the work successfully carried out—particularly by officials in my Department—to detect and prevent fraud. Last year, the amount of fraud prevented by the Benefits Agency as a result was a record of more than £700 million. Obviously we want to move to prevention and deterrence in the future, and I am grateful for my hon. Friend's support.

Ms Lynne: Although I welcome any clamp-down on benefit fraud, may I ask the Secretary of State to tell the House why the Conservative Government stopped home visits in the 1980s? Can he further tell the House what he will do to make the Benefits Agency more efficient? Is he aware that £540 million was lost last year in over-payments of income support, the majority of which were due to official error?

Mr. Lilley: I seem to recall that the change in policy occurred during the Lib-Lab Government, at the behest of the International Monetary Fund, which demanded the immediate removal of a large number of bureaucrats. However, we are looking forward, not backward, and we are introducing these changes to improve the position and to clamp down on fraud. I agree with the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett), who has criticised his own party for going slow on the effort against fraud and said that the Labour party has been linked to freeloaders for too long. I am glad that at long last the Labour party is beginning to support us in the changes that we are making.

Mr. Ashby: I am grateful that my right hon. Friend has now realised that benefit fraud is far more widespread and far greater than his Department had hitherto realised, but will he get the fraud officers in his Department to realise that it is a serious crime and that they should concentrate more on prosecuting and convicting offenders than on recovering the money? Can we see the police more involved in benefit fraud inquiries as well?

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend makes an important point. We are successful in securing a conviction when we take a case to the courts—some 95 per cent. of cases result in conviction. It is important that people should realise that they run the risk of conviction, but it is also important to get the money back from those who have wrongfully taken it. Those people may continue to have a lower level of entitlement to benefit, from which deductions can be—and are—made, and we get substantial sums back as a result.

Mr. Wicks: Does the Secretary of State accept that, after 16 long years of talking tough but acting soft, we would welcome a tough clampdown on social security fraud? Does he accept that one of the major reasons for fraud is the failure of social security recipients to declare earnings? Does he agree that we need moral leadership here today and that we have a golden opportunity to implement the Nolan report in full, including the declaration of earnings, so that, when it comes to the poorest—

Madam Speaker: Order. The question is totally outside the question on the Order Paper. We are talking about social security fraud.

Mr. Wicks: If honesty is good enough for the poor, is it not good enough for the House of Commons?

Mr. Lilley: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to his role on the Opposition Front Bench and I have listened with considerable interest to the valuable contributions that he has often made on our topics in the past. I am sure that he will enrich the contributions and that in future they will be in order, but the point that he is making is rather trivial: people should obey the law and the rules—we are in all favour of that.

Social Security Reforms

7. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what assessment he has made of the long-term effect on public spending of the social security reforms that he has announced so far. [39690]

Mr. Lilley: The major reforms that I have announced in the past two years are expected to reduce public spending by £4 billion per year within the next Parliament and £14 billion per year in the longer term.

Mr. Amess: Has my right hon. Friend received any support from any other political party for his important reforms to save money from the social security budget? Can he tell the House how the Labour party will be able to spend an extra £4 billion on social security other than by raising taxes?

Mr. Lilley: I am afraid that I cannot tell my hon. Friend that I have received much support from the Labour party in the process of reforming social security policy. Indeed, it has opposed almost every change that we have introduced. As a result, should there ever—heaven forbid—be a Labour Government, they would start off with a need to find an extra £4 billion per year in the next Parliament, and three times that much in the next century.

We still await some response from the new Opposition spokesman on social security, whose presence—though not, so far, his contribution—I greatly welcome today. I hope that he will tell us whether the inspired stories appearing in almost identical words in all today's newspapers are true—that the Labour leader has effectively torn up the results of the Commission on Social Justice established by his predecessor and has told his new shadow spokesman to start again from scratch—and why he has rejected a report that his own leader said was the most outstanding report since Beveridge.

Mr. Miller: One of the reforms announced by the Secretary of State which he claims will have an impact on public spending is the use of computers—for instance, the link between computers in the Department and those in income tax offices. Does he agree that a precursor to any such reform must be radical extensions of the powers of the Data Protection Registrar?

Mr. Lilley: The elements that we are currently introducing in our computer systems rely on the matching of data already held in the social security system. As the hon. Gentleman suggests, it may be sensible to go further once those systems are in place, but that would have to be squared with the privacy and data protection rules first.

Mr. Thomason: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, in planning public expenditure, his Department should try to concentrate help on those who need it most? Does he believe that that is the policy that he is pursuing?

Mr. Lilley: That is at the heart of what we are doing. We spend a huge sum on social security—£15 per working person every working day—and we must ensure that that huge sum goes where it is most needed. At the same time, we must enable people to make provision for themselves, and we must increase the vitality of the economy so that more and more people secure jobs and are not in need in the first place. We are doing that more successfully than almost any other country on the continent.

Mr. Chris Smith: Is not the real cause of the ballooning social security budget the Government's own economic failure? Is it not true that, despite all the cuts, benefit expenditure has risen by £30 billion since 1979 and the number of people dependent on benefits has doubled during that period? Instead of seeking more and more victims for further cuts—from war pensioners to mortgage payers to single parents—should not the Government bend all their efforts towards creating a thriving, investment-rich economy that will lift people off benefits altogether, and into work?

Mr. Lilley: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to his post as social security spokesman. He has a hard act to follow—that of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), for whose ability and integrity I never hid my admiration. I am confident that the hon. Gentleman will rise to the same heights and earn my equal respect. I am doubly confident as I am a constituent of his during the week and he will be eager to earn my vote.

The hon. Gentleman will, however, have to do rather better than today's question in future. He will have to emulate his predecessor and do his homework. He will then discover that we are being more successful than any other country in reducing unemployment. We have more people in work than any other major country in Europe. The countries that are suffering most from high and rising unemployment are those which are pursuing the very policies that Opposition Front Benchers are dedicated to imposing on this country: a national minimum wage, and the social chapter of the Maastricht treaty—unless they tore that up before lunchtime as well.

State Pension Age

8. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the cost of reducing the age of basic state pension to 60 years. [39691]

Mr. Heald: The annual cost in today's money of reducing state pension age to 60 would be £13.4 billion in 2030.

Mr. Jessel: As £13.4 billion would be equal to nearly 10p in the pound in income tax, would not Labour's proposals amount to an enormous burden on future generations? Why will Labour not come clean about that?

Mr. Heald: My hon. Friend makes an important point. The Commission on Social Justice suggested equalising the state pension age at 65; the Opposition Front Bench then suggested 63; the Labour party conference then suggested 60, at a cost of £13.4 billion. Now that the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) has been given a blank cheque to go out and change all the Opposition's policies, perhaps a state pension age of 56 will be suggested next.

Mr. MacShane: Does the Minister agree with his colleague the Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence, who believes that Members of Parliament should retire at 60, and would he care to name those Ministers who would leave the Government this afternoon?

Mr. Heald: As a young Minister I certainly have no intention of retiring. I think that the hon. Gentleman was pushing his luck.

Poverty

9. **Mr. Sutcliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people are now living below the official poverty line; and what was the figure in 1979. [39692]

The Minister for Social Security and Disabled People (Mr. Alistair Burt): No Government of any political persuasion have ever set an official poverty line. Since 1979, average incomes have risen by more than a third after allowing for inflation. The average incomes of all family types have risen and pensioners' average incomes have increased by some 50 per cent.

Mr. Sutcliffe: Is it not the case that, under the Tory Government, the poor get poorer while the rich get richer, particularly Tory Ministers and Tory Members? Why is it that the poorest 10 per cent. of society have seen their real incomes drop by 17 per cent. while the top 10 per cent. in society have seen their incomes rise by 62 per cent.? Does the Minister think that that is fair?

Mr. Burt: There is no doubt that there has been a great disparity in incomes in recent years. One reason is the number of couples in families who are both working; the other is that there has been wider dispersal of incomes and differentials. As the hon. Gentleman is sponsored by a print union, he will know all about increasing differentials.

Mr. Congdon: Does my hon. Friend agree that the whole concept of a poverty level is a total misnomer, particularly when Opposition Members use it as a moving target and especially when the living standards of all groups have improved significantly over the past 16 years? That is evident from the massive increase in consumer durables among all income groups, including the bottom 10 per cent. Does that not show that the concept of a poverty line is nonsense?

Mr. Burt: The idea that poverty can be defined accurately and translated into benefit levels and minimum wage rates is a political El Dorado. Those are not my words, but those of the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), and they substantiate my hon. Friend's point. It is exceptionally difficult to set such rates. However, studies show that the bottom 10 per cent. by income in the United Kingdom is not a fixed group but moves in terms of expenditure and opportunities. The best thing that can be done is to increase incentives for work and improve job opportunities—and no Government could have done more than we have to do exactly that.

Mr. Denham: Will the Minister confirm that among the poorest people in Britain are the perhaps 600,000 pensioners who live on less than income support rates? Will he also confirm that, in preparing his Department's contribution to pre-election tax bribes, he is banking on those pensioners not claiming the support to which they are entitled? Is Britain now really a country in which pensioner poverty has to pay for the Prime Minister's aim of tax cuts for the wealthy?

Mr. Burt: I welcome the hon. Gentleman and congratulate him on his rise to the Front Bench. He will be aware that, since 1988, reforms to the social security structure have directed £1 billion towards the neediest pensioners—the people about whom he is most concerned. In general, the situation of pensioners is far better than it was in Labour's last years of power. There are far fewer pensioners than ever before in the bottom decile of incomes because of the improvements that have been made to pensions, the additions, and so on. As always, however, the position of the poorest pensioners will remain a matter for concern and care by the Government. We shall have an economy designed to support them rather than one which will fall to ruins, as would be the case if the Opposition followed the plans that they have announced.

Social Fund

10. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the latest assessment in percentage terms of the cost of administration of the social fund. [39693]

Mr. Roger Evans: The cost of operating the social fund in 1993-94 was 41 per cent. of the amount of money paid out and recovered. Since the start of the scheme we have paid loans to the value of £1.5 billion for an outlay of just over one fifth of that amount—£329 million.

Mr. Pike: Would it not be common sense to reduce administration costs from that appalling level of 41 per cent. and give grants to the people most in need, as those on income support who qualify for assistance from the social fund are the most desperately poor people in this country?

Mr. Evans: On a number of occasions, the hon. Gentleman has raised the argument—I understand why he does so—for a system of grants more similar to the old system that the social fund replaced. The difficulty with the old system was that the cost doubled every two years between 1980 and 1986 and that it proved to be inequitable, as 80 per cent. of expenditure was going to 17 per cent. of eligible claimants. The social fund is a real improvement in terms of giving more help by way of loans to more people. The multiplier effect, if I may describe it as such, is about fivefold. It does not follow that the administration costs of a grant scheme, if it is to be administered firmly, need be any less.

Mr. Bradley: Does the Minister not realise that, with half the costs of the social fund being swallowed up in administration, it is the poorest who are not receiving any help at all? Did he read the Family Welfare Association report, which was reported in *The Guardian* last week and which said that 116,000 items of urgent need were turned down last year because people were unable to repay as their benefits were low? Many more people did not even bother to claim because they knew that they could not afford to repay as their benefits were low. Will he urgently review that position to ensure that the poorest in our society are not further punished because of the social fund's administration costs?

Mr. Evans: The figure of half which the hon. Gentleman put to me is wrong; I have given the correct figure. Yes, of course we read and studied the report to which he alluded, but he gave a misleading impression. Only a small proportion of applicants are refused social fund loans on the ground of inability to pay. About half a per cent. of loan decisions were refusals on that ground—that is fewer people. Most of those who were refused on such a ground were already paying back one or more loans from the fund. There must be a reasonable limit to the amount advanced.

Independent Living Fund

12. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to make changes to the independent living fund; and if he will make a statement. [39695]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: We have no plans at present to change the successful arrangements under which the independent living fund enables 16,000 severely disabled people to live in the community at a total annual cost of around £100 million.

Mr. Brown: I am glad to learn that my hon. Friend has no plans to make any changes. Will he take it from me that the independent living fund is a way of giving independence—very much true independence—to disabled people? It has been one of the most successful methods of financing disabled people to go about their own lives. Will he undertake to continue to regard the fund as one of the most prestigious methods of financing true independence among disabled people?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, my hon. Friend is absolutely right. I pay tribute to the interest that he has taken in the funds on behalf of his constituents. During the recess, I visited the funds that are headquartered in Nottingham and attended a meeting of the board of trustees. I pay tribute to its work. It keeps in regular touch with its clients and its administration budget is extremely low, at around 1 per cent.

Disabled People

13. **Mr. Matthew Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what action the Government are taking to tackle discrimination against disabled people. [39696]

Mr. Burt: The enactment of the Disability Discrimination Bill will mean that, for the first time, it will be unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in employment, access to goods, services and premises. There will also be a power to set minimum standards of accessibility for public transport vehicles. A national disability council will be created to advise the Government on the elimination of discrimination. The Bill will represent a huge advance for disabled people.

Mr. Banks: I congratulate my hon. Friend and the Government on the Disability Discrimination Bill, which I hope will complete its passage later this week. Does my hon. Friend agree that, now that the parliamentary debate is over, it is time for all of us who represent disabled people and for disabled people themselves to join him in getting on with the Bill's provisions, for the greater good of those who will benefit the most?

Mr. Burt: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for putting matters in such a way. That is absolutely right. There has been dispute, both inside and outside Parliament, about whether the Bill is the right way forward, but now that we have argued and proved our case, we believe that the Bill represents a substantial advance for disabled people. The efforts of all who really care for that should now be put into ensuring that the Bill's implementation goes smoothly and that the provisions that we have introduced, which create substantial new rights for disabled people, work. I will consult extensively on the basis of the new regulations that will make the Bill work to do exactly that.

Mr. Corbett: Will the Minister rethink his original answer, when he claimed that the Bill would outlaw discrimination in employment against people with disabilities? Are not 96 out of every 100 firms employing 20 or fewer staff free to continue discriminating? How can that be progress, when the fastest growth in jobs is among small firms?

Mr. Burt: As I am sure the hon. Gentleman realises, the point is that 80 per cent. of all employees are covered by the Bill. I do not think that any firm, small or otherwise, that discriminates against disabled people is getting a good deal. Disabled workers have an excellent record of both achievement and attendance at work. The new opportunities in employment being opened up to disabled people will make their continued employment even more secure.

There should be no discrimination. The Bill will help to change attitudes, but what it crucially does that other legislation does not do is to recognise the needs of those who will be supplying employment services to disabled people and create a balance between the needs of those firms and the rightful aspirations and expectations of disabled people. I repeat that 80 per cent. of all employees will be covered by the Bill, which represents the significant advance of which I spoke earlier.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Deregulation

28. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress he has to report on his deregulation initiative. [39712]

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Roger Freeman): We are using the powers of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act, which was passed just over a year ago, to repeal unnecessary United Kingdom primary legislation. I am also visiting the Governments of our European Union partners to build a consensus agreement that we should have fewer but better European regulations.

Dr. Goodson-Wickes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Government's deregulation measures, pioneered by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, have been a great success? However, is it not true that the desire to regulate still lies deep in the socialist soul and that business men, let alone people going about their daily lives, ignore that fact at their peril?

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend and very much agree with him. Nothing is closer to the desire of all true socialists than the early introduction of the social chapter—which I understand is likely to cost, if fully implemented, about £10 billion a year, in addition to the already sizeable social security budget.

Mr. Skinner: Has not the right hon. Gentleman got a cheek talking about deregulation when sitting next to him is the Deputy Prime Minister, who only a few months ago persuaded the Prime Minister to set up another Government unit with civil servants, with a desk diary of £150,000, with two jobs—Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State—and with a personal hairdresser thrown in? If we are to talk about deregulation, let us start with the Treasury Bench—and the sooner, the better.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State is doing an excellent job and will continue to do that job for a long time yet.

Mrs. Lait: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the lottery has had an adverse effect on the betting and gaming industries, especially in tourist towns such as Hastings? What initiatives does he plan to take to level the playing field and deregulate those industries in a responsible manner?

Mr. Freeman: We have already taken a number of steps, principal among which is the order that has been laid before Parliament on the deregulation of off-track greyhound betting. I see that my parliamentary private secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for Falmouth and Camborne (Mr. Coe), is in his place. I do not know whether the House is aware—I was not until earlier today—that he not only owns two greyhounds but has just won the greyhound derby.

Policy Presentation

29. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to improve the presentation of Government policies. [39713]

The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Michael Heseltine): All Ministers must take responsibility for presentation of their Departments' policies. The relevant Cabinet Committee, which I chair, provides a collective forum to discuss presentation.

Mr. Banks: May I say what an excellent job the Deputy Prime Minister is doing in standing in for the Prime Minister? To be fair, it is perhaps not the most intellectually challenging task that he has had to face. I thank him for his great courtesy when he came over to Newham in his capacity as one of the millennium commissioners. I know that he is considering my borough as a site for the millennium exhibition. I am sure that he will use the judgment of Solomon in coming to the right conclusion and ensuring that Newham is chosen. I am not one of those whingers who complains about the squillions that it has cost to set up his Department. I am sure that the taxpayer gets great value for money, and I wish the right hon. Gentleman a very nice day.

The Deputy Prime Minister: The House will recognise new Labour in a new form. If I may so, it is a great improvement on the old version.

Mr. Nigel Evans: Does my right hon. Friend agree that not only is presentation of policy important, but it is important to have the policies there in the first place? To act as a Government involves more than glitzy public relations, red roses and new suits. We need policies that are in the best interests of the British people, not the glitzy PR exercise that we get from the Labour party.

The Deputy Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The fascinating thing about what is happening throughout the world today is that the entire intellectual debate about how to pursue policies for the next century is conducted from the right of politics.

Mr. Simon Hughes: If the electorate are confused about the Government's attitude on whether the House should be entirely independent, is that the fault of Government policy—which does not say that it is clear, following Nolan, that this place should not be bought—or is it a fault of the presentation of Government policy? Does he agree with his junior Minister, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, that, for the past 150 years, the Government have worked on the assumption that Members of Parliament work part time?

The Deputy Prime Minister: During the whole of the past 150 years, it has depended entirely on whether Members of Parliament were employed as Ministers or as Back Benchers. The fact is that they are two quite different jobs. The House itself is sovereign in these matters, as the hon. Gentleman knows.

Competitiveness White Paper

30. **Mr. Merchant:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what responses the Government have received to their second White Paper on competitiveness. [39714]

The Deputy Prime Minister: The White Paper "Competitiveness: Forging Ahead" has been widely welcomed by industry. Major representative bodies such as the CBI, the Engineering Employers Federation and the Chemical Industries Association, as well as many major companies, have all expressed their support.

Mr. Merchant: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for that reply. Does he agree that an essential condition of enhancing competitiveness is greater investment? What are he and the Government doing to encourage that greater investment, especially in the vital manufacturing industry sector?

The Deputy Prime Minister: My hon. Friend gives me the opportunity to reassure him that the Government support very much the point that he has made and are extremely pleased to see that investment intentions in manufacturing for the year ahead are extremely strong. This is in no small measure due to the fact that we have one of the most exciting economic prospects that I can remember and that the economy is growing faster than most other European economies.

Mr. Prescott: Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that five of the six countries that have leapfrogged Britain in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development world prosperity and competitiveness league since 1979 observe a minimum wage, and that two of them have signed the social chapter? Is this yet another example of Government propaganda being out of line with the facts?

The Deputy Prime Minister: No, the House will recognise that one of the most attractive features of the present economic circumstance is the flow of inward investment coming into this country, not just from Asia or north America but from Europe. One of the reasons it is coming is that the Government are committed to not accepting the increased costs of the social chapter. The House will recognise that the Labour party, if it were ever to become a Government, would immediately undermine Britain's extremely attractive competitive position.

Priorities

31. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement about his priorities. [39716]

The Deputy Prime Minister: To promote the competitiveness agenda, the deregulation initiative and the effective administration of the services for which my Department is responsible.

Mr. Arnold: My right hon. Friend will know of the considerable irritation shown by businesses and people about the regulations that pour out in respect of food hygiene and safety. Although the general public support them in principle, the examples in practice cause considerable disquiet. What are the Government doing about it?

The Deputy Prime Minister: My hon. Friend will know that all those regulations are the subject of review, and many have now been announced as repealed or fit for repeal. More than 530 of the recommendations made by Lord Sainsbury's task force have now been accepted. The House will be fully aware of the work that Frances Maude is now doing. He is in charge of the present task force that advises the Government on further progress.

Mr. Derek Foster: Now that senior Tories admit that the Government have been hijacked by the right, is it not clear that, just as many Tory Back Benchers will vote tonight to safeguard their financial interests rather than the interests of Parliament, so the Government have abandoned a national interest to govern in the interests of the Conservative party? Have not the Government only one priority: their survival from day to day?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Those of us who will support what the right hon. Gentleman refers to as the "Government line" will do so because we believe that it is in the best interests of Parliament that the proposals that we put forward should be accepted. We think that the changes in which some Opposition Members believe might result in long-term, permanent damage to the institution of Parliament.

Deregulation

32. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many section 1 orders under the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994 have been laid, and how many are expected to be laid in the next Session of Parliament. [39717]

Mr. Freeman: The Government have laid 13 orders to date, including, for example, measures to assist building societies. Subject to the need not to overload Committees, the Government intend to lay one new order each week while Parliament is sitting and bring measures that help the competitiveness of the United Kingdom economy, especially for smaller enterprises.

Mr. Coombs: May I express some surprise at the novel idea that Committees should not be overloaded? It is a new one on me. Can we not find a way to speed up the rate at which orders are introduced, because they are in the best interests not only of the Government but of people and industry as a whole? What specific orders does my hon. Friend hope to introduce in the next few months?

Mr. Freeman: I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Field), who chairs the House of Commons Deregulation Committee, which has begun on an excellent footing. I also pay tribute to the Deregulated Powers Scrutiny Committee in the other place, which partly looks after the deregulation orders that we lay. I would encourage trade associations and individual companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, to come forward rapidly so that we can consider proposals by them, which might frame orders that we can lay before Parliament to help employment, help lift red tape and bureaucracy from the shoulders of business and industry and therefore increase the competitiveness of the UK economy.

33. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he proposes to take to improve consultation in connection with deregulation proposals. [39718]

The Parliamentary Secretary, Office of Public Service (Mr. John Horam): Consultation takes place on all proposals for deregulation orders. We pay very careful attention to the comments of the Deregulation Committee and the House of Lords Delegated Powers Scrutiny Committee as regards the adequacy of consultation in particular cases.

Mr. Pike: The Parliamentary Secretary will recognise that, certainly in one case, there has been a lack of consultation in terms of both time and the range of people consulted. Will he ensure that, in future, so that the Deregulation Committee does not waste time and those matters can be dealt with properly, every Department carries out adequate consultation in respect of both time and the range of those consulted?

Mr. Horam: I think that the hon. Gentleman refers to the Deregulation (Sunday Dancing) Order, on which his Committee pronounced today. I believe that the report came out today. We pay great attention to what the Committee and the House of Lords Delegated Powers Scrutiny Committee say. The Deregulation (Sunday Dancing) Order is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary, but I take the point that all Cabinet Ministers and others who present regulation orders should take account of the length of consultation, and I shall ensure that that is done.

34. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what initiatives he has to formulate further deregulation. [39719]

Mr. Freeman: With the help of the deregulation task force, we continue to identify changes to existing rules and regulations to reduce the burdens that they impose, without removing necessary protections. We want business and industry to identify regulations which they believe need to be simplified or repealed.

Mr. Marshall: Does my right hon. Friend accept that, when the rest of the industry competes with the national lottery, it is handicapped by over-regulation? May we have an assurance that it will be allowed to compete on equal terms?

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for referring to the lottery, which has been an enormous success, and raised well over £1 billion for good causes. As for betting regulations, in April 1995, we relaxed the restrictions on facilities in betting shops. We are now planning to bring forward a deregulation order to allow amusement with prizes machines in betting shops. I hope that that will be welcomed by the industry.

Mr. Flynn: In considering further deregulation, has the Minister read the report of the Transport Select Committee on what have become known as roll-on, roll-over ferries? Is he not concerned at the unanimous view of the Committee that that form of public transport is the only one that does not fail safe, but fails dangerously and lethally? Is it not the case that those ferries do not require to be subject to deregulation but need new regulation to ensure public safety?

Mr. Freeman: The hon. Gentleman will not expect me to comment specifically on ferries, but I agree with him that there are many cases where we need better regulation for the protection of the consumer, the passenger or whoever. I am addressing regulation that is unnecessary, and perhaps outmoded. By lifting that burden from business and industry, we can increase competitiveness.

I will certainly draw the question of the hon. Gentleman to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport.

Cabinet Office Staff

35. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what is the current staffing level of the Cabinet Office; and if he will make a statement. [39720]

Mr. Horam: By convention, the Office of Public Service, the Cabinet Office and CCTA, the Government Centre for Information Systems, are treated as one group, and staff currently number 1,298. That includes a large number of functions such as support for the Government Whips Office and the Opposition Whips Office.

Mr. Greenway: Does my hon. Friend accept that the country is deeply impressed by the work of the Cabinet Office, save, in some respects, perhaps for the Opposition Whips Office? There is no doubt, however, that the money spent in the Cabinet Office is well spent, and the country is rightly grateful.

Mr. Horam: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. It is good to hear those comments. It is also good to notice that the number of staff at the Department has declined since the reshuffle. We are definitely getting value for money.

Mr. MacShane: Has the Parliamentary Secretary read the excellent article by Sarah Hogg in the excellent new magazine "Prospect", in which she reveals that five Cabinet Ministers have no departmental duties, and do not have a job, except to poke their noses into the work of other hard-working Ministers? Would a sensibly run company allow a quarter of its executive board to have no real job but just to mess up other people's jobs? Should not the hon. Gentleman put the aging lion, his boss, out to grass as soon as possible?

Mr. Horam: The lack of departmental responsibilities does not, of course, apply to the Deputy Prime Minister, whose departmental responsibilities we have discussed today. I cannot comment otherwise on Sarah Hogg's article.

Executive Agencies

36. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what evidence he has of improved efficiency in agencies established under the next steps programme. [39722]

Mr. Horam: The best evidence of agency performance is in their individual annual reports. Overall, agencies achieved 80 per cent. of their targets in 1993-94, and we are working on the 1995 next steps review, which will for the first time show trend data on agencies' performance and the savings from their competing for quality programmes. Agencies are making a significant contribution to the £544 million savings identified through the Government's competing for quality programme.

Mr. Jessel: As Historic Royal Palaces is an agency in the programme, will my hon. Friend join me in welcoming last week's decision by Hampton Court palace to stop charging the £1.70 entrance fee to the newly restored privy gardens to local residents from Twickenham, Teddington, the Hamptons, Richmond, Kingston and Elmbridge? That decision is the result of three meetings that I was able to convene.

Mr. Horam: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I think that a sensible compromise was reached in that particular case, which was not least due to his magnificent efforts over many months. Given my hon. Friend's interest in musical instruments, he will also have noticed that Hampton Court was used as the backdrop for the Purcell opera that was broadcast on BBC television on Saturday night.

Mr. Connarty: Surely the Parliamentary Secretary cannot be happy with the performance of one agency, the Child Support Agency. The latest report on it shows that in 25 per cent. of cases it failed to get things right, and everyone knows that in 100 per cent. of cases it causes massive distress.

Mr. Horam: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman did not get in on Social Security questions, which just preceded these. That would have been an appropriate question to ask then.

Visit to Basildon

37. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his visit to Basildon on 3 November. [39724]

The Deputy Prime Minister: As always when I visit Essex, I had a most enjoyable and stimulating visit.

Mr. Amess: Following my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's highly successful visit to my constituency on Friday, will he join me in congratulating the people from a huge number of businesses who turned up to listen to his speech? Will he congratulate those people on their success in selling their goods and services, throughout not only the United Kingdom but Europe?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I very much support the spirit of what my hon. Friend said. I found in Basildon last Friday a typical example of a very large number of extremely successful companies taking advantage of the economic recovery.

Yitzhak Rabin (Tribute)

3.30 pm

The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Michael Heseltine): I am sure that all Members of the House will join me in expressing deep sorrow at the tragic death of Yitzhak Rabin.

As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said yesterday, no one has done more for peace in the middle east. Under Rabin's leadership, Israel took the historic decision to pursue land-for-peace and to cease her rule over the Palestinian people. That was a difficult decision, but a right and a brave one. The success of the peace process so far with the Palestinians, and with Israel's neighbours, is very much his achievement and his memorial.

Rabin was a hero for Israel in war and in peace. We join the people of Israel, and Jewish people everywhere, in mourning that great loss.

Britain has every confidence that the peace process will continue under the leadership of Shimon Peres. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary is touring the middle east this week, to reaffirm our support for the peace process and to encourage the countries that he visits to do the same.

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): On behalf of the Opposition, I echo the Deputy Prime Minister's words in paying tribute to Yitzhak Rabin.

Yitzhak Rabin was a brave soldier, an outstanding leader and a great statesman. The House extends its condolences to his wife Leah and their family at this time of personal grief, and to the whole Jewish community. We share in the universal shock and disbelief that a man so committed to the cause of peace could be taken from us in such a terrible and violent manner.

Yitzhak Rabin took huge personal and political risks in leading Israel down the path to peace, and he paid the ultimate price; without Yitzhak Rabin, the peace process would not have happened. He was a national hero—trusted, respected and admired. Only Rabin, as a military man, could exchange the battlefield for the conference table. He put away his gun and shook hands with his enemy.

Yitzhak Rabin has laid the foundations for a lasting peace between Israel and her neighbours. There is surely no greater testament to the determination of the peoples of that troubled region to live together than the fact that so many Arab dignitaries were among the world leaders attending his funeral today.

The opportunity for peace in the middle east must not, and will not, be lost because of an assassin's bullet. The world will remember Yitzhak Rabin's last words, at Saturday's rally for peace in Tel Aviv:

> "I was a military man for 27 years. I waged war as long as there was no chance for peace. I believe there is now a chance for peace, a great chance, and we must take advantage of it".

Israel has lost a distinguished Prime Minister and the world has lost a great worker for peace. May his last words guide those he has left behind and strengthen the peace that he gave his life for.

Sir Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): I join my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister and the deputy Leader of the Opposition in paying tribute to the late Prime Minister of Israel. I got to know him at the time of the six-day war as a soldier and then during his first period as Prime Minister. He always commanded the utmost respect. One admired his integrity and his straightforwardness and one always knew that one could trust him in what he said. It is a great blow to Israel.

It was Yitzhak Rabin's brilliant service as a soldier that later led him into politics and his experience in war led him to work in such a determined way for peace. There is much to be learned from that: those who have prominent positions in war are not, afterwards, those who want still more war. They are the people who want peace.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): On behalf of my right hon. and hon. Friends, I should like to add our expression of sorrow and grief at the death of Yitzhak Rabin. He was a man in whom there was the rare union of physical heroism, moral courage and excellent intellectual judgment—a combination rarely found anywhere, let alone in politicians, soldiers and diplomats. Although he was an elderly man when he died, he nevertheless managed to inspire a young generation of Jews, particularly Jews living in Israel. He will be sorely missed on the world and domestic stage.

Mr. Douglas Hurd (Witney): Perhaps I may add a word to what has already been, worthily, said. A man of war became a man of peace, not because he lost courage, but because he built a new courage on what he had already achieved. In Israel and in London, I watched Yitzhak Rabin build that new dimension to his life. He kept the directness, the frankness, the self-discipline of a military man, but used those talents for success in peace rather than war. His concern was for Israel's safety, not his own safety.

Although it is nothing to do with me, I hope that there will not be too much investigation into the arrangements for Yitzhak Rabin's personal security. For a democratic politician in such a position, the risks are great. He deliberately and rightly ran those risks—for such men, there is no such thing as total security.

Wars nowadays tend to be quick in their results; they are achieved in days or even hours. Peacemaking is long, slow and tortuous; the peacemakers are open to doubts, criticism and assaults of all kinds, as Yitzhak Rabin found. Those who inherit his task will inherit those risks; they have to carry on where he left off. What has been achieved must not be allowed to unravel. I do not think that there is any single task that is more important in the world today.

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): I knew Yitzhak Rabin for nearly 30 years and I came to admire and respect his integrity and, at the same time, his flexibility. When, at the beginning of the Palestinian intifada, I suggested to him that the time should come for the Israeli Government to have discussions with the Palestine Liberation Organisation, he at first said that that was not possible. He eventually came to agree that it must be done because, as he said to me when I put the question to him, not only had he never expected the west bank territories that he had conquered as Chief of Staff in 1967 to be retained for a generation by the Israelis, but he did not want those territories to be retained and he did not want his young men in the army to risk their lives to retain them.

Yitzhak Rabin would want two things in particular to be placed on record. First, he was a committed socialist who came up in politics through a left-wing affiliate of the Israeli Labour movement, the Achdut Ha'avoda. He was not a chance soldier who happened into politics; he was a complete politician throughout. Secondly, as he put it to me on a number of occasions, he loathed fundamentalist fanaticism. In the past two days, we have seen that Jewish fundamentalist fanaticism can be as evil as Muslim fundamentalist fanaticism. As a Jew, Rabin always knew and acknowledged that fact.

Those of us who love the state of Israel—and I am one who does—must regard it as our duty to work with the majority of good, decent people in Israel in order to extirpate that fanaticism from their country and restore it to total democracy. I think that Rabin would want that, just as I know that he would want the peace process to be brought to a conclusion.

Mr. Winston Churchill (Davyhulme): As one who first met Yitzhak Rabin during the six-day war and later during the Yom Kippur war, I join in the tributes that have been paid to a great Israeli patriot, a distinguished soldier and a great statesman. Valiant in war, he was courageous in peace and, for that, he paid with his life.

Through you, Madam Speaker, we convey to our fellow democracy, the state of Israel, the deep feelings of the entire Parliament and of the nation at what has befallen Israel. As a true democrat, Yitzhak Rabin shunned the added security that is all too often interposed between leaders and the electors and he paid for that risk-taking with his life. The greatest memorial that could be erected to him is the continuation of the peace process, and we wish Shimon Peres, the people of Israel and the people of the middle east well in their endeavour.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): To us all, Yitzhak Rabin epitomised a great statesman, leader, soldier and champion of peace. But he was much more than that. He fought for a Jewish state before there was one; he was one of the creators of Israel. He led the in-gathering of the exiles, bringing people—the survivors of the Holocaust—into Palestine and then Israel. Some of us remember how lonely the world was for Jewish people when there was no Jewish state. When that state was established, Yitzhak Rabin led its defence again and again.

Yitzhak Rabin's people trusted him, but his vision was not of war but of peace. Those who knew him know that his vision grew with his stature and with time. He believed in peace for the people of Israel within a peaceful middle east and a peaceful world. The people trusted him on the battlefield, and most of them trusted him on the democratic path to peace. They trusted him with their security and that of their families, especially their children. That trust enabled Yitzhak Rabin to bring his nation along the road to peace.

For those of us who knew Yitzhak Rabin, he was a genial companion. To me, he was a model and a hero: a man who symbolised service to his nation, whatever the risk to himself. It is almost exactly a year since I joined him in Oslo, where he received the Nobel peace prize. In a tranquil half hour, he unwound with a series of cigarettes, saying how weary and how tough the trail to peace was, but how he was determined never to leave it.

I know that all hon. Members join me in sending a message of profound sympathy to Leah Rabin and to her family. To our colleagues in the Knesset—because Israel is one of the rare democracies in that part of the world—to acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who now must bear a double burden, and to his wife, Sonia, who knows that the assassin would not have stopped at Rabin if he had had the chance, we say, in the biblical language of Israel, "Anachnu itchem betsara hameshutaf"—we are with you in a sorrow that we all share.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): As chairman of the British-Israel parliamentary group, I should like on behalf of all its members to be associated with the tributes paid to Mr. Rabin.

Since Saturday, the world has been overcome by shock and sadness at the loss of a statesman and a sense of irony that one who sought peace should have been gunned down so brutally.

Yitzhak Rabin's entire life was devoted to the state of Israel. As a young man, he was a member of the Haganah and fought in the war of independence. Subsequently, he was Chief of Staff in 1967. Like Moshe Dayan, the old soldier decided to become a man of peace. He recognised that the only long-term security for Israel lay in the eradication of old bitterness and hatred in the middle east.

The assassination of President Sadat did not derail the peace process between Egypt and Israel. Let us hope that the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin does not derail the peace process in the middle east. The best legacy that he can give the world is the continuation of the peace process.

The world has lost a statesman, Israel has lost a great leader and his family has lost a great man. Our hearts, minds and thoughts are with his family and his people. May God be with them today.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): In joining the tributes to Yitzhak Rabin, I send condolences from the parliamentary Labour party to his widow and family and to all the people of Israel. When I heard the news on Saturday, I was stunned and shocked, as were many people in Britain and throughout the world, that a man who believed in peace as much as Yitzhak did has been taken from us.

As has been said, Yitzhak Rabin was a politician first and a military leader second, but as a great military leader in the eyes of the people of Israel, he led them along the path to peace in a way that no one else could have done. It was not the easiest way to take. As a former soldier, he could no longer foresee that Israel would benefit from continued outbreaks of wars or ever have secure frontiers, so he began to work for peace. Some of what has happened cannot be reversed, but there is still a long way to go.

I hope that, in sending this message to the people of Israel, we inspire all those there who followed the lead of Prime Minister Rabin to redouble their efforts to achieve a peace that will bring security not only to the people of Israel, but to all the Arab states that surround it.

Mr. John Butterfill (Bournemouth, West): Almost all nations have at some time a statesman who can come to their aid in their hour of need, but it is rare for a nation to have someone who did so twice—first as a brilliant soldier defending Israel in the six-day war, and subsequently as a statesman who was able to further the peace process as only he could do. Only he could give his people the reassurance that he knew and understood their defence needs, while recognising—as everybody who has visited Israel recognises—that ultimately Israel can be defended only by reaching peace with its neighbours.

[Mr. John Butterfill]

It is a tremendous loss not just for Israel, but for the entire world. I hope that hon. Members will be aware that there is a book of remembrance at the Israeli embassy.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): The sense of desolation and horror that was felt on Saturday night by many of us is difficult to convey. Yitzhak Rabin was a man whom I have known for a long time and, although we speak of statesmen, I think of him as a warm, witty and clever man with a strong sense of commitment. He was a man who understood the needs of Israel at every stage of its development; who fought for it when it was necessary to fight; who was a politician when it was necessary to lead; and who, throughout his career, put Israel first.

I send to my colleagues in the Israeli Labour party and the Knesset my deep condolences and my feeling of utter waste. I strongly believe that the values that Yitzhak Rabin fought for and knew to be paramount will not be allowed to be forgotten; and that, in his name, the future will be a peaceful one for Israel. The people, although they know that they have had reason to fear, were well served by a man of imagination and genius, who will be as sadly missed by his family as by his friends.

Mr. Hartley Booth (Finchley): Many of us have constituents who are now grieving. It is right that we should stand for them and express their grief. Yitzhak Rabin exemplified courage and it is right to praise that. His courage was that of a man who dealt not just with ordinary matters of peace and war, but with deeply entrenched positions that went back centuries. For a man to face those entrenched positions and risk his own life was the epitome of real courage. We praise that in the House today.

When we go back to our constituencies and meet with grief, we should also praise and support the man who will take over from Mr. Rabin, his successor Mr. Peres.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): Yitzhak Rabin was a remarkable man who sought peace and inspired everyone. On behalf of the Scottish National party, I offer our condolences to the people of Israel and the Jewish community throughout the world. Israel's loss is shared by all humanity.

Mr. David Sumberg (Bury, South): On behalf of my constituents of all religious backgrounds and the members of the Manchester Jewish community, I thank my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) and all right hon. and hon. Members for their generous tributes to Yitzhak Rabin. He fought for his country's freedom and died for his country's peace.

Will my right hon. Friend convey to the Government and people of Israel the fact that the people whom I have mentioned and, I hope, all Members of the House, stand with them at this tragic time? The country will come through this hour and, as we remember this weekend those who gave their lives for our freedom and our peace, we will remember Yitzhak Rabin, who did the same for the people and the nation of Israel.

Mrs. Barbara Roche (Hornsey and Wood Green): In 1967, I had started my secondary schooling at the Jewish Free school in Camden Town. I remember the six-day war as a tense period for all of us in the Jewish community, a community of which I am extremely proud to be a part. In our school, there were many children of officials at the embassy of Israel. Many of the older pupils volunteered to fight with the Israeli defence forces, and during those few days we believed that the very existence of Israel was at stake.

I remember what a hero Yitzhak Rabin was to us and to the whole community. At the beginning of the peace process, when we saw the part that he and the Israeli Labour party played in it, my heart and the hearts of many people in the community were full of pride that such events could take place in our lifetime.

My sympathy and the sympathy of many people in my constituency go to Yitzhak Rabin's widow and family. Also, we extend to the Government of Israel our best wishes for the peace process, in the hope that it will continue and succeed. That would be the surest tribute to the memory of a very, very brave man.

Sir Timothy Sainsbury (Hove): My many right hon. and hon. Friends who are, like me, members of the Conservative Friends of Israel, would like to be associated with the many eloquent tributes paid by both sides of the House to a most remarkable and brave soldier and statesman. Those of us who had the privilege of meeting, talking with and hearing Yitzhak Rabin were as convinced as I am that, when he committed himself to the peace process, he was seeking—as he did with dedication throughout his life—the security of the state of Israel. The achievement of that security through the peace process must be Yitzhak Rabin's best and most lasting memorial.

Mr. Mike Gapes (Ilford, South): Reference has already been made to the many right hon. and hon. Members whose constituents will be grieving at this time. Millions of people all over the world will be extremely sad at the events of the weekend.

I met Mr. Rabin in 1991, when the Labour party in Israel was in opposition. I was struck by his total honesty and resilience. The best testimony, and our best hope for the future, is to redouble our efforts in supporting internationally Mr. Rabin's successor and fellow Nobel peace prize winner, Shimon Peres, the people of Israel and the Palestinians in continuing the process of negotiation, dialogue and, we hope, achieving a lasting peace.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Sir E. Heath) referred to Yitzhak Rabin's earlier premiership. My recollection of him goes back to that time, and to his resignation in 1977 over a non-event. Yitzhak Rabin might have retired from politics at that time. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) said, Mr. Rabin had a strong political will, founded on his socialist faith. He also had a strong belief in his country. He made the long trek through the political wilderness until he reached the premiership again, in 1992.

The right hon. Member for Hove (Sir T. Sainsbury) and my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Gapes) mentioned the impression that Mr. Rabin made on those who met him. I remember a conversation that I had with Yitzhak Rabin in 1991, when Scud missiles were falling on Tel Aviv. Mr. Rabin told me of a visit that he had made to Denmark and to the castle of Elsinore—made famous by Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and built to withstand invasions from Sweden, just across the water. Yitzhak Rabin asked his Danish friends, "How long were you at war with Sweden?" They answered, "One hundred years." Yitzhak Rabin knew that it would be a long haul to peace in the middle east, but he knew also that if a journey begins with a single step, the journey to peace had to begin with a single stride.

The hon. Member for Davyhulme (Mr. Churchill) and my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) mentioned that Israel is a democracy. From this democracy and the mother of Parliaments should go the message to Israel that we support her peace process, democracy and people.

Standards in Public Life

3.58 pm

Madam Speaker: We now come to motion Nos. 1 to 4 on the Order Paper which, for the convenience of the House, will be debated together with the amendments that have been selected.

As a number of right hon. and hon. Members wish to speak, I shall have to limit the speeches of Back Benchers to 10 minutes.

Mr. Peter Bottomley (Eltham): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Motion No. 1, on the conduct of right hon. and hon. Members, is basically non-controversial, but there is a possible ambiguity in its wording. I have offered a manuscript amendment, but that is not the best way of dealing with the matter. If there is any doubt about the wording of motion No. 1, perhaps sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii) might come after the words "House shall". That would clear away any possible ambiguity.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Gentleman wrote to me earlier and I have responded to do him, but, of course, he can refer to that matter in the debate—I believe that he wants to be called in the debate. He can make suggestions to me if he wishes, but he knows that I have not selected his manuscript amendment.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I wonder whether I can raise another matter, because the Deputy Prime Minister is here today. It is a matter that I have raised on the Floor with you on a previous occasion, and I believe that it is important for the House of Commons.

You will recall that, on 24 October, I raised with you a question about the difficulties that are being experienced by hon. Members when tabling questions to the Deputy Prime Minister. I wonder whether you have had time during the recent week and a half to consider *Hansard* of 16 October, when the Deputy Prime Minister answered questions from hon. Members. You will notice from the questions that were tabled and the answers that were given, and recognising the responsibilities of the Deputy Prime Minister, that he has responsibility for deregulation, the civil service and market testing. Yet he was answering questions on the EEC budget; he was asked a question about social democracy; he answered questions on the obligations of various European states under European treaties; he also answered a question—

Madam Speaker: Order. I have the gist of what the hon. Gentleman is saying. It is not a question, but it is a point of order. I also recall inviting him to write to me about that matter. To the best of my knowledge, and I think that I am correct, I have not yet had a letter from him. I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman, because of the limited time that we have in the debate, will be good enough to come to his point of order, so that I might be helpful.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I would like you, Madam Speaker, to compare those and other answers that were given by the Deputy Prime Minister with the answers given by his ministerial colleagues, which are specific to questions that are raised by Members of the House of Commons. What I am asking is whether you, in a ruling, will be able to consider the whole matter of what

[Mr. Campbell-Savours]

questions are accepted by the Table Office, while recognising that departmental officials can block those questions after they have been tabled by Members.

If a Minister of the Crown is answering more widely than the questions that have been asked and, indeed, is prepared to accept supplementaries that bear very little relationship to the questions that have been tabled, surely we as Members should have the right to table wider questions, particularly as the right hon. Gentleman insists on calling himself the Deputy Prime Minister of this country.

Madam Speaker: I believe that there is some concern about that matter.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: A lot of concern.

Madam Speaker: As the hon. Gentleman says, a lot of concern. If that is the case, it is obviously a matter for the Procedure Committee. The hon. Gentleman did not write to me, as I invited him to do some time ago. He might set out the matter to the Procedure Committee so that it might look at it if he is not satisfied.

Sir Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. To assist me and possibly others in determining how to vote, could you say whether, in the event of the official Opposition amendment calling for early disclosure being defeated, you would give consideration to a vote on one of two amendments, one of which is in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham), which would call for disclosure after the next election? It would be very helpful to know whether it would be your intention to consider this—

Madam Speaker: What is the amendment number?

Sir Teddy Taylor: Amendment (c), Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Gentleman cannot mean amendment (c).

Let me put this to the House. There are too many possible permutations for me to say at this stage which amendments will be called for Division purposes—particularly when hon. Members do not give me the number of the amendment. If some amendments are successful, others, logically, will fall, and similarly if some amendments are unsuccessful, other amendments will be called for Division. I cannot at this stage, without even being given the number of the amendment, say whether or not it will be called.

Sir Teddy Taylor: It is amendment (c) to motion No. 3, Madam Speaker. I am so sorry. It seems to me that there is a choice—

Madam Speaker: What is the amendment number?

Sir Teddy Taylor: Amendment (c) to motion No. 3, in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East.

Madam Speaker: It is not selected.

Sir Teddy Taylor: So it will not be voted on—

Madam Speaker: The list of amendments is in both Lobbies. I suggest that hon. Members go and look at the list.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. According to column 522 of *Hansard*, on Friday the hon. Member for Barking (Ms Hodge) mentioned my constituency without giving me notice. A notice about the issue was put on the Notice Board today, rather than on Friday. The hon. Member for Barking has a reputation for aiding and abetting child abuse; will you, Madam Speaker, stop her from abusing Members of Parliament? *[Interruption.]*

Madam Speaker: Order. I shall ask the hon. Gentleman to withdraw the remark that he has just made; otherwise I shall use the Standing Order that is available to me.

Mr. Shaw: I was referring, Madam Speaker, to the hon. Lady's reputation outside the House of Commons—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Shaw *rose*—

Madam Speaker: Sit down. I shall give the hon. Gentleman one more opportunity: he will withdraw the charge that he has just made in relation to the hon. Member for Barking (Ms Hodge), or I shall use the Standing Order.

Mr. Shaw: I made no charge, but I shall, if necessary, withdraw—

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman will resume his seat. I am seeking an immediate withdrawal.

Mr. Shaw: I must withdraw, then, what I said earlier about the fact that the hon. Lady has a reputation outside the Chamber—

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman will apologise properly. I have given him three chances. He must stand up and apologise to me, and to the House.

Mr. Shaw: I have withdrawn the comments that I made earlier, Madam Speaker, which were repeated outside the Chamber.

Madam Speaker: I shall not accept the point of order originally raised by the hon. Gentleman until I see the letter that he committed himself to writing to me some days ago. I believe that it was handed to my secretary at 3.40 pm today, and I have not yet had an opportunity to see it.

Mr. Denis MacShane (Rotherham): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I seek your guidance on an entirely different matter.

The House has just paid tribute to Yitzhak Rabin, very movingly, and has spoken for the whole nation. Three hours ago, hon. Members on both sides of the House attended the funeral at Westminster cathedral of Derek Enright, the Member of Parliament for Hemsworth. Your Deputy paid a warm and wonderful tribute to him during the ceremony.

As a relatively new Member, Madam Speaker, may I ask whether you can—either on your own authority or in conjunction with the usual channels—find a mechanism to allow the House, without entering into a lengthy debate, to pay tribute to one of its Members who dies? The tribute would then appear in *Hansard* and would enter into the records of the House; it could be read by the Member's family, friends and colleagues.

I was slightly dismayed last week by the fairly curt announcement that was made—although that was not your fault, Madam Speaker—and by the fact that hon.

Members could not pay tribute to one of their number who had passed on. I wonder whether, under the appropriate procedures—

Madam Speaker: Order. I have got the point. I am enormously sympathetic, but the matter was considered quite recently, and I determined that we should continue with the type of tribute that we have. It is quite important for us to have the tribute that is paid by the Chair when the death of a Member takes place.

Mr. David Wilshire (Spelthorne): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. May I return to the subject of this afternoon's debate? I entirely understand your point about not being able to give guidance at this stage, but, as you know, we are to have a free vote. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] It will be for me; I cannot speak for anyone else.

Normally, Back Benchers such as me leave the sorting out of procedure to the great and the good, but in the event of a free vote those opportunities are not available to us. Before we vote, Madam Speaker, will you be able to explain to people such as me exactly what we are supposed to be doing?

Madam Speaker: Absolutely. When the time comes and the Divisions take place, I shall call out the numbers of the amendments so that every hon. Member knows precisely what Question is being put.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Perhaps I may refer to what happened a few moments ago. Once again the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) has accused a Member of the House of a criminal offence—

Madam Speaker: Order. I have dealt with that matter.

Mr. Bermingham: There has been no apology.

Madam Speaker: Order. There was an apology. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] Order. I have accepted the withdrawal by the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw). I shall deal with other matters in relation to the hon. Gentleman as soon as I see his letter.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): Further to the points of order by my hon. Friends the Members for Southend, East (Sir T. Taylor) and for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire), Madam Speaker. Although the amendment in my name and that of my hon. Friends the Members for Southend, East and for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) will not be called, if the vote for immediate disclosure is not successful, will there be an opportunity to vote on amendment (j) in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne, which calls for disclosure in the next Parliament?

Madam Speaker: Is that amendment (j) to motion No. 2?

Mr. Thurnham: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: If amendments (b) and (g) are agreed to, (j) will fall. If amendment (b) is not agreed to, amendment (j) will be put. I cannot now go through the entire list. Other hon. Members have accepted that I will take them through and give them guidance before they vote.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Is this a satisfactory way to decide who in some instances shall be a Member of the House? Is not the matter of wider interest to the country as a whole, and ought it not to be dealt with by legislation analogous to the Representation of the People Act 1991?

Madam Speaker: Order. That is not a matter for me: it is a matter for the Government. I think that the House now wishes to proceed to this important debate.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Has any Minister sought to make a statement this afternoon or at any time today about the extraordinary events that came to light over the weekend concerning the general practitioners' contract and its impact in Presteigne? Those events concern the removal for the first time in British history of patients from a GP's list for financial reasons. The doctor has been honest enough to say that he has removed a family, Mr. and Mrs. Venables and their children, from the GP's list of his practice for purely financial reasons.

Madam Speaker: The answer is no. If there were to be a statement, we would all know about it because it would be on the annunciator.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. If on motion No. 2, amendment (b), which is to do with proposed agreements, is passed and amendment (g) fails, will it be possible to call amendment (j)? What is the time limit for the debate?

Madam Speaker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave earlier, when I said that there were far too many possible permutations for me to say at this stage which amendments would be called for Division. Of course, I shall carefully lead the House through the amendments before each Division.

Ms Harriet Harman (Peckham): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Has the Secretary of State for Health made a request to make a statement about the GP in Bracknell who has written to women patients saying that they need screening for cervical cancer once every three years? They can get it on the NHS only once every five years and he is recommending that they go private—

Madam Speaker: Order. Let me make it quite clear that no Minister has said to me that he is anxious to make a statement today on any subject. I am anxious to proceed to this important debate.

4.13 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Tony Newton): I beg to move,

That the Resolution of the House of 15th July 1947 relating to Privileges shall be amended by adding at the end the words—

'and that in particular no Member of the House shall, in consideration of any remuneration, fee, payment, reward or benefit in kind, direct or indirect, which the Member or any member of his or her family has received is receiving or expects to receive—

(i) advocate or initiate any cause or matter on behalf of any outside body or individual, or

(ii) urge any other Member of either House of Parliament, including Ministers, to do so,

by means of any speech, Question, Motion, introduction of a Bill or amendment to a Motion or Bill'.

Madam Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss the following motions:

EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS

That—

(1) with effect from Wednesday 15th November 1995, any Member proposing to enter into an agreement which involves the provision of services in his capacity as a Member of Parliament shall conclude such an agreement only if it conforms to the Resolution of the House of 6th November 1995 relating to Conduct of Members; and that a copy of any such agreement, excluding the amount of any fee or benefit payable, shall be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards at the same time as it is registered in the Register of Members' Interests;

(2) any Member who has an existing agreement involving the provision of services in his capacity as a Member of Parliament which conforms to the Resolution of the House of 6th November 1995 relating to Conduct of Members, but which is not in written form, shall take steps to put the agreement into written form; and that no later than 31st March 1996 a copy of any such agreement, excluding the amount of any fee or benefit payable, shall be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and registered in the Register of Members' Interests; and

(3) any Member who has an existing agreement which does not conform to the Resolution of the House on 6th November 1995 relating to Conduct of Members shall, by 31st March 1996, either redraw the agreement so that it conforms to the said Resolution or withdraw from the agreement; and that a copy of any such redrawn agreement, excluding the amount of any fee or benefit payable, shall be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and registered in the Register of Members' Interests by that date.

And the following amendments thereto: (b), in line 6, leave out from 'a' to 'shall' in line 7 and insert

'full copy of any such agreement including the fees or benefits payable in bands of: up to £1,000, £1,000-£5,000, £5,000-£10,000, and thereafter in bands of £5,000'.

(c), in line 7, leave out

'excluding the amount of any fee or benefit payable'.

(d), in line 7, leave out 'excluding' and insert 'including'.

(e), in line 8, after 'Standards', insert

'and made available to the public'.

(f), in line 9, at end insert

'and made available for inspection by the public'.

(g), in line 14, leave out from 'a' to 'shall' in line 16 and insert

'full copy of any such agreement including the fees for or benefits payable in bands of: up to £1,000, £1,000-£5,000, £5,000-£10,000, and thereafter in bands of £5,000.'.

(h), in line 15, leave out

'excluding the amount of any fee or benefit payable'.

(i), in line 17, after 'Interests', insert

'and made available for inspection by the public'.

(k), in line 22, leave out from 'a' to 'shall' in line 23 and insert

'full copy of any such agreement including the fees or benefits payable in bands of: up to £1,000, £1,000-£5,000, £5,000-£10,000, and thereafter in bands of £5,000.'.

(l), in line 22, leave out

excluding the amount of any fee or benefit payable'.

(m), in line 24, at end add

and made available for inspection by the public'.

(j), in line 17, after 'and', insert

'provided that from the start of the next Parliament the amount of any such fee or benefit payable shall be disclosed to the Commissioner and made available to the public; and'.

(o), in line 24, at end add

'provided that from the start of the next Parliament the amount of any such fee or benefit payable shall be disclosed to the Commissioner and made available to the public'.

(n), in line 24, at end add

'(4) any Member who enters into employment agreements of whatever kind, whether relating to the provision of services in his capacity as a Member of Parliament or otherwise, shall be required to disclose in the Register of Members' Interests—

1. The total fees or benefits from such agreements in bands of up to £1,000, £1,000-£5,000, £5,000-£10,000 and thereafter in bands of £5,000.

2. The total amount of time, in days or parts thereof, devoted to the fulfilment of such agreements.'.

(p), in line 24, at end add

'(4) notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs 1-3 of this Resolution with effect from Wednesday 15th November 1995, no Member shall enter into an agreement for the provision of services in his/her capacity as a Member of Parliament with any individual or organisation engaged in lobbying or public relations on behalf of more than one client.'.

STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE (GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS)

That this House agrees with the recommendations in the Second Report from the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life (House of Commons Paper No. 816) relating to—

(1) the recording of deputations in the Register of Members' Interests (paragraph 31); and

(2) the cessation of paid advocacy (paragraph 54).

And the following amendments thereto:

(a), in line 4, leave out paragraph (1).

(b), in line 6, at end add

'and further that a Member with a paid interest should not initiate or participate in, including attendance, a delegation where the problem affects only the body from which he has a paid interest.'.

(d), in line 6, at end add

'and further that a Member with a paid interest should not engage in correspondence about a subject which affects only the body from which he has a paid interest.'.

STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES

That—

(1) Standing Order No. 128 (Select Committee on Members' Interests) be repealed;

(2) Standing Order No. 121 (Committee of Privileges) be repealed when the Committee of Privileges shall have reported to the House in respect of the matters of the complaints referred to it; and

(3) Standing Orders (Committee on Standards and Privileges) and (Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards) below be made.

Standing Order (Committee on Standards and Privileges)

(1) There shall be a select committee, called the Committee on Standards and Privileges—

  (a) to consider specific matters relating to privileges referred to it by the House;

  (b) to oversee the work of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards; to examine the arrangements proposed by the Commissioner for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of the Register of Members' Interests and any other registers of interest established by the House; to review from time to time the form and content of those registers;

and to consider any specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests referred to it by the Commissioner; and

(c) to consider any matter relating to the conduct of Members, including specific complaints in relation to alleged breaches in any code of conduct to which the House has agreed and which have been drawn to the committee's attention by the Commissioner; and to recommend any modifications to such code of conduct as may from time to time appear to be necessary.

(2) The committee shall consist of eleven Members, of whom five shall be a quorum.

(3) Unless the House otherwise orders, each Member nominated to the committee shall continue to be a member of it for the remainder of the Parliament.

(4) The committee shall have power to appoint sub-committees consisting of no more than seven Members, of whom three shall be a quorum, and to refer to such sub-committees any of the matters referred to the committee; and shall appoint one such sub-committee to receive reports from the Commissioner relating to investigations into specific complaints.

(5) The committee and any sub-committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and records, to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House, to adjourn from place to place, to report from time to time and to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the committee's order of reference.

(6) The committee shall have power to order the attendance of any Member before the committee or any sub-committee and to require that specific documents or records in the possession of a Member relating to its inquiries, or to the inquiries of a sub-committee or of the Commissioner, be laid before the committee or any sub-committee.

(7) The committee shall have power to refuse to allow proceedings to which strangers are admitted to be broadcast.

(8) Mr. Attorney General, the Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, being Members of the House, may attend the committee or any sub-committee, may take part in deliberations, may receive committee or sub-committee papers and may give such other assistance to the committee or sub-committee as may be appropriate, but shall not vote or make any motion or move any amendment.

Standing Order (Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards)

(1) There shall be an officer of this House, called the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, who shall be appointed by the House.

(2) The principal duties of the Commissioner shall be—

(a) to maintain the Register of Members' Interests and any other registers of interest established by the House, and to make such arrangements for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of those registers as are approved by the Committee on Standards and Privileges or an appropriate sub-committee thereof;

(b) to provide advice confidentially to Members and other persons or bodies subject to registration on matters relating to the registration of individual interests;

(c) to advise the Committee on Standards and Privileges, its sub-committees and individual Members on the interpretation of any code of conduct to which the House has agreed and on questions of propriety;

(d) to monitor the operation of such code and registers, and to make recommendations thereon to the Committee on Standards and Privileges or an appropriate sub-committee thereof; and

(e) to receive and, if he thinks fit, investigate specific complaints from Members and from members of the public in respect of—

(i) the registration or declaration of interests, or

(ii) other aspects of the propriety of a Member's conduct,

and to report to the Committee on Standards and Privileges or to an appropriate sub-committee thereof.

(3) The Commissioner may be dismissed by resolution of the House.

And the following amendment thereto:

(a), in line 49, leave out paragraph (7).

Mr. Newton: As you have said, Madam Speaker, a number of other motions and an almost infinite number of amendments may be discussed with motion No. 1.

The report that the House is considering completes the work of the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life, which I chaired. Our remit was

> "to consider the first report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life in so far as it relates to the rules and procedures of the House; to advise on how the recommendations relating thereto might be clarified and implemented; and to recommend specific resolutions for decision by the House."

Although the focus in recent weeks has understandably been on the issues contained in our second report, I should briefly remind the House and people outside of the important progress that has already been made. The House has already agreed to create a new Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards working within a new Select Committee on Standards and Privileges. It has further strengthened the declaration rules by requiring that relevant interests should be indicated on the Order Paper in relation to questions, amendments and early-day motions, and it has endorsed the proposal that a new code of conduct should be drawn up by the new Committee and put before the House.

Further steps in the implementation of those measures will, of course, be taken today, if the House agrees the order of reference for the new Select Committee contained in motion 4, to which I shall return, and a separate motion that the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) will move later on behalf of the House of Commons Commission concerning the appointment of a new commissioner.

Those are all important steps that have already carried the House a long way forward in responding to Nolan. In July, however, the House also accepted the Select Committee's view that more work was required before the House could take decisions in the matter of what should and should not be allowed, and the extent to which what is allowed should be disclosed. It gave the Committee a further remit, now discharged in our second report, to bring forward proposals by the end of the present Session.

In seeking to meet that tight deadline, the Select Committee has met 25 times since 19 July and a total of 39 times since it was formally established on 13 June. I am told and can well believe, as I dare say can the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), that no Select Committee has met as frequently and I pay tribute, briefly and wholeheartedly, to its members, of whom I see two close in front of me, for the time and commitment that they have given to producing both reports.

Especially in view of the fact that we have some disagreements, I want to express my appreciation for the way in which the Select Committee has worked—I am grateful to see the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) nodding. Even in the relatively few areas where there were disagreements—clearly we shall come to them and some are reflected in the amendments in the name of the hon. Member for

[Mr. Newton]

Dewsbury—the Committee always addressed its task in a positive and constructive manner, which made my job as chairman infinitely easier.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): In all those Select Committee deliberations, did it deal with a problem that it has faced ever since resolutions were introduced in the House on these matters: the refusal of admittedly a tiny minority to comply with any of the resolutions? What effective sanctions will be put in place for those hon. Members who raise two fingers to these Standing Orders?

Mr. Newton: It would be right to say that the Select Committee had quite enough to think about without devoting a great deal of time to that matter, but I think that the position is familiar to the House from episodes in the past and even from hypothetical episodes, as it were. Manifestly, it would be a matter for the House. Under the new structure, one would imagine that there would be a complaint to the Select Committee on Standards and Privileges, which would examine it, as the Privileges Committee examined the complaint concerning so-called "cash for questions", and make a recommendation for the House, and that it would be up to the House to decide what, if anything, to do.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will the Leader of the House give way?

Mr. Newton: I will do so, but it is important that I should leave plenty of time for other hon. Members to speak in the debate and put my points in a connected way.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Does the Leader of the House believe that Members of Parliament should have the right to arrange meetings with Ministers and perhaps attend those meetings in return for a fee or reward?

Mr. Newton: In a way, the hon. Gentleman underlines my point in my initial response to him, as I shall come to that matter later in my speech. It is covered by one of the motions and by one of the hon. Member for Dewsbury's amendments. Perhaps, therefore, I might turn to the motions on the Order Paper.

The first motion is perhaps the most significant—in my view, it is very significant. In our first report, we set out some of the problems inherent in seeking, as Nolan had recommended, to distinguish one type of paid outside interest from another. We pointed especially to the definitional problems associated with the concept of multi-client organisations and with terms such as "lobbying firms" and "parliamentary services". The debate on 19 July and our further deliberations have served only to reinforce those concerns. In the end, it was the Select Committee's unanimous view that those definitional problems were critical and that the difficulties in overcoming them were simply too great.

Instead—and again I emphasise that it is a unanimous recommendation—we have adopted an alternative approach which goes significantly further than that proposed by Nolan in dealing with those actions by hon. Members which, in the Committee's view, should not be permitted, irrespective of the person or organisation from which an hon. Member is receiving money. At the simplest level, that means whether it is a multi-client organisation, a single-client organisation or a single client.

In effect, we brought forward the work originally identified for the new Select Committee in the next Session and reviewed the current 1947 resolution—of which I suspect many hon. Members were unaware before Nolan reminded us of it, and which, as Nolan said, has given rise to confusion when read alongside other resolutions that the House has passed.

Mr. Marlow: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Newton: I will, but I ask my hon. Friend to bear in mind what I said earlier.

Mr. Marlow: I do not want to be controversial, but because of the way that the first resolution is written it appears that, for example, a farmer who is in receipt of money from Brussels through the common agricultural policy would not be able to discuss agricultural policy with the National Farmers Union and then engage in debate in this House. That is one example, but many others flow from the resolution. I believe that it is far more far-reaching than my right hon. Friend thinks. Will he consider that matter very deeply before he replies to the debate?

Mr. Newton: Of course I will consider that matter and others. However, I must make the point—and I believe that I carry the hon. Member for Dewsbury with me—that while the report repeatedly says that we have not been able to deal with every conceivable question and issue that might arise—and there may well be a need for further guidance from the new Select Committee—I think—

Mr. Budgen: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Newton: May I at least first complete my answer to the last intervention?

I believe that I can say reasonably authoritatively that what the Committee was concerned with, and what it believed the proposed resolution to be directed at, is the question of payment by someone in respect of an interest, not in respect of an interest that someone has through his own employment or occupation. None of us would envisage that, for example, a farmer would be prohibited from saying anything on agricultural policy—although, having declared the interest, he may wish to choose his words carefully, as I am sure hon. Members do at present.

Mr. Budgen: Does my right hon. Friend agree that his answer clearly shows that making very important decisions by way of motion is unsatisfactory? It leaves the various guidelines extremely uncertain with, perhaps, matters then being decided on a more or less political basis by a Committee of this House. It is an unsatisfactory way to deal with something that should be dealt with by legislation.

Mr. Newton: I understand my hon. Friend's point, but I have to tell him straightforwardly that I do not agree with him. At some stage, we may need to consider whether some sort of legislation is required, but quite frankly an attempt to deal with all the problems that Nolan wrestled with, that the Committee has wrestled with and that the new Select Committee will find itself wrestling with from time to time by defining and tying up everything in an Act of Parliament or a set of regulations would be a prescription for disaster. What we have proposed will enable the House to operate with a degree of flexibility in certain circumstances, not all of which can be foreseen.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West) *rose—*

Mr. Newton: If I continue to give way, there will be hardly any time for others to speak. Hon. Members are aware that usually I am very generous at giving way. However, on this occasion I beg them to recognise that we have three hours for a very important debate. It is important that a connected case should be made and hon. Members then have an opportunity to make their points.

Mr. Banks: I am deeply grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. I need to ask him a question.

Mr. Marlow: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. My right hon. Friend said that he is constrained because we have only three hours for debate. If the mood of the House is that the debate should be longer, what can the House do about it? It is not enough time.

Madam Speaker: The motion was placed on the Order Paper on Friday. The hon. Gentleman and others should have been in the House on Friday to object to it if they wanted more time today.

Mr. Banks: Will the Leader of the House explain what my situation would be? I receive support from the International Fund for Animal Welfare, in respect of which I employ an additional member of staff. If I continue to do so, would I be prevented by the amendment to the 1947 resolution from initiating debates, asking—[HON. MEMBERS: "Yes."] Conservative Members should shut up a minute and let me hear it from the Leader of the House. Would I be prevented from asking questions and introducing Bills or early-day motions? It is crucial to me to know the answer to that question.

Mr. Newton: If the hon. Gentleman were receiving payment, or a benefit in kind such as the provision of payment for a research assistant, the answer to his question would be yes.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan) *rose—*

Mr. Newton: This must be the last intervention.

Mr. Salmond: Before the Leader of the House moves from that point, could he explain further to the House why he and the Select Committee found it impossible to define and act upon one of the strongest Nolan recommendations, that against multi-client organisations, when the Committee decided to pursue the distinction between advocacy and advice, which seems to everybody to be fraught with great difficulties of definition?

Mr. Newton: I shall make two brief points. First, as we said in our first report, in paragraphs that are reproduced in the second report, the concept of multi-client lobbying organisations is riddled with difficulties of definition. What is lobbying? That is not as easy as it seems, because lobbying, in a sense, is a basic part of all democratic politics.

Secondly, the Nolan report acknowledged that the matter raised questions about almost every large firm—public relations firms, law firms, accountancy firms and management consultants—and suggested some possible Chinese walls to be erected within firms which did not seem to us to be practicable. That is the main point that I would make. If I may generalise from that point, while, of course, there are definitional problems with what we have proposed—as there would be with any solution—there are, in my judgment, significantly fewer definitional problems with what we have proposed than there would have been with the endless series of distinctions entailed by the Nolan recommendations.

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst) *rose—*

Mr. Newton: I have already said that I have given way for the last time. This really will have to be the last time.

Mr. Sims: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. He will know that I raised a point on Thursday which he said that he would clarify today. He has not allayed my concerns. In its report, the Select Committee states:

> "We are not . . . seeking to deprive the House of well-informed contributions from Members with experience or knowledge of direct value to the subject being debated."

Is it not clear from what my right hon. Friend has just said that any Members with specialist knowledge cannot make such contributions if they are in receipt of any payment, be it from a trade association, a trade union, or, indeed, a campaigning organisation? That would restrict the ability of Members of Parliament to speak.

Mr. Newton: I have the very greatest respect for my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims), as he well knows from our contacts on a variety of matters. He reinforces the point that I made about interventions. I would have come to his point if I had not been diverted by so many interventions. I make no great complaint about that; then again, perhaps I do.

Our proposal is that the 1947 resolution should be extended to indicate specific kinds of parliamentary action which ought not to be undertaken for payment on behalf of outside bodies. These are advocacy by way of speech, question, motion, introduction of Bill or amendments to a motion or Bill. Nor should it be acceptable for one Member to encourage another to take those actions on his or her behalf—in other words, indirect advocacy in relation to payment. Benefit in kind is to be treated in the same way as cash. That covers the case of the research assistant of the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks). Payments to a Member's family are to be treated in the same way as those to a Member.

This is a major extension of our rules. I do not disguise that. Everyone is aware of it—increasingly so, I think. The House will expect me to say a little more about what the Committee sees as the practical implications.

The key to our approach is that Members should not be paid to initiate parliamentary proceedings or initiate them on behalf of clients to whom they are paid advisers. In other words, they should not advocate in Parliament the cause of outside interests from which they receive remuneration.

I now come to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst. This may reassure the hon. Member for Newham, North-West as well. As Lord Nolan's report said, there will be a natural tendency for hon. Members to advise outside bodies whose views, to a large extent, they share. For that reason, the prohibition on questions, motions and Bills applies only

> "if they relate specifically and directly to the affairs and interests of that body."

However, we were concerned that such a prohibition should not prevent contributions from being made to debate by hon. Members bringing the knowledge and experience gained by legitimate work as paid advisers, or in any other way.

[Mr. Newton]

For that reason, in relation to speeches, we have advised that it should remain entirely acceptable for hon. Members to speak during debates on a matter that affects the interests of an outside body with which they have a paid connection so long as they do not initiate such a debate and, as now, fully declare their interest when they speak. The report also says that, in such circumstances, the hon. Member will need to take care that his or her speech does not

"bring particular benefit to the organisation or individual from which the Member received payment."

I hope that that explanation is at least some help to my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst.

As our report acknowledges, this is clearly not a matter in which it is possible to lay down detailed prescriptive rules for every circumstance. We have provided a framework within which a body of experience and practice can be built up. If the House agrees to our recommendations on the broad way forward, the interpretation of the new rules in particular circumstances would inevitably be a matter for the new Select Committee, with the advice of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. It will no doubt issue further guidance if it sees the need.

For the moment, I shall pass by motion No. 2, which is the most controversial, and deal with motion No. 3 on delegations arranged by hon. Members with Ministers, and the timing of the ban on advocacy to which I have just referred.

Mr. Sims: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his explanation. Although I understand the argument that hon. Members should not initiate proceedings, surely the word "advocate" means to speak in support of. To include the words "advocate" and "speech " in the resolution makes it appear to anyone reading it that an hon. Member may not speak in support of a cause for which he or she is being paid.

Mr. Newton: I assure my hon. Friend that that was not what the committee wished; nor is it what the committee regards the proposed resolution as meaning.

Mr. Michael Fabricant (Mid-Staffordshire): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. If someone passes a motion in the House, what holds: the wording in the motion; or the intended meaning of the motion, as explained during the debate while that motion is taking place?

Madam Speaker: All hon. Members of common sense will read carefully what the Leader of the House is saying as well as take into account the motion on the Order Paper. Ultimately, many of the resolutions, motions and amendments passed today may have to go to the special Select Committee for implementation.

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to you, Madam Speaker, for that explanation. That is, indeed, the position.

Mrs. Ann Taylor (Dewsbury): Will the Leader of the House confirm that the motion that he puts to the House today reiterates the existing 1947 resolution, which of itself bans paid advocacy—speaking for money—and that our extension of that resolution seeks to be more specific and illustrate the circumstances in which such a ban might operate?

Mr. Newton: That is absolutely right, and I am grateful to the hon. Lady.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst will acknowledge that I am explaining, as faithfully as I can, what was in the Committee's mind. I am sure that the indications that we have given will be taken into account by the new Select Committee in its interpretation. After all, it will be a body of Members of this House who will have listened to the debate and read our report. I give him the clear assurance that our proposals are not intended to prevent Members from speaking in a proper and balanced way, as I have outlined.

As for motion No. 3, the Select Committee recommended that where a Member leads a deputation to a Minister or official on behalf of a paid outside interest, that visit should be registered in the Register of Members' Interests to ensure maximum transparency. A minority on the Committee wished to ban Members from leading delegations, or arranging them where there was a paid outside interest.

That view will no doubt be reflected by the hon. Member for Dewsbury in one of the amendments that she has tabled. I can only say that it seemed to the majority of the Committee that the key safeguard was transparency, and that there would be no real gain—and possibly some loss to the taking of well-informed decisions—if Members who are paid advisers could not even seek to arrange a meeting, openly declared, in which points of concern could be put to Ministers.

The second element of the motion relates to the timing of the cessation of the paid advocacy. If I may, it seems sensible to return to that when I come to discuss the more controversial motion No. 2.

Before that, however, I should refer to motion No. 4, which, as I said earlier, proposes an order of reference for the new Select Committee on Standards and Privileges, and provides for the winding up of the Select Committees on Members' Interests and Privileges. If I say relatively little about that, it is simply because the matter was extensively covered in our July debate. The motion is closely based on the recommendations of our first report.

There is one significant point that I should make about the two existing Select Committees which the new Committee is intended to replace—I say it particularly with an eye on members of the Committee on Privileges. Given that the Privileges Committee is in mid-inquiry, the motion envisages that it should continue alongside the new Committee until that inquiry has been completed. I know that members of the Privileges Committee attach importance to that undertaking, so I should like to emphasise it.

The demise of the Select Committee on Members' Interests would be immediate—I am not sure how much regretted its passing will be by its members—and I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) and his Committee for the work that they have done for us over the years.

I return to motion No. 2 on the Order Paper. I address first the issues on which the Select Committee was unanimous. The Committee was unanimous that, as Nolan had recommended, all agreements relating to parliamentary activities should be put in writing and deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards so that he could ensure that they were wholly within the new rules banning paid advocacy.

We accepted the Nolan recommendation that there was no need for disclosure of employment agreements unrelated to a Member's role in Parliament. We did feel, however, that the requirement should include frequent or regular commitments, as opposed to merely occasional commitments outside Parliament, which seem clearly to arise directly from membership of the House: for example, an agreement for money to write a regular newspaper column or to compere a television programme. That is much more comparable with an outside job than irregular, infrequent interviews on particular issues.

The second element on which the Committee was virtually unanimous, although there was one dissenting voice, concerned the timing of the introduction of the new arrangements for depositing employment agreements. The large majority felt that any new agreements between Members and outside bodies should conform to the rules with effect from the beginning of the new Session—later this month. Members with existing agreements that conform to the new rules should put them in writing, if they have not already done so, and deposit them with the commissioner by 31 March next year. Members with existing agreements that fall foul of the ban on paid advocacy in Parliament will have until 31 March either to bring the agreement within the rules and deposit it with the commissioner, or to withdraw from it.

Whatever arrangements might apply to any individual Member, the great majority of the Committee believed that the new resolution banning paid advocacy should be in force for all Members from the start of the new Session. The great majority of the Committee felt strongly that we could not endorse a position in which there would be one group of Members who could advocate a cause for payment and another which could not.

Where the Committee divided—to my great regret it divided, as everyone knows, on party lines—

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): The Tory party as well.

Mr. Newton: I regard that division as a matter of regret; I am not attacking anyone. It divided on the question whether contracts deposited with the commissioner should be open to public inspection, and should include details of the remuneration received.

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): Will the Leader of the House give way?

Mr. Newton: May I please continue my argument in a connected way?

The opinion of the majority was in effect that the crucial issue was the need for the Commissioner for Parliamentary Standards, in fulfilling his duties, to know what an agreement committed a Member to do. It felt that the basic purpose was therefore achieved by the deposit of such agreements, but without the remuneration.

The reasons for that are set out in paragraphs 43 to 49 of the report, which I am sure that the House will have studied with care. However, I emphasise what I believe the majority of the Committee would regard as the two main points.

First, we felt that it was right to consider the issues of restriction of activity, so to speak, and disclosure together—as, indeed, Nolan had done—in the light of the fact that the whole Committee had agreed on an overall approach radically different from that recommended by Nolan. Nolan had concluded against the distinction between advocacy and advice on which our Select Committee has agreed, and proposed only a limited ban on agreements with multi-client lobbying organisations. It took the view that more information about existing agreements, and more examination of the implications, was needed before a decision on a wider ban could be taken. It said that it was "in this context" that the recommendations on disclosure of agreements and remuneration was crucial.

Against that background of an overall approach very different from Nolan—and going very much further than Nolan—the majority believed it also necessary to consider the way in which the associated Nolan recommendations on disclosure should be looked at in that new and very different context.

Obviously, no question of disclosure could arise in relation to activity that was no longer allowed. Therefore, to the extent that disclosure of remuneration had been regarded as an answer to the perceived problem, the case on those grounds fell away if the activity itself were not to be allowed.

Secondly, therefore, in that new context, the majority felt it right to give greater weight to the difficulty of drawing a fair and sustainable line between activity for which remuneration would have to be disclosed and activity for which it would not. The point is perhaps most clearly illustrated by the Nolan report's reference to financial benefits that Members

"receive as a consequence of being elected".

That would manifestly go much wider than the type of agreements that we have been considering and would, for example, obviously embrace the great majority of payments made to Members for newspaper articles, broadcasting and lecturing. The vast majority of those arise from being a Member of Parliament.

Nor is it hard to think of other issues on which argument would increasingly arise. I simply quote the Committee's conclusion.

Mr. Bill Michie: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Newton: I will give way to enable me to find the Committee's conclusion.

Mr. Michie: I am grateful to the Leader of the House. In the course of many years, this place has passed legislation that has forced local government to be open, honest and above board. Not so long ago, the Government took away the right to silence of suspects, on the grounds that they had nothing to hide. At the Tory party conference, the party discussed the business of introducing identity cards to recipients of benefit because, if one has nothing to hide, one has nothing to fear. What do we have to fear by ending the right to silence in the House?

Mr. Newton: To judge from some of the posters that I have seen on television, the hon. Member for Dewsbury may make a similar argument. I believe that it would be right for me to leave the hon. Gentleman to make his own speech, if he wishes, rather than to discuss that now.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North) *rose—*

Mr. Newton: No; I will not give way any more. I said that I wanted only to quote the Committee's conclusion. I quote paragraph 49, which I believe is the only part of our report that I shall read out again:

> "In reality we judge that the real choice is between the view that compulsory disclosure of remuneration for legitimate activity is an unjustified intrusion, and the view that full disclosure of all income—in effect, the publication of the tax return—should be required. Nolan concluded that 'no-one has put a convincing case' for full disclosure."

The majority of the Committee agree with that.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: On that subject, which is especially important, I have heard Conservative Members suggest that our amendment would require the publication of tax returns. Will the Leader of the House confirm that no member of the Select Committee advocated that course of action, and that the amendments that we are debating tonight do not say that we should go down that path?

Mr. Newton: I have no desire to mislead anyone. It is certainly the case that no proposition of that type was put to the Committee or argued in the Committee, and I understand that the hon. Lady's amendments, which I believe would give rise to the growing distinctional problems that I have mentioned, would certainly not take us in one leap to full disclosure of tax returns.

I conclude by saying that on that, as in every other matter before the House in the debate, it is for the judgment of Members to decide. However, what I claim for the Select Committee is that, taken together, our two reports constitute the most significant strengthening of our rules for decades—certainly since the register was introduced in 1974, and in my opinion for much longer than that.

Our proposals are designed to balance the overriding duty of Members to serve their constituents without undue hindrance, with the necessary safeguards that our freedoms in the House should not be abused. I believe that our proposals stand together as a carefully thought out and comprehensive package, and I invite the House to endorse it by voting for all the resolutions in my name.

4.45 pm

Mrs. Ann Taylor (Dewsbury): I start by declaring, as always, the interests that I have that appear on page 129 of the Register of Members' Interests—my sponsorship by the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union, the fact that I am an adviser to the Association of Teachers and Lecturers and the fact that Unison has in the past helped with my office costs. Not included in the register, because it was a late addition, was the gift of football tickets to my family earlier this year.

I mentioned the interests that I have, not only because it is right that any Member speaking in the debate should do so but because it is obvious from the interests I have that I am affected by the amendment on disclosure that stands in my name and that of Members from other parties in the House. I shall speak specifically to that amendment in a few moments, but I want to make it clear that I am affected by that, as are hon. Members who I believe will join me in the Lobby tonight.

I do not want to go over the whole history of how we come to be debating the subject today. We are short of time and I believe that the whole House is aware that it is an important issue, in terms of the confidence that people can have in Parliament and of the matters that arose from the "sleaze factor", as it was sometimes called.

I simply recall the very end of our most recent debate on that issue in the House, when some Members, such as the hon. Members for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) and for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), said that they agreed with the principle of disclosure but wanted more work on the detail of the way in which that would operate to be carried out by the Select Committee.

It is interesting to note, and we should remember, that paragraph 69 of the Nolan committee report says that, of those Members of whom Lord Nolan asked the question, "Do you mind if there is disclosure of the income that you receive for parliamentary activities?" none said that he objected to that limited disclosure about which Lord Nolan was talking.

Mr. Terry Dicks (Hayes and Harlington): Is the hon. Lady aware that, even if someone wanted voluntarily to record the amount of money that he receives from a consultancy, the House laws prevent that from being recorded in the Register of Members' Interests?

Mrs. Taylor: There is no provision in the existing register for such disclosures to be made in general terms, although many people who have sponsorship use the fact that they are covered by the Hastings agreement as a shorthand way of doing exactly that.

It is important that the House, when debating that issue today, remembers that many hon. Members on both sides of the House said that they supported disclosure of the amounts in that limited area relating to parliamentary activities if definitions could be found. The Select Committee resumed its work on that basis.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): The Labour party in my constituency is putting out a statement that the hon. Lady is bringing forward a proposal today that

> "all payments to MPs be made public in a register of members interests".

Is that the position or not?

Mrs. Taylor: I hope that the hon. Gentleman has read my amendments carefully. The amendments, which are tabled in my name and those of other members of the Committee, do not call for any more than Lord Nolan's committee called for: the declaration should include amounts paid to us as a result of interests which we have and which are related to our parliamentary activities. I am happy to make that clear, and shall talk about it in greater detail shortly.

Mr. Marlow: I wish to clarify one issue so that we are aware of the rounded story. Is it true that, under the first motion, if any of the hon. Lady's hon. Friends were provided with office facilities in their constituencies by trade unions, they would not, in the House, be able to advocate the trade unions' position?

Mrs. Taylor: The issue of sponsorship—the interests and advantage of and help from sponsorship—is covered not by the first motion but by the second. The subject of sponsorship was dealt with specifically by the Select Committee, which made no changes to the existing provisions in relation to sponsorship, not least because most of us know that the 1947 resolution already exists.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Taylor: I cannot give way—I have already done so. We are short of time and need to make progress.

I want to endorse much of what the Leader of the House said about the way in which the Committee operated. For the most part, we had constructive discussions and had to agree to differ on, I think, two or three points. Unfortunately, those points were critical, at least to my mind, which is why I have tabled the amendments.

I shall start with the 1947 resolution and return to the evidence that I gave to the Nolan committee some time ago. I said then:

> "the ground rules that some Members—indeed, I believe the majority of Members—believe existed have certainly not been followed by some Members in individual cases."

But, I continued:

> "It is clear, and "Erskine May" has made this clear over the years, that certain actions are just not acceptable, such as Members of Parliament accepting payment or inducements for any kind of Parliamentary activity."

That is how people interpreted the status quo, and it is an important starting point. The Nolan report makes it clear that that has been the case for many years—not just since 1947 but since the middle of the last century and, indeed, since 1695.

Dr. Hampson: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Taylor: No, I cannot give way. I must make progress.

The ideas behind the 1947 resolution are not new. I would therefore argue that the ideas behind the first motion which the Leader of the House moved today are not new. As he said, they had the unanimous support of all members of the Select Committee. The motion acknowledges the sound basis of the 1947 resolution and the fact that it dealt with the issue in principle, but it adds more detail, is more specific and gives examples of what cannot be considered as legitimate activity if a Member of Parliament is undertaking that activity for money.

Mr. Nigel Evans (Ribble Valley): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Taylor: No; I am sorry, but I cannot give way as I want to deal with this point.

It is important for everyone in the House to realise that the Select Committee report stated that the list which is featured as an addition to the 1947 resolution is illustrative and is not supposed to be exhaustive. Those who want statutory provisions must bear in mind that it will be difficult to cite every example of what hon. Members cannot do. If we were to adopt that approach, we might create even more loopholes.

Dr. Hampson *rose—*

Sir Terence Higgins (Worthing) *rose—*

Mrs. Taylor: I shall give way to the right hon. Member for Worthing, who is a member of the Committee.

Sir Terence Higgins: The hon. Lady will be aware that the Committee spent an immense amount of time on many issues, particularly the subject of speaking in the House. The Leader of the House was right in saying that we were unanimously agreed on what we considered to be the right approach to that issue. But does the hon. Lady think that the motion as now drafted implements the Committee's intention, specifically with regard to paragraphs 21 to 26? I should have thought that there was a catch-all motion, in addition to the specific initial motion, that could state that the thrust of the Committee's report was also accepted by the House. If so, this particular problem would be solved.

Mrs. Taylor: The right hon. Gentleman, who served on the Committee—I think that he attended every sitting—knows how we wrestled with the problems. He also knows that we did not say that our report was the last word on the issues and that the new Select Committee and the code of conduct—particularly the code of conduct—would have to tackle some of the problems.

Mr. Nigel Evans *rose—*

Mr. Budgen *rose—*

Mrs. Taylor: I must make progress. I should have thought that the 1947 resolution—and its extension—was the least controversial part of what we are discussing.

Dr. Hampson *rose—*

Mr. Evans *rose—*

Madam Speaker: Order. Do I understand that the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) is not prepared to give way at the moment?

Mrs. Taylor *indicated assent.*

Madam Speaker: In that case, the hon. Gentlemen must not persist, but must resume their seats.

Mrs. Taylor: The Nolan committee stated that the 1947 resolution formed the basis of the list of allowable activities. It also referred to a problem that has exercised your mind on occasions, Madam Speaker, and the minds of others in the House: the feeling that, since the introduction of the Register of Members' Interests, there has been a tendency to create the false impression that any interest is acceptable once it is registered. That is why we need to go further today and be more specific about what is considered acceptable.

I want to examine the question whether the total ban on advocacy, for single as well as multi-client companies—to which the Leader of the House referred and which is covered by our Select Committee report—takes the issue much further than the Nolan report, as some people have claimed. The question is whether that is a step of such fundamental importance that it negates the need to implement the other key Nolan recommendation: disclosure of paid advisory work.

I wish to explain to the House why we supported including single clients in the ban for two reasons. The first is the obvious one that many of us thought that single clients should be and were covered anyway under the 1947 resolution. There was also a practical reason: it is clear from the Select Committee's report that it would have been nonsense to ban advocacy by those acting for multi-client companies but allow it for those acting for single-client companies.

Paragraph 9 of the Select Committee report states:

> "it would not be difficult to devise a system whereby a multi-client organisation could operate through a series of single-client subsidiaries, thereby circumventing"

the rules.

Mr. Nigel Evans: Some 167 Opposition Members are sponsored by single-interest groups such as trade unions. Earlier this year, I participated in a debate on the railways. Only five Opposition Members were present, all of whom were sponsored by railway trade unions. Does the hon. Lady think that that was right? Does she not think that those Members should be prevented from taking part in such debates in future?

Mrs. Taylor: I am sure that I do not need to tell the hon. Gentleman that none of those individuals would receive money directly for himself from those organisations. Nor should I need to advise the hon. Gentleman of his rights, whereby, if he thinks that any hon. Member, from either side of the House, is in breach of current provisions, he should report it in the appropriate way.

I say to the hon. Gentleman and to Conservative Members that the ban on advocacy was extended to single clients as well as multi-clients, to close a very obvious loophole. Hon. Members who rely on the argument that the Select Committee goes further than Nolan as justification for non-disclosure of money from Parliament-related work should be aware that that argument does not hold up.

There are potentially three types of paid employment that the Select Committee believes could involve Members of Parliament: paid advocacy, paid advisory work and work independent of the House. We have already dealt with paid advocacy, which was banned by the 1947 resolution. Therefore, the House proposes no change to paid advocacy in principle. It is important to state—I know that it will interest some Conservative Members—that there is no change to the work performed by a Member of Parliament that is completely independent of his or her parliamentary duties. Some hon. Members believe that such interests should not exist. So far as today's debate and the Nolan report are concerned—

Dr. Hampson: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: It sounds to me as though it will be a point of frustration because the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) was unable to intervene on the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor).

Dr. Hampson: I apologise, Madam Speaker, as I have seldom done this to the Chair, but the hon. Lady is slightly misleading the House.

Madam Speaker: Order. First, I know full well that the hon. Gentleman is not raising a point of order with me: he is frustrated because the hon. Member for Dewsbury will not allow him to intervene. Secondly, the hon. Lady is not misleading the House even slightly, so I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will rephrase what he has to say.

Dr. Hampson: Paragraph 30 of the Nolan report says that the 1947 resolution—

Madam Speaker: Order. What is the point of order to me? It must be to do with the Standing Orders or the procedures of the House. The hon. Gentleman is showing his great frustration at not being able to put his question to the hon. Lady. He must contain himself.

Mrs. Taylor: The report of the Select Committee and the amendments that we have tabled will make no difference to hon. Members' paid advocacy work—which is banned—and no difference to that work performed by a Member of Parliament completely independent of his or her parliamentary role. Paragraph 70 of the Nolan report says:

> "We are aware that in a number of other countries the practice is to require full disclosure of assets and income. But it is by no means clear that full disclosure of financial matters unrelated to Parliamentary business is relevant to the public interest. No-one has put a convincing case to us as to why that might be necessary".

That applies to the Select Committee report and to the amendments that I have tabled; it is misleading for anyone to suggest otherwise. We agree with the Prime Minister, who said last week that hon. Members are entitled to the same tax privacy as other people. However, that point is irrelevant to the debate this evening; no one is suggesting otherwise.

Sir Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): Will the hon. Lady help me on that point, to which reference is made in paragraph 38 of the Select Committee's report? The hon. Lady emphasised that, if hon. Members' work is not connected with Parliament, that is the end of the matter. Paragraph 39 goes on to state:

> "The present rule is that all remunerated outside employment must be included in the Register".

Why must such work be included in the Register of Members' Interests, if, as the hon. Lady says, it has no connection with Parliament?

Mrs. Taylor: It must be listed in the register under the current rules, which have applied for some time. There is no change to that category either as a result of the Select Committee's recommendations or as a result of my amendments.

Mr. Jim Lester (Broxtowe): If hon. Members declare income from advisory or consultancy roles, people will falsely relate the time that Members of Parliament spend in those roles with the time that they spend on constituency work. Hon. Members who are part-time farmers, journalists or barristers may devote a great deal of time to those tasks outside the House, but they do not have to declare their cash receipts.

Mrs. Taylor: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will re-read the relevant sections of the report which relate specifically to parliamentary activities. The report also deals with protection in relation to constituency activities. No confusion need arise in that area. However, if there is any doubt in hon. Members' minds, the Select Committee is drawing up a code of conduct and, from 15 November, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards will be able to provide advice on the matter.

I turn now to what I thought was the most controversial issue—it is certainly the issue that divided the Select Committee. The hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) referred to the issue of "parliamentary advice"—that is the shorthand term. The category embraces all the work that an hon. Member has only because he or she is an elected Member of Parliament. It is extremely important to remember that that category of work exists only because hon. Members are elected to this place. The Nolan report states:

> "Full declaration is especially important in respect of paid activities relating to Parliament".

The Select Committee recognised that the activities in that category are separate from independent earnings of Members of Parliament. In his motion, the Leader of the

House recommended that all agreements that hon. Members have relating to parliamentary activities should be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards; in other words, the agreements are relevant because they relate to parliamentary activities. I support that view: I think that those interests should be registered. However, I think that we should go further and ensure that they are subject to full disclosure.

Mr. Bernard Jenkin (Colchester, North): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Taylor: No, I must make some progress.

The Select Committee points out that Members of Parliament receive such payments only by virtue of their positions in this place: they would not receive them if they were not Members of Parliament. Therefore, our constituents have a right to know about the payments and they should be made public. If there is a distinction to be made, it is the one that has been drawn already—and that the Leader of the House commended to the House—between those agreements that relate to parliamentary activity and the independent work that some hon. Members perform. No further distinction needs to be made in order to implement the amendments that stand in my name.

The Nolan committee recommendations state that the amount of money that Members of Parliament receive is relevant because whether an hon. Member receives £1,000 or £20,000 from an organisation may influence that hon. Member when it comes to disagreeing with that organisation. That point is fundamental to our argument and to our amendments.

Some Conservative Members are concerned about the long-term consequences of going down the disclosure path. There have been many scares about tax returns and I hope that the Leader of the House has calmed some of the hysteria with his answer to my intervention. The scares about hon. Members' income tax returns being made public are no more than smokescreens and diversions from the central issue. I would go further and say that there is far more chance of seeing a real campaign to make hon. Members' tax returns public if my amendments are defeated this evening than if they are carried.

This is an important issue for everyone in the House. Hon. Members on both sides of the House resent the fact that all Members of Parliament are getting a bad name because of the activities of a few. The best way to protect the good name of Parliament and to rebuild public confidence in Parliament is to vote for my amendments this evening.

Several hon. Members *rose—*

Madam Speaker: Order. I remind Members that speeches are now limited to 10 minutes.

5.9 pm

Mr. Tom King (Bridgwater): I am sure that I am not the only hon. Member who regrets that we are debating this matter. There is no question but that the honour and integrity of the House is the responsibility of every individual Member. No matter how many rules are written, there will be attempts to evade them, and the integrity of the House is the most important issue.

The Nolan committee made some unanimous recommendations without dividing on party lines and I very much regret that the Select Committee was unable to do the same. If I hold one Member of Parliament most responsible for that, it is the Leader of the Opposition. I am sorry that he is not here today, although of course I understand why.

I have listened to the right hon. Gentleman holding forth about the need to uphold the integrity of the House and standing up for the moral position of Parliament. I have also read about the deal between trade union leaders and members of the Labour party, in which he made it clear that Labour had to be seen as squeaky clean and that any apparent financial link between unions and Members of Parliament had to end as soon as possible.

The key criterion of the new compromise deal that was put together by a working party of trade unionists and Members of Parliament over several months, during which many unions, including the Transport and General Workers Union, which sponsors the Leader of the Opposition, balked at the idea of losing total control over how their money was spent, was that, under the new system, the money paid to constituencies would not have to be registered. That is clear proof that, whatever rules we make, attempts will be made to avoid transparency.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. King: No. *[Interruption.]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Mr. King.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. King: I shall give way to the hon. Lady, but she must be brief, as I have only 10 minutes.

Mrs. Taylor: I shall be very brief. As a member of the Nolan committee, will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that the Labour party has been pressing for an urgent inquiry into party political funding?

Mr. King: As the hon. Lady will know, the Nolan committee referred to that issue. It referred specifically to the declaration of interests and recommended that we should examine not only political funding, but the financial issues involved. Many hon. Members missed the direct reference by the Nolan committee to the pay of hon. Members and the need to examine that issue.

The party political campaign that has been waged has distracted the attention of the media and that of many hon. Members from many of the most significant elements of the Nolan report. I pay tribute first to the Government's response to the recommendations that were directed towards them. In a singularly ill-attended debate on Thursday night, we dealt with the issues regarding retiring Ministers now being required to go to the Carlisle committee, the introduction of "Conduct and Procedure for Ministers" and the introduction of the code for the civil service—all important new developments.

The other success of the Nolan committee has been to address not just Members, but a wider public outside, including many organisations that deal with Parliament, on the importance of maintaining high standards. One does not have to be Secretary of State for Defence for very long to know about the intense lobbying by forces

[Mr. King]

outside Parliament. Hon. Members on both sides of the House are involved with outside organisations that lobby extremely hard. There has been the growth of a rather casual approach in some quarters. I welcome the fact that the very existence of the Nolan committee has led to the recognition of the importance of maintaining high standards. I can already see signs of their wider recognition.

I dare suggest to the House that the most significant issues are not those that are currently most divisive and the subject of the greatest argument. The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards will make a major and valuable contribution. I hope that hon. Members have had a chance to read his job description and to consider the role that he can play, together with the new Committee on Standards and Privileges and the code of conduct.

He will be helpful in the guidance and advice that he will provide, the maintenance of the register and his ability independently to investigate complaints. I trust that no hon. Member wants any genuine misdemeanour not to be properly investigated. The commissioner will also give proper protection to the innocent, who can be too easily maligned and smeared in the press without adequate recourse. In that respect, the ability to make an independent investigation is valuable.

Some of my hon. Friends are worried that we might have set up somebody who is unaccountable to the House. I said in a previous debate that the commissioner would be selected and appointed by the House, answerable to a Select Committee and able to make his own investigations, but would report the findings of those investigations only to a Committee of the House.

My only query—and I know the difficulties that the Commission faced—concerns the salary chosen for the gentleman in question and the days that it is thought necessary for him to do his work. I have the greatest respect for Sir Gordon Downey, but no Comptroller and Auditor General ever received such a total remuneration as he will now receive, of salary and pension.

I say to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House that I hope that the code of conduct will proceed with the greatest possible haste.

I come now to the alternative approaches that are at the heart of the debate. In Nolan, we suggested that, with the exception of the multi-client agencies and consultancies, the best approach was to permit activities existing at present but to go for full transparency and disclosure. The Select Committee has decided unanimously that it can improve on that and recommends a total ban. I note from some interventions that not all Members are absolutely sure that the Select Committee has got it completely right.

We encountered real difficulties in drawing a distinction between advice and advocacy. We were concerned as to whether it might unreasonably restrict the perfectly legitimate expression of views on behalf of constituents or perfectly reputable outside bodies. We also doubted whether it could be acceptable to the House. If the unanimous view of 15 senior and experienced Members of Parliament is that it can be done, I am prepared to support it, but I worry about the responses by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and by the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) to the intervention about the motions—that a great deal can be done by a subsequent Select Committee, which appears to be able to amend the motions or give different guidance from what may be in the motions at the moment. If my right hon. Friend puts the motions to the House tonight, I shall support them, as they clearly go further than the Nolan committee.

I do worry about the speed with which this whole exercise has been conducted. I know that the Select Committee met quite a number of times, but at the same time I wonder whether what the hon. Member for Dewsbury has described as fundamental changes have been completely thought through. The proposed ban is certainly a major step.

As for disclosure, Nolan of course recommended full transparency in respect of contracts for work related to Parliament, and I believe that that was right, but with the new proposal—

Madam Speaker: Order. Time is up.

5.20 pm

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): I was surprised that the right hon. Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King) saw fit to question the speed at which the Committee operated, since it was his committee which recommended that the changes should be in effect at the beginning of the forthcoming Session. That is why we met with such frequency and diligence during the summer recess. I also regret the somewhat partisan note that he injected. Efforts certainly were made to come to a unanimous view. My view, when the committee produced its first report in July, was that it was worth deliberating during the summer recess, despite the inconvenience, to see whether it was possible to reach agreement. That did not prove possible, and I regret that too.

I particularly regret the fact that the Leader of the House did not feel able in the event to support Nolan's core recommendation that there be full disclosure of Members' outside interests—including the explicit recommendation that they should declare in the register their annual remuneration in respect of services provided in their capacity as Members of Parliament. I do not propose this evening to go beyond dealing with the issue on which the Select Committee was unable to reach a conclusion unanimously, as, between them, the Leader of the House and his shadow have already deployed the arguments that the Committee put forcefully.

The issue that divided us was extremely important. The argument that proposing a ban on paid advocacy by Members dispenses with the need for disclosure of payments for parliamentary services is specious and unconvincing. Nolan did not tie its recommendation of disclosure to Members serving outside interests only as advocates. Nolan specifically rejected the argument that "actual remuneration is irrelevant". Indeed, the Committee described it as not at all convincing.

Nolan went on to say:

> "A member who gets £1,000 a year as a Parliamentary adviser is less likely to be influenced by the prospect of losing that money than one who receives £20,000 a year. The scale of remuneration is in practice relevant to a full understanding of the nature of the service expected."

We must dispense with the impression that some have tried to give: that moving towards a full ban on advocacy, or attempting to redefine the terms of the 1947 resolution, has in some way made it possible or acceptable not to reveal the money given to Members of Parliament in return for their advice.

Mr. Jenkin *rose—*

Mr. Maclennan: I know that the House wants to hear as many speeches as possible, so I must curb my desire to give way to the hon. Gentleman.

I am not alone in entertaining some doubts. The right hon. Member for Bridgwater worried about the practicality of distinguishing between advocacy and advice; and perhaps more importantly, about policing the distinction between them. When I gave evidence to the Nolan committee, I drew attention to some of the difficulties. Someone giving advice about how to obtain an opinion from the House of Commons or from a Minister is coming pretty close to being an advocate.

These moves will not necessarily prove to be the final word on the matter, but it is still worth making explicit the prohibitions set out in the principal resolution before the House today, which describes the activities considered to involve advocacy. This, however, cannot be the end of the matter. The prohibitions do not discharge hon. Members from the explicit duty proposed by Nolan to publish the income that they receive for offering advice to clients as Members of Parliament.

More generally, this debate has to some extent unfortunately been cast in the mould of a discussion about standards in public life. The revelations of the past three years have made that inescapable, but this is not entirely a debate about political morality. It is also—and should be—a debate about the effectiveness of this House. It is not just the venal behaviour of—I believe—not very many Members of Parliament that should be under the spotlight. It is also the inadequacy of Parliament to discharge the functions required of it that has fostered the growth of lobbying, which in turn has led to the problems that we face today.

The huge increase in the volume of legislation, the inadequately prepared and often too partisan nature of that legislation, the inadequacy of the consultation on that legislation, and the speed with which it has been enacted and—frequently—repealed have all contributed to the growth of an army of consultants outside Parliament, whose business it is to get a fair hearing for the important interests of those affected by proposed Government legislation.

This is the problem that underlies the difficulties that we have faced. There has been a vast increase in the amount and speed of the business conducted here. The real problem is that the voices of those affected by what we do have not been heard; consequently there has been a demand for consultants and public relations people, who expend time and effort ensuring that those voices are heard. Conditions today are very different from when the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Sir E. Heath) was first elected. The volume of legislation has doubled; vast amounts of subordinate legislation are not adequately scrutinised. Parliament must take that in hand, or the process of overload will lead to Parliament breaking under the strain and Members falling foul of outside pressures.

I believe that the Nolan committee has offered us some medicine that we have no choice but to swallow, quickly, but there has been a systemic failure in this House and this Parliament that requires much more radical reform. We need a Great Reform Act to unpack our much vaunted Westminster model of government. That wider reform of the constitution is now necessary. The evidence that it is needed emerged, even before Nolan, in the strains and stresses of a system that is breaking.

5.28 pm

Mr. John Biffen (Shropshire, North): My right hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King) described a sense of unease—almost distaste—about the nature of this debate. Obviously no one enjoys talking about his emoluments. But there is also a sense of frustration, in that, ideally, we should like to discuss the whole question of registration and financial disclosure and its regulation and enforcement. The context that that would give our discussions would greatly enhance them, but clearly that cannot be done.

I do not object to the way in which the debate has proceeded in recent months. The House will learn to treasure the stand taken by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) in promoting the desirability of a legal framework within which such measures could be resolved—a point picked out by my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen). With a partnership like that, who knows how it can be countered?

The essential questions are the financial circumstances of Members of Parliament—particularly the undesirability of paid advocacy, and the alternatives that might be sought. In the 1960s and 1970s, I sat on the Government Back Benches and was fascinated by the exposition of James Callaghan in respect of the police and of Brian Walden in respect of turf accountants. It was a sort of dignity and impudence, and it was immensely impressive. No one thought that those Members of Parliament had demeaned themselves by that particular enterprise. No one thought that the House was being treated disparagingly.

I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House is correct when he says that the mood of the public has moved on. What was accepted by the House in the 1960s and 1970s as being natural and beyond question would be of great concern today. If it is the mood of the public that is driving this debate—and I believe that it is—it is not just a matter of the club secretary looking in the suggestions box to see whether things could be done rather better. There is outside the House a powerful mood of anxiety about how Members of Parliament perform. The institution cannot be kept separate from its membership. We are right to react with caution and anxiety, and right to examine what reforms may be made.

Another aspect of the mood of openness is the way in which society outside Parliament is looking at its institutions, which interacts at one point with this debate. Under the Cadbury rules, public limited companies must enumerate directors' fees in their accounts. For individuals for whom such information is an area of fascination, payments made to Members of Parliament are already revealed in corporate accounts. That has nothing to do with the heroic standards of the House but with outside interests. Do not suppose that that can happen without a consequence for the House, the register and the whole issue of hon. Members' interests.

[Mr. John Biffen]

The money that a Member of Parliament receives as a director will be public knowledge but that which he receives as a consultant will remain veiled in mystery. That situation cannot be sustained. It has nothing to do with the decision that we are taking this afternoon but with other forces at work outside the Chamber, which require a different approach to disclosure.

Anyone who felt anxious about the fragility of today's decisions will have them reinforced by the debate. I do not make this point to my right hon. Friend in an aggressive or hostile way, but the moment we try to distinguish between advice and advocacy, we face difficulties. Time and time again, hon. Members have said how difficult will be the question of definition. My right hon. Friend used a delightful phrase—I believe that it was "definitionally critical", which was a Shakespearean touch. All distinctions will become untenable and will make this afternoon's proposals unsustainable. There will inevitably be pressure to produce more rational and extensive disclosure.

When I first entered the House, there was no Register of Members' Interests. The House was as candid, open and honourable then as it is now—although I cannot say that this development is particularly encouraging. I cannot see the House turning away from the requirement for financial disclosure. If that is to come via Cadbury in the corporate sector, that itself will be the engine of change that will run through our procedures. Eventually it will extend to non-parliamentary interests. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Sir E. Heath) said, that throws up the whole question of what information should be entered in the register if it is not a declarable interest in respect of financial disclosure. Those are the problems over the brow of the hill, and they cannot be avoided.

The Prime Minister said that it was greatly his hope that the matter could be resolved in the sense of long-term implications. Of course he is right. Of course the House must resolve the matter, but it must do so more logically and clearly, and—I regret to say—on the far side of the general election, for the general election and partisan politics cast a blight across proper and sustained consideration. Tonight, we will do my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House a favour if we ask him to take away these proposals.

5.36 pm

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) who has, as is so often the cases, something fresh to say about a subject that is already beginning to look a little worn. I particularly welcome the right hon. Gentleman's common-sense observation that right hon. and hon. Members disclose their earnings as directors but apparently do not divulge their income as consultants. That anomaly is becoming increasingly absurd.

I welcome also the right hon. Gentleman's reminder of the 1960s and of the relative rarity of consultancy arrangements in those days. That triggered in my mind an important reform recommended by the Strauss committee in 1969. If its major recommendation had been adopted, it would have avoided much that has followed. Strauss recommended a ban on the advocacy that is now part of the Select Committee's report.

I have watched from outside the activities of the Select Committee, and it would be churlish not to recognise the enormous amount of work that it has done in a short period. Despite the real controversy that still exists between different parts of the House, it is truly remarkable—particularly for anyone who attended the first debate on 18 May—that the members of the Committee unanimously registered agreement across a vast area in their first and second report.

I particularly welcome the proposed ban on paid advocacy in the form that the Select Committee described. I am pleased that the House will ban outright practices such as cash for questions, cash for amendments, cash for early-day motions, cash for private Members' Bills and cash for speeches in the House. I am glad that those visible and objectionable forms of advocacy will be banned.

Let us be realistic—other forms of advocacy will continue. The most important of them is the access that Members of Parliament have to Ministers and civil servants through deputations, letters and private approaches. An alleged example of that form of paid advocacy was widely publicised in the weekend newspapers.

The main issue today is whether the extended ban on advocacy, which the Select Committee has put forward, destroys the case for declaration of amounts paid to Members of Parliament through the enjoyment of other advisory consultancies. The majority of the Select Committee believe that the case for that degree of disclosure no longer exists. A minority strongly disagrees.

The arguments have already been rehearsed—rather well, I think—from both sides of the House, but at this stage it is worth reminding ourselves of precisely what Nolan had to say on that matter. I know that it has been quoted before, but I shall say it again. At paragraph 69, he said:

> "we believe that the public and in particular members' constituents have a right to know what financial benefit its members receive as a consequence of being elected . . . We consider it right therefore that remuneration should be disclosed in these cases."

The report dealt directly with the question: does the amount matter? It has already been quoted, but I shall re-quote it. It said:

> "A member who gets £1,000 per year as a Parliamentary Adviser is less likely to be influenced by the prospect of losing that money than one who receives £20,000 a year. The scale of remuneration is in practice relevant to a full understanding of the nature of the service expected."

By recommending that amounts should not be declared, the majority on the Select Committee has clearly retreated a considerable distance from the Nolan recommendations. A number of points need to be stressed. May I first remind the House that the Nolan committee was unanimous in its report and recommendations, and that among the 10 members of the Committee, there were, apart from a former Clerk of the House, three members with considerable parliamentary experience, representing the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democratic parties? Apart from myself, it included Lord Thomson of Monifieth, who served in this House as George Thomson MP, and the right hon. Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King), who is in his place today.

We all supported the proposal that there should be declared in writing not only the content of consultancy agreements but the amounts actually received, in bands of income. The issue was also raised specifically during the oral hearings of the Nolan committee, and its report noted:

"several MPs with whom we have raised this issue did not object to disclosure of remuneration so long as this related strictly to parliamentary services."

The hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Duncan Smith), whom I see on the Conservative Back Benches and who played an active part in the work of the Select Committee on Members' Interests, was asked by a Nolan committee member whether his advocacy of greater transparency

"should be accompanied by the amount of Income that is attributed to that outside interest".

The hon. Gentleman replied:

"I would have no objection to that."

When pressed about the reaction of Members of Parliament in general, he said:

"I find it difficult to comment on that because I have not talked to the great majority of MPs about it. I simply give my opinion that most MPs would be happy for openness".

The hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith), Chairman of the Select Committee on Members' Interests, when asked the same question, replied, not committedly but quite fairly:

"I think there are arguments on both sides of this question".

It is therefore quite wrong to allege that the proposal for the disclosure of amounts received is simply the work of partisan and ill-disposed Labour Members of Parliament. That is quite false; it is the considered judgment of the Nolan committee and of many people who gave evidence to it.

Mr. King: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Shore: I am sorry, but there is a 10-minute rule.

Of course I understand why there are strong objections to the proposals. According to the present and limited register, 168 Members of Parliament with 356 consultancies have paid agreements with outside bodies. The ban on advocacy will almost certainly lead to the termination of a number of those consultancies, and to a resulting loss of income to their recipients.

As for the rest, the great bulk of consultancies, there is inevitable disquiet, because publication will almost certainly lead to demands that Members of Parliament justify their consultancy earnings. If their constituents are satisfied that these activities promote the public interest and that the Members involved are able to combine those outside paid activities satisfactorily with their primary duty to represent their constituencies and to participate in national affairs, they will have little to fear, but those who cannot so satisfy their constituents will obviously be under pressure to bring the arrangements to an end.

These anxieties, while wholly understandable, do not outweigh the basic need to restore in the public at large confidence in their elected representatives in the House of Commons. The country has a gut feeling that Members of Parliament are here above all to serve them and the nation, and that anything that interferes with that must be justified rather than taken for granted.

The House will recall that the Nolan committee was set up in October last year

"to examine current concerns about standards of conduct of all holders of public office including arrangements relating to financial and commercial activities".

No one should minimise the extent of current concerns about the standards of conduct.

Failure to disclose amounts earned from all Parliament-related consultancy agreements will inevitably lead people to conclude that Members of Parliament have something to hide and cannot justify their consultancy arrangements. Nolan was set up to restore public confidence in elected Members. It will not succeed in that task if the House rejects its major recommendation: to disclose earnings.

5.46 pm

Sir Terence Higgins (Worthing): I declare the various interests that I have recorded in the register.

Ultimately, standards in public life will depend on the talent, ability, skill and integrity of those who are elected to the House. Nolan himself recognised that the issues that he was considering could not be divorced from the issue of Members' pay. I argued at column 1193 on 26 October 1995 that we are in a serious recruitment crisis in the House, not in the sense that there would be too few candidates to fill the seats but that the number of people suitably qualified to come to the House, and more particularly to be drawn from the House to become Ministers, is likely to be adversely affected if we continue the present position with regard to Members' pay.

The situation is such—I analysed it in some depth in my earlier speech—that, if we were to get Members back to the same relative position in relation to the rest of the country, in real terms, Members' pay would have to be doubled and Ministers' pay trebled. I believe firmly that we must also consider that issue in looking at and putting into context today's debate.

I suggested, since Nolan clearly has managed to establish a remarkable degree of independence, that the matter should be referred to him. He pointed out that it was outside his present terms of reference. I believe that those terms need to be changed, and we need a series of all-party discussions so that we can tackle that problem. The matter is urgent, because, if it is going to be done, it has to be done towards the end of this Parliament for implementation in the next. Given the interest in the debate today and the general atmosphere at the present time this may well be our last chance to get the matter sorted out. If we go on the same way in the next 10 years as we have in the past 30, I fear that in 10 years' time a large number of Members in the House will either be placemen or paranoiacs—*[Laughter.]* It is not a laughing matter. I believe that it is a very serious matter indeed.

It is generally agreed, certainly between hon. Members on the Front Benches and all the members of the Select Committee, that the Select Committee worked in an extraordinarily efficient way. We were frequently reported in the press to be deadlocked, but we spent very little time on the matter on which we were deadlocked because it was apparent that we were deadlocked and that the matter would have to be resolved on the Floor of the House.

We spent 25 sittings on this report, and 39 in total, trying to clarify the overall report of the Nolan committee. With the greatest respect to the right hon. Member for

[Sir Terence Higgins]

Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), I must say that we had a great deal of clarification to do. As my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House pointed out, we had to examine the whole issue. He dodged the issue of consultancies; he referred it to us, and we had to come up with what I believe to be a much more sensible solution in relation to banning advocacy. We have defined it pretty precisely—and to the extent that we have not, the new Commissioner for Standards and the new Select Committee will be able to smooth the rough edges.

I must express concern to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House in regard to a rather complicated point that arose in interventions on his opening speech. We spent many hours discussing how we were to deal with the problem of speaking if advocacy was banned; the results of our deliberations are recorded in paragraphs 21 to 26. I had assumed that there would be a catch-all motion saying that we approved the general tone of the report, or the general references in it, but that has not appeared.

There is a motion stating that the drafting will be difficult, and that there will have to be a code of conduct; but, if we pass the motion as it is currently drafted, we shall end up with an interregnum in which speaking in the circumstances in which we envisage it to be permitted will be prohibited until the code has been established by the new Committee. We are constrained by time, as we have been throughout our proceedings on this matter and as the Nolan committee was; but perhaps we can try to resolve that problem this evening.

We have little time for debate. I am sorry that we cannot have a series of separate debates on the various issues—the question of deputations, for instance. Let me conclude by picking up the points made by the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney. The fact is that Nolan viewed the question of disclosing amounts in relation to the confused scenario that he envisaged. He did not envisage, as we do, the total banning of advocacy. Clearly, in that context the question of disclosure simply does not arise any more. One of the main evils—perhaps the main evil—with which Nolan sought to deal was the idea that people exert influence on this place from outside by paying money to hon. Members. We have now ruled that out, so in that context it does not arise.

As for the provision of advice, as the report points out, the amount paid is likely to reflect either the resources of the recipient of the advice or the quality of that advice; but it will not affect the performance of hon. Members in the House. If it does, it will be caught by the rules and suitable sanctions will be applied. Another point made by the right hon. Gentleman needs to be dealt with, however. He said that we should reveal the amounts that are paid to hon. Members as a result of their election to the House. The implication is that hon. Members are spending considerable time outside, dealing with consultancies and so forth, rather than being in the House.

We all know perfectly well what the position really is. Many hon. Members with large outside interests are among the most enthusiastic and hard-working parliamentarians; probably no hon. Member works less than would be regarded outside as a normal working week. On the other hand, there are hon. Members—including some of those who are keenest to suggest that Members of Parliament should be full time—who do not, perhaps, serve as much as they might on Standing or Select Committees. The amount that is paid is no indication of the amount of time that Members spend in the House. I believe that we are all full-time Members, regardless of whether we have other occupations outside.

Let me return to the main issue. I do not believe that disclosure is necessary. I disagree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen); I take his point about public limited companies—no doubt his and my remuneration as directors are recorded in the annual reports—but I do not think that that justifies the extension advocated by Opposition Members. I hold that view not least because it is difficult to define whether a particular interest arises from membership of the House. Many hon. Members are now doing, on a much smaller scale, what they did before—probably in return for a much smaller income than they received then. Any statement of what they are receiving as a result of membership of the House should perhaps also take into account how much they were receiving before, and the amount by which their income has dropped as a result of that membership.

For all those reasons, I do not think that we should go along with the idea of disclosure of amounts. It has been overtaken by developments advocated by the Select Committee, which I consider a substantial improvement. Because disclosure has been the sole issue on which the press and, to a large degree, the Opposition have concentrated, we are overlooking the great extent to which we are tightening the rules with regard to the Commissioner, the new Committee and the banning of many practices which I—along, I believe, with many others—regard as completely wrong.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North said, the atmosphere has changed; but I believe that we should be able to support the changes that we are now proposing in front of our constituents. I hope that the House will not accept the Opposition amendment.

5.55 pm

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): Inexplicably, the right hon. Member for Worthing (Sir T. Higgins) excluded the possibility that Members of Parliament can be both placemen and paranoiacs. I think the House might have spared him a minute or so more to explain why.

I have long had the honour of being sponsored by the Co-operative movement, which does not make secret donations in any form—directly or indirectly—to any Member of the House. My interest is one that I declare with pride. There is nothing hole-in-corner about Co-operative sponsorship. No payment is made to the Member of Parliament and the contribution made to her or his allowable election costs is there for all to see. It is out in the open, fully disclosed and fully accounted for: a model of open dealing and political cleanliness.

Along with the hon. Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox), I am also joint parliamentary adviser to the Royal British Legion, which is a wholly honorary role, both in my case and in his.

Full disclosure of what is spent by private interests to influence decisions of the House—in particular, what is paid to individual Members—is now essential to the health of our democracy. If the mandatory declaration of

Members' earnings for work done in a parliamentary capacity for outside interests is not secured today, the battle for transparency must go on—and go on it will until no organ of opinion has cause to write, as one not unfriendly to the Government now does:

> "Do Tory MPs realise how grubby they make themselves look? By fighting tooth and nail to keep secret how much they earn on the side, they give the impression they have something to hide. They should stop acting like Arthur Daleys and realise that the public has the right to know what extras they are raking in."

That is not from *The Guardian*, *New Statesman and Society* or *The Observer*; it is from a leader in *The Sun* and, as every test of opinion shows, it reflects the view of the vast majority of the British people. They now no longer request, but insist, that backstairs payments for political favours must cease.

Mr. Rupert Allason (Torbay): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Morris: I have a time limit.

Mr. Allason: I shall be very brief. Those of us who advocate complete transparency accept what the right hon. Gentleman says, but does he agree that it would be a good idea to extend that transparency to payments to constituencies by trade unions?

Hon. Members: It is already happening.

Mr. Morris: As has been explained to the hon. Member for Torbay (Mr. Allason), what he seeks is happening now. I am saying that backstairs payments for political favours must cease.

The response of some hon. Members will be to say that what they decide to keep secret about their outside earnings for parliamentary work is their business, and their business alone: that it has nothing to do with *The Sun*, with hon. Members who take a different view or with anyone else. I implore them to think again before we vote tonight. In particular, I ask them to stop being so self-indulgent, to the detriment not only of parliamentary colleagues but of the institution of Parliament itself. Taking and concealing money for parliamentary favours is demeaning to us all and puts an undoubted stain on the reputation of this House. That is why what they do in the matter that we are debating today is our business too.

The vast majority of the electorate also insist that everything that we say and do here must now be said and done in the open. As the House knows, I serve on the Privileges Committee. I made plain, from the moment the Committee was reconstituted in July 1994, my view that it should never meet again in secret except where, for some compelling reason, more especially one involving any possible breach of natural justice, it unavoidably had to do so. Yet we still meet wholly in secret even when there is no conceivable legal or other reason for so doing and even if a witness specifically requests to be heard in public, as Peter Preston did in the case of his appearance before the Privileges Committee earlier this year.

The Prime Minister has told me that his support for secret meetings of the Committee is based on respect for precedents. "That's how it has always been" is his justification. But in the light of the seven principles of acceptable conduct in public life that were enunciated by Lord Nolan—selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership—the Prime Minister's stance is no longer tenable. The Nolan committee puts precept into practice and I hope that its example will very soon bring the proceedings of the Privileges Committee out of the shadows and into the 20th century while there are still a few years of it left. That would help to cleanse the reputation of the House and, at the same time, improve the quality of justice that is dispensed by its most powerful Committee.

The public now want not only to hear talk about principles but to see them rigorously applied. They are entitled to see beyond the doors of the Committee Rooms of the House, to know what is happening as it happens, and to expect the Nolan committee to bark ever more loudly for the highest achievable standards in public life. I find it a matter for deep regret that the decision by the Special Select Committee on full disclosure of earnings that arises from membership of the House was taken by a casting vote, and that members of the Committee divided wholly on the basis of party allegiance.

I hope that, after this debate, the divide on full disclosure will no longer be one between right and left but will be seen in all parts of the House as one between right and wrong. It is not too late now for us to unite in the cause of open dealing and restoring the reputation of this honourable House.

6.2 pm

Sir Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): I declare all my interests as entered in the Register of Members' Interests. None of them has any connection with parliamentary affairs.

Madam Speaker was kind enough to call me in our earlier debate on these issues, and I was hesitant about taking part today. However, there are one or two matters that I should like to mention. First, with the greatest respect to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, the whole of this affair has been appallingly handled and today has been an excellent example of that. We are squashed into a three-hour debate on an important, controversial and complicated subject. There has been little discussion of the other major issues in my right hon. Friend's speech and in his report simply because there is not enough time.

It has not been possible to interrupt some hon. Members because they can immediately say, quite rightly, "I have only 10 minutes." This is no way to conduct the business of the House of Commons. I do not blame the Leader of the House, because he is under tremendous pressure, above all from Opposition Front Benchers who have been screaming the whole time for rapid decisions because they want a decision on the revelation of Members' incomes.

I adhere to all the points that I made in my earlier speech and, in particular, to what I said about the appointment of a commissioner. I do not think that the House altogether recognises the problems that will face him. Any political agitator in the country will be able to write to him making allegations about Members' conduct in the economic sphere, and the commissioner will be bound to investigate them. In the course of that, all the allegations will become public.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: No.

Sir Edward Heath: Of course they can become public. The hon. Lady cannot simply think that, when the

[Sir Edward Heath]

commissioner starts investigating, the chap who put the allegations will not give them to the press. It will all come out and be published. If the allegations are irresponsible, there is no reason why they should be thrown to the public, and that is the problem that the commissioner will face. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman likes to indulge in unjustifiable allegations. We have had infinite examples of that, but perhaps he will desist for a moment.

I say to the Liberal Democrat spokesman, the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), that the proposed bands if incomes are reviewed are absolute nonsense. What justification could there be for that? Are we to say that, if an hon. Member is only mildly dishonest, we should do so and so, but that, if he is tremendously dishonourable, we should take certain other actions?

The hon. Gentleman is also wrong to say that, if an hon. Member had only his parliamentary income to live on and is offered £1,000 or £2,000, that is important to him. If he is a barrister earning £250,000 a year from fees, £20,000 is neither here nor there. We cannot categorise people's morality and honesty by trying to move financial barriers up and down. That is a great failure of his argument.

The argument with which I agreed was about the difficulties of industry, and in some cases the professions, in dealing with the Government. In this country there is an enormous gap between them, and people in industry do not know how to deal with Government Departments. I discovered that 30 years ago in the European negotiations, when I found out how close businesses in the other European Union countries were to their Governments and Ministers. Business men flew to Brussels to brief them while they were carrying on negotiations. If I mentioned that I was going to Brussels, business men would ask, "What for? Where is Brussels anyway?" That is a weakness in our structure and that is why business takes the view, "These people can help us and advise us and tell us how to do things." That is why the market has grown in such a remarkable way.

I shall now deal with the question of the public having a right to know. Of course people have a right to know about our public salaries, but we have a right to privacy. Why should people have a right to know about the financial rewards for our individual private activities? That does not stand up to any examination. It has just become a cry, "They have a right to know about us." The public have a right to know about our public position and public rewards, but not about our private activities—*[Interruption.]* That argument has gone out of the window. What is the point of publishing the private income of hon. Members?

Mr. Bryan Davies (Oldham, Central and Royton): We are not proposing that.

Sir Edward Heath: In that case, the hon. Gentleman disagrees with the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), who says that it has to be published if someone is registered at the moment.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for allowing me to correct the impression that he is giving. I am not saying that everything that is registered at the moment should be declared in terms of the amount earned. At the beginning of his speech, the right hon. Gentleman said that none of his outside interests was related to parliamentary activities. In that case, none of them is covered by my amendment requiring disclosure of amounts.

Sir Edward Heath: The hon. Lady is on two entirely separate points. The first is about activities related to parliamentary activities, and they are registered. She went on to say that of course those that are not related must also continue to be registered. But what is the point of registering them if they are not connected with parliamentary activities? There is no relationship at all.

On activities concerned with parliamentary activities, what is the argument for publishing the private income that a Member receives? There is no argument for it—none at all. It is just that the Labour party wants and has always wanted to publicise what Conservative Members are earning because it has always had a doctrine of envy and hatred. We know it—we have been dealing with it for a long time. The Labour party cannot produce a single valid argument for publishing those incomes connected with parliamentary activities.

Whatever Nolan may have said, he justified this House as being a very honourable House, and so it is. No justification exists for getting into the complicated arrangements that are set out here. That is why I have continually objected to these things and to the way in which they have been handled here. There has not been proper time to examine them. The Leader of the House will agree that his Select Committee has not had proper time. It has had to sit all through the summer recess. That is no way to handle the business.

This House has always been known as an honourable House and Members have been known as honourable Members. That is the way that we should behave in future and the matter should not be tied down with the machinations of Labour Members. If we want to know their real purpose, one has only to consider their handout which was released last weekend, entitled "News From Labour". What does it say? They are going to write to 125 Members—I have not received a letter—and say, "You must tell us what your income is."

Mr. Andrew Mackinlay (Thurrock): Read it.

Sir Edward Heath: I am not going to take up time reading out the handout—Labour Members have got copies anyhow. It says, "Unless you tell us what your income is, we shall come time and time and time again, demanding that you reveal what you are being paid." What does that mean?

Mr. Bryan Davies: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Edward Heath: No.

That means that the next election will be fought by Labour party agitators going to meetings and interrupting the whole time with only one question, "What is your income?" They want to fight an election not on policies but on envy, greed and dislike for the people in politics.

6.11 pm

Dr. Tony Wright (Cannock and Burntwood): The most devastating paragraph in the Nolan report is paragraph 58, which deals with the failure of the House over the years to put itself into some sort of order. It says that, if the House had only done that, had attended to reports such as the Strauss report and to recommendations such as those of the Salmon commission in 1976 and had dealt with the need to have an effective Register of Members' Interests and bring it up to date, it would not have brought the present situation on itself. At the end of paragraph 58—this is the one sentence that I want to quote because it is a consummate understatement of the position in which the House finds itself—the Nolan report says:

> "The overall picture is not one of an institution whose Members have been quick to recognise or respond to public concern."

That surely is the root of all that we are talking about today.

I welcome the advocacy ban, because it is an attempt finally to get to grips with things that the House thought it had established almost half a century ago, in 1947. It turned out that it had not. The House failed to respond, which is why we are at this point today.

The ban as described in the motions is not effective enough without the amendment, because it leaves open all the ways in which, informally, hon. Members can still make representations on the part of interests for which they are paid. That cannot be right. That gap must be closed to make the ban effective, but it is nevertheless important.

There are two principles in all this. One is prohibition. The House should say clearly, without any room for doubt, that it is not acceptable for a Member of Parliament to do certain things such as taking money from outside organisations to promote causes in this place. That is what the advocacy ban will do.

The second principle is that of transparency. People must be able to see what is going on here, how we conduct ourselves and what we are doing. The right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) caught the essential mood of the moment when he said, "We have to take into account not what we say about these things but what people outside are saying." If hon. Members cannot recognise the country's mood now, they do not really understand what people are trying to say to them. People want to see that we are able to clean up our act. If we seem unable to do so, they will reach conclusions that will take us into ever more desperate circumstances.

I do not believe that some of the distinctions that the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life has tried to make are ultimately tenable, as the distinction between multi-client and single-client organisations was untenable: it fell away once it had begun to be scratched. The distinction between Parliament-related activities and non-Parliament-related activities is not effective and it will begin to disintegrate when the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards begins to consider it, which is why I tabled an amendment that I suppose stands as "the income tax return" amendment. It is not that—it does not require that—but that is what it stands as.

People want to know the answer to certain questions. First, they want to know whether Members of Parliament have other jobs and, secondly, if so, what those other jobs are for. Thirdly, they want to know how much they get paid for those other jobs and, fourthly, how much time they devote to them. No doubt our constituents and the people of this country are awfully naive about these things, but those are precisely the questions that they are asking of us. They happen to think that they elect us to be Members of Parliament and to represent them, and that it is a job in itself. If that is not true, now is the moment for the House to tell the people of this country that it is not true.

I notice that, over the weekend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster stumbled into that matter when he said that being a Member of Parliament was a part-time occupation. I congratulate him on the direct way in which he approaches the issue, but, if that is the House's answer to those questions, let it answer openly and not in terms of arguments about spurious distinctions that do not stand up.

Having said that, I have been prevailed upon and persuaded that Conservative Members would not understand if I were to press what is called "the income tax return" amendment—amendment (n). They say that they are confused about all this and that their confusion will be increased if the amendment is allowed to stand. From the interventions that were made earlier, it was clear that Conservative Members were mightily confused about what was proposed. In the interests of enlightenment and the reduction of confusion, I am prepared to withdraw the amendment.

On any view, we are at a moment when the House and Parliament must take a view on whether they want to start the process of fundamental reform, of which this is only a part—indeed, it is only the beginning and, in some ways, the least significant part—or watch themselves decline ever further in public esteem.

The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Sir E. Heath) said that people effectively had no right to know certain things. People do have a right to have confidence in their public institutions and, above all, in Parliament. At the moment, Parliament is getting dangerously close to eroding that confidence. What it decides today will decide whether it starts to restore it.

6.19 pm

Sir Timothy Sainsbury (Hove): I hope that the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Dr. Wright) will understand if I do not respond in detail to what he said, much as I am tempted to do so, because we are limited by time. I rather agree with those who have said that it would have been better to have a longer debate on these issues. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) said, that would have enabled us to put the issues into a wider context, and they would then have been more easily understood.

If we are to achieve our objective—which I hope we all share—of protecting the good name of Parliament, it might have been better to consider all the issues together. Instead, we are dealing with only one of three closely related issues—the advocacy or consultancy services provided by Members of Parliament in their capacity as Members of Parliament. I recognise, as have others who have spoken, that there are difficulties of definition. However, I believe that the Select Committee is broadly right in its proposals on advocacy and that the Nolan committee and the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) are broadly right in what they say on consultancies.

I have some reservations. Indeed, the hon. Lady's amendment would attract more sympathy from me—and, I suspect, others—if it dealt with several other issues. First, there is the issue of timing. Before we began our debate, several hon. Members tried to establish whether

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we could consider implementing full disclosure at the start of the next Parliament, rather than the next Session. That would be a fairer and simpler system, which would allow a new Parliament to start with a new set of rules. I am not saying that we should not implement other aspects of the Nolan recommendations immediately, but full disclosure, which is a radical change, should be introduced with the next Parliament. The Opposition would attract more sympathy if they accepted that.

It would be helpful if we could have a clear declaration from the Opposition Front Bench that there is no longer the intention to move to the "income tax return" suggestion of the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood, and repeated several times, from a sedentary position, by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner). They rather contradicted the hon. Member for Dewsbury.

The second issue that I believe the House should be debating today is the need unequivocally to declare support for the Nolan committee on another point. I refer to paragraph 19 of the first report, where the committee states clearly that it is desirable for the

> "House of Commons to contain Members with a wide variety of continuing outside interests."

I sincerely believe that we will do this House and the country a grave disservice by any suggestion that all outside interests should be banned or fully disclosed.

The third issue that should be debated now has already been raised many times, but no more eloquently than by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Sir T. Higgins). I refer to the absurd and wide disparity between the pay of Members of Parliament, especially Ministers, and the salaries and remunerations that can be obtained outside the House. When I was a Minister at the Department of Trade and Industry, I found it bizarre to be spending much of my time in negotiation and discussion trying to help industrialists being paid five, 10 or even more times the salary of a Minister of State. Again, the House will do itself and the country a disservice if it does not agree now to deal with that issue before a general election and on an all-party basis.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing set out the reasons, facts and figures clearly. However, I want to contribute a few ideas. Perhaps it might be possible for pay to be improved in part by a much wider range of Members receiving additional payments. For example, perhaps all Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen, not just a small number, should receive additional payments. Perhaps additional payments should be made to the Chairmen of Select Committees, as they clearly carry a considerable burden.

I think that the whole matter has been a little rushed and we have not had sufficient time to debate it. We are not dealing with the whole range of issues. It might have been better if not only the proposals put forward by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, but those put forward by the Opposition had been taken away for more thought.

6.25 pm

Mr. John Evans (St. Helens, North): I proudly declare that I am a skilled member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and have been since I was 16. That organisation pays the sum of £600 to my constituency Labour party as well as an agreed amount of my election expenses. Those are duly recorded in the candidates' return, and always have been.

I pay tribute to the Leader of the House and to my hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) for the way in which, together, they led the Select Committee and worked hard to seek considerable areas of unanimity. However, I make the plea that never again should the House of Commons inflict such a duty on hon. Members and expect them to produce such a detailed report in such a short time.

I shall comment on two issues, one of which was raised by the right hon. Member for Worthing (Sir T. Higgins), who served on the Committee: the absurd suggestion that if the House tonight agrees to the recommendation on disclosure of earnings, it will result in far fewer people wishing to stand as Members of Parliament. Indeed, according to the Deputy Prime Minister, it would change the very nature of the House of Commons. There was a story in *The Observer* last week, which I understand emanated from the Paymaster General, that if the House votes that earnings should be revealed, about 100 Tory Members will leave the House at the next election.

If there is any truth in the claim that a whole phalanx of Tories will stand down and that there will be great difficulty in attracting new candidates to take their place, that is a shocking commentary on the modern Tory party. Essentially it means that the principal interest of so many Tories is not to be elected to the House to serve their constituents or their country, but to get their hands on fat juicy consultancies to enhance their standard of living. I do not believe that there is a single word of truth in such utter nonsense. However, if senior members of the Government make such statements, it is hardly surprising if people begin to wonder what on earth the Tory party is up to.

The second point that I want to raise relates to delegations to Ministers, something on which the Committee spent some time. I made it clear in Committee that I felt it to be one of the gravest areas of concern in the entire issue of sleaze in public life. After all, if a consultant to a company can arrange a meeting for the chairman or chief executive of that company with a Minister of the Crown, he certainly justifies his salary of £5,000, £10,000 or £20,000. If the allegations in *The Sunday Times* about the hon. Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Porter) were anywhere near the truth, the position is even worse than I suspected. It is not just a question of paid Members of Parliament fixing meetings for their own employers, but apparently individual Members of Parliament are anxious to meet clients who want to meet Ministers.

I can only assume that the statements of the hon. Member for Wirral, South in *The Sunday Times* are true, a newspaper with the background of *The Sunday Times* would not print them. The matter will be raised with the hon. Member for Wirral, South and he will have to deal with the occasion on which he was approached by business men claiming to be acting for the good of British industry. The hon. Gentleman said:

> "And I say,'oh yeah.' In fact, what they are doing is try to use some sort of political input to advance a commercial interest. Nothing the matter with that. I have no complaint about that at all. But if it's a commercial enterprise, I'm commercial."

That is the clearest indication—

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Evans: I wrote to the hon. Gentleman. I cannot give way because I have only 10 minutes. I will talk to the hon. Gentleman outside the Chamber.

Mr. Porter: I am much obliged to the hon. Gentleman for the courtesy of letting me know that he was going to raise this matter in the House. Perhaps he would be good enough the read the last paragraph of what *The Sunday Times* said. In case he does not have it, I shall remind him. It said that I am not in breach of any rules of this House or of any law.

Mr. Evans: The hon. Gentleman has put his finger on the kernel of the argument. If he is not in breach of any rules then, by God, the rules of the House need changing.

Of course, such conduct will be dealt with in future by the new parliamentary Committee and the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. The need for such an expensive post—and it is expensive, at £78,000 for a four-day week—has been created by the activities of a handful of hon. Members who were willing to take cash for questions or expensive freebies in the Ritz hotel in Paris and by the Prime Minister's knee-jerk reaction to the allegations of sleaze and his establishment of the Nolan committee.

The Nolan committee established that there is widespread public concern about declining standards in public life. According to an opinion poll on page 108 of the Nolan report, 64 per cent. agreed with the statement:

> "Most MPs make a lot of money by using public office improperly".

Nolan also revealed that 168 hon. Members had 356 consultancies between them. The fact that most of those 168 are Tories revealed the size of the problem that the Prime Minister inherited when Nolan called for disclosure of the earnings of Members of Parliament.

The Prime Minister dealt with the problem in typical fashion by setting up another committee, the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life, and charging it with producing a report before the summer recess. It did; and recommended—and the House accepted—the appointment of a new commissioner, a new Select Committee on Standards and Privileges and a new code of conduct for Members. However, the Committee was divided on the issue of disclosure of earnings. Labour Members backed Nolan and, to no one's surprise, Tory Members on the Committee rejected disclosure.

The Chairman of the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life, the Leader of the House, dared not, at that stage, reject Nolan out of hand. After all, the Prime Minister had on 20 May, just two days after the acrimonious debate on 18 May, stated:

> "I do not just accept the broad thrust of Nolan. I agree with it."

The Leader of the House produced a formula for the debate on the Select Committee's first report on 19 July which stated that the Committee needed more time to study all the aspects of disclosure of earnings. The Leader of the House—he will not mind me saying this—was conducting a charade. The Tory members of the Committee had no intention whatsoever of supporting disclosure. In the Select Committee, we were not deadlocked over the issue, as the press frequently reported. The only discussion we had on the subject took about five minutes, when we had a vote on the principles of the five options relating to Lord Nolan's demand for disclosure of earnings.

The options started with full disclosure, which the Opposition parties voted for, and then moved, by stages, further away from disclosure until there was no absolutely no disclosure—and the Tories voted for that. The Committee then agreed, without further ado or debate, that both sides would write their own versions of what they wanted in the final report and that we would vote on them in the Committee's formal and final session. That is what we did.

The Tories have made a silly mistake. A third option was available to them which called for disclosure of earnings to the new commissioner only. If they had accepted that, many Conservative Members who are concerned about the matter would have been happy. They could have lived with that and voted for it. Of course, the Tories rejected it.

If the Tories win the vote tonight, they will again leave the British people with the impression that they have something dreadful to hide. That will not go away and, as the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Sir E. Heath) said, it will certainly be an issue at the next general election.

6.35 pm

Sir John Stanley (Tonbridge and Malling): The two issues that have run through the debate are the declaration of earnings and the implications of the ban on advocacy, which, I believe, are much more profound than some hon. Members have suggested.

I will state my position on the declaration of earnings. I believe that the Nolan recommendations were poorly drafted. They certainly failed to clarify what was meant by "contract" and by "agreement". As to the basic principle, I do not have any objection on grounds of principle to the proposition that, where hon. Members supplement their income by providing parliamentary services to outside bodies, both the source and quanta of the sums earned should be declarable. I shall support that Nolan recommendation tonight.

The main issue before the House tonight is the implications of the declaration of the ban on what has been known as paid advocacy. The hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) suggested in her opening remarks that the 1947 declaration against paid advocacy has had a material effect on the conduct of the House. In the more than 20 years that I have been in the House, paid advocacy has been alive and well throughout the House.

There have been any number of debates featuring hon. Members who have declared an interest in an outside organisation, whether a trade association or trade union, and who have clearly advocated the interest of that organisation in the course of the debate. I do not know that the 1947 declaration has had much impact, if that was indeed for what it was intended.

The so-called addendum that the Government are moving is designed to carry the matter further. That has some very real implications for what I believe to be the most fundamental right of hon. Members—the right to

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speak in our proceedings in a wholly uninhibited way and to take part in our proceedings on the same basis as would any other hon. Member.

I draw the House's attention to the fact that the motion before us, over which the hon. Member for Dewsbury skipped extraordinarily lightly, proposes to a huge extent the banning of the initiation of debates by those who receive not only payments but benefits in kind, direct or indirect. I should have thought that that would have been a matter of some interest to the Labour party. The Nolan committee reported that there are 221 hon. Members with sponsorships, financial consultancies or other sorts of financial interests from trade unions. I wonder why the Labour party is not more concerned about the implications of that ban on initiating debate.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir John Stanley: I have only a short time.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House said in opening the debate that, although such hon. Members may not initiate debates, they could take part in them. However, my right hon. Friend used a form of words whereby he said that, although they could take part, they would have to choose their words with care. He used the same expression in his interview on the "Today" programme last Friday. No Member of this House should be in the business of some form of self-imposed censorship—choosing his or her words carefully. I do not intend to choose my words carefully within the bounds of parliamentary expression. I am obliged to say what I think and be absolutely straight about what I believe is on the agenda.

Moreover, there is not merely to be an inhibition of power to be able to initiate debates. Paragraph 23 of the Select Committee's report postulated that hon. Members might, in some circumstances, be debarred from taking part in debates at all. That is a most profound inhibition and potential intrusion on hon. Members' right of free speech. The relevant sentence says:

> "On the other hand, it is not practicable to lay down in advance, with the precision that a Resolution of the House would require, all the circumstances in which it would or would not be proper for a Member with a paid interest to take part in a debate."

It will have profound consequences if we contemplate circumstances in which a large number of hon. Members were prevented from initiating debates, obliged to choose their words with care if they were to take part in debates and, in some circumstances, were unable to participate in debates at all.

Those are profoundly important matters, and it is not sufficient for the Select Committee simply to say that they should be left to the new commissioner, who is simply an official of the House, the new Select Committee or the new code of conduct. I do not criticise the Committee, which has done a Herculean job. It has had to work under a totally artificial time constraint, which seemed to be dictated by the political requirements of the Opposition.

I see no need to rush these proposals, because the implications of a ban on advocacy for the most fundamental right of all Members of Parliament—the right of freedom of speech—must be thought through infinitely more carefully. We must know precisely who will be banned from what, which is not clear at present. The motions before us tonight should be withdrawn and the matter referred back to the Select Committee. It is for the whole House, and the House alone, to decide who will be banned from what in participating in our proceedings.

6.42 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): My interests are recorded in the Register of Members' Interests in the usual way.

It gives me no pleasure to say that we heard a mischievous and disagreeable speech from the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Sir E. Heath). It was totally distorted, as is his article in the *Evening Standard* today. He gave the impression in his speech that all is well in the House, there is no need for change and we are an incorruptible Assembly. I would remind him—he is no longer in his place—how this matter began and why the Nolan committee was set up in the first place: it was the cash-for-questions scandal.

When we first debated the matter, I said that *The Sunday Times* should be not criticised for what it did. Rather, it should be congratulated because, had it not carried out such an investigation, those matters would not have come to light and the reforms and recommendations before the House today would never have been agreed to. Although I am willing to, and often do, criticise that newspaper, I believe that it was in the overall interests of the House and of parliamentary democracy to bring those matters to light. That is why I believe that what it did was justified.

It is important to recognise—the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup did not recognise this—that the main controversy over financial disclosure arises not from some sinister Labour party plot but, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) said, from the Nolan committee's recommendation. The Prime Minister was right to set up the Nolan committee and had our full support in so doing, so it is difficult to understand why, having said when it reported that he would support it, he has now opted out.

He has caved in to Conservative Back Benchers—some of whom are here tonight; others are not—who were totally opposed to setting up the Nolan committee in the first place. They made it perfectly clear that they did not like the idea and saw no reason why the committee should be set up. Their agitation alerted the Tory Whips to a position that has led the Prime Minister not to support a crucial part of the Nolan recommendations.

On privacy, I believe that some aspects of our personal lives are indeed our business. There was no justification for the tabloids recently exposing some of the so-called "scandals", be they about Conservative or Opposition Members, because the public interest was in no way involved. Certain aspects of hon. Members' private lives have no relevance to their parliamentary duties. However, hon. Members cannot take the view, which some Tory Members wish to take, that financial matters are purely our business and that there is no reason why the public should know what we earn from outside sources. I do not accept that view for a moment. In other countries, such as the United States, far more information must be given than what the Nolan committee recommends.

I doubt whether many hon. Members would dispute that there is public support on the crucial question whether matters relating to parliamentary activity—those financial details—should be given. There is overwhelming support in the country, far outside the Labour party, for the recommendation. Conservative Members who are adamant in their opposition to it form a small minority in the country. Even the newspapers that would normally support the Conservative cause have not supported the Tory Members who are opposed to Nolan on this issue. I cannot but emphasise, and I doubt whether any Conservative Members could disagree, that among the public at large there is overwhelming support for giving information on activities that arise from our parliamentary duties, as recommended by Nolan, in bands. What is wrong with that? Why are Conservative Members so reluctant to give that information?

If we lose tonight's vote, it will be a defeat not just for this crucial amendment but for the House. It will demonstrate that we are unable to reform ourselves, which will reflect on us all, including those hon. Members who vote for the amendment. There will continue to be a general feeling in the country that we are all in this for ourselves and are all on the make. That would be a most unjust attitude to take, but it is undoubtedly being taken.

As some of my hon. Friends have said, if the amendment about financial disclosure is not carried tonight, the issue will not go away. It will come back in this Parliament and even more so in the next. It will be a continued sore within the parliamentary and democratic system. Why do not we demonstrate our courage tonight and admit that parliamentary reform of this nature is necessary? It is what the country wants and I believe that the country is right to want it. If it is justified, why should we defy public opinion in this way? I trust that, despite all the difficulties of getting a majority for the amendment tonight, it will be carried.

6.49 pm

Mr. David Wilshire (Spelthorne): Even though I have no interests covered by the resolutions, I decided to become actively involved in the matter because I am fed up with being called a sleazebag. Every time that all Tory Members of Parliament are attacked, I am included, and quite frankly, it hurts. I have absolutely no doubt, however, that the overwhelming majority of Members of Parliament, whatever their political party, are decent, honourable and hard-working people. However, the public no longer think that that is true. They have reached that conclusion because of the well-publicised activities of a few hon. Members. Tonight, we have the chance to put that behind us. If it hurts us to do that, I am afraid that we have only ourselves to blame.

Because time is short, I want to confine my remarks to one issue—the disclosure of relevant outside earnings. I have come to the conclusion that we simply must disclose them. I admit that, in an ideal world, I would disagree with that and would not want to disclose such information; but we do not live in an ideal world, and we are not in an ideal House. In my judgment, the disclosure of relevant earnings has become the price that we must pay. If we do not pay that price tonight, the issue will come back, and next time the price will be higher. If we do not pay it then, the issue will come back yet again and the price will have gone up once more.

I understand the arguments of colleagues and hon. Friends—that privacy is important, and that the slippery slope beckons. My constituents and the contents of my mailbag tell me that the public do not buy those arguments. They do not believe that the Select Committee has gone far enough.

The recommendations of the Select Committee go further in respect of advocacy, and my constituents and everyone else I have spoken to are absolutely delighted about that. The Select Committee stopped short, however, of the Nolan recommendations on the giving of advice. The public will not understand that, and will not be reassured by that.

Recent history has left us in the House with no choice other than not only to be above reproach but to have 150 per cent. proof that we are so. That is why we have to pay the price that some of us do not like.

I should like to mention two matters of detail covered by my amendments. The first relates to the question of disclosing bands, to which my amendments (d) and (e) refer. I am against disclosing income in bands, for two simple reasons. First, the Select Committee report requires us to draw up contracts in detail, and to submit them. If we go for bands, we shall have to Tippex out the amount in the agreement and then write another letter. I do not particularly want to do that.

Secondly, I hope that it has occurred to hon. Members that, if we agree to bands and someone chooses to pay us £100 for giving advice, we will then be put in the band ranging from £1 to £1,000. You can bet your bottom dollar, Madam Speaker, that *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* will report that we have received £1,000, not £100, because we are in that band. I caution against bands, but I will not go to the stake for that principle.

My amendments (j) and (o) would make financial information declarable after the next general election. I must make it clear, however, that my amendments are not designed to put off the decision of principle until after the election. We shall take that decision of principle tonight, and we will then be left to implement everything barring making a declaration about amounts of money. I believe that that is the correct approach, for two reasons.

First, some hon. Members find a salary of £33,000 more than enough, and I respect them for that. Others come to the House, however, with certain commitments, and having made salaries well in excess of a hon. Member's salary. I respect them for that, too. There is absolutely nothing dishonourable about being in that position. If we expect those people to change the circumstances in which they find themselves, I judge that five months is not time enough for them to do so. I believe that they should be given until the date of the next general election.

Secondly, the declaration of that financial information should be put off until after the next election because of the antics of some on the Opposition Benches. I respect and agree with the official line of the Labour party that such available information is for the good of the House. Some Opposition Members, however, are already grubbing around for votes. Some of them are crowing merrily and saying, "Just you wait until the next general election, when we have the resolution. We will use it for party political purposes." I deplore such an attitude. By removing the temptation to acquire any such financial information before the next general election, my amendments enable the Labour party to prove that its members are not grubbing around for votes.

[Mr. David Wilshire]

Tonight, the House faces a clear, straightforward and simple challenge: do we have what it takes to restore public confidence in the House of Commons? Are we prepared to swallow hard and pay a high price to redeem our reputation? Tonight, we do not have to decide whether we support the Government or the Labour party. Over the past few days, journalists have kept on asking me whether I intend to vote with the Labour party. One even asked me whether I planned to do the same as the hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth). The answer to that was simple—hell will freeze over before I join the Labour party.

Tonight, I am not voting for the Labour party; tonight no one will be voting for Labour—people will be voting for Parliament. I am not voting against my friends and my Government, but I am voting against sleaze, and I urge the House to do the same.

6.56 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): My constituency receives financial support from Unison.

I congratulate the Select Committee on producing an excellent report after a lot of work. In particular, I further congratulate it on going down the route that I think I might modestly say that I set out during the course of my contribution to the July debate, when I referred to an extension of the 1947 resolution.

In the seconds available to me, I should like to pose the House a series of questions. What does the House believe that the public believe having read the article in yesterday's edition of *The Sunday Times*? Does the House believe that the public would expect us to deal with the issue of hon. Members being paid to seek introductions to Ministers for their clients? Does the House believe that that is what the public want, or does it believe that we should leave the matter alone and not meddle?

As the resolutions stand on advocacy, we are doing nothing to deal with the problem that was highlighted in *The Sunday Times*. The practices of those who want to sell access to Ministers will remain under the resolutions before us tonight. I believe that that is wrong.

The two amendments in my name deal with access to Ministers. The first deals with meetings—their initiation and arrangement, and participation in them. The second deals with correspondence with Ministers. In so far as both would prohibit such actions by Members of Parliament, I believe that they should be carried by the House this evening.

Mr. Salmond: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. There is only one amendment on the Order Paper, amendment No. 2(p), which deals with one of the key issues in Nolan—the banning of multi-client lobbying public relations organisations having contracts with Members of Parliament. As you have not called anyone to speak for that amendment, Madam Speaker, how on earth can the debate be considered to be balanced? Is it the fault of the Leader of the House, who called a three-hour debate and so restricted the right of hon. Members to propose those amendments?

Madam Speaker: I think that a number of hon. Members will find themselves very disappointed and frustrated today because of this short debate. They have not been called or even been able to expand on the views that they already hold.

6.59 pm

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): As a result of the debate, right hon. and hon. Members have become aware of the importance of the resolution of the House of 15 July 1947 relating to privileges—a resolution which probably no one has ever read and which probably was never drawn specifically to the attention of a Member on being elected to the House, because we have no induction procedure of any description.

I want to comment briefly on what the right hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley) said. Although he supported disclosure, he asserted that motion No. 1, which is in the name of the Leader of the House—he appeared to believe that it was in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor)—on amending and adding to the 1947 resolution, comes to the House with a unanimous recommendation from the Select Committee. The motion is in the name of the Leader of the House, whom we sincerely hope will be supported.

If right hon. and hon. Members want to sell for money their right to initiate debate on any issue, that is up to them; they do it knowingly and accordingly must be accountable to their constituents. There is a marked reluctance to reform. That has led directly to a failure to keep pace with the attitudes, outside the House, of a more mature and alert electorate.

Lord Nolan and his Committee did not invent that problem. Nor did the media invent that problem. During the debate, mention was made of yesterday's *Sunday Times*. One thing must be made abundantly clear about that. If, a year ago, as I understand it from *The Sunday Times*, it believed that a Member of Parliament, the hon. Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Porter), had done something wrong, it was the duty of *The Sunday Times* to draw the matter to the attention of the Register of Members' Interests, not sit on it and use it in the scurrilous way that it did yesterday.

One or two hon. Members have asked why we should be treated differently from other people. The answer, I submit, is simple. We really are different. We are a unique group of 651 ordinary people, elected to carry out an extraordinary task on behalf of our fellow citizens. As a group—as an institution—we have lost a good deal of trust from, and are held in very low esteem by, our fellow citizens. We must win back that trust as quickly as possible, for the House, our institution of Parliament, is on trial.

I do not speak from the Opposition Dispatch Box for the Labour party, any more than the Leader of the House spoke earlier for the Conservative party. If we make the vote a party battle, we demean the House and ourselves. *[Interruption.]* Hon. Members may chaff at that, but that is the reality. I speak for those who accept the need for reform radical enough to show that we understand the public anxiety. That is what it is about.

The reform must involve transparency, to show that we are not on the make. Secrecy about earnings that are directly related to elected membership of the House sends a message that we are on the make. As the hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) said, that taints us with sleaze. I genuinely believe that transparency will sterilise the sleaze argument once and for all.

The right hon. Member for Hove (Sir T. Sainsbury) made an interesting and constructive speech. He mentioned a couple of issues that deserve a response from the Opposition, and certainly from the person on the Opposition Dispatch Box who is winding up the debate. We chose the amendments to operate from the new Session on 15 November, simply to stay as near in line with Lord Nolan's Committee's proposals as possible. We deliberately sought not to deviate from the Nolan Committee report, although I accept that the right hon. Gentleman's argument has validity.

I also want to say to the right hon. Member for Hove, on behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury and myself—for I do not speak for the Labour party on that subject but I know that I speak for a considerable number of Opposition Members—that we have no long-term aim to abolish outside interests or to seek disclosure of an hon. Member's total income. We have no long-term agenda in that respect.

I say to those hon. Members who might feel that the issue has already become too partisan, that I regret that, as do my hon. Friends. I know what it is like to sit on the Government Benches, wondering whether to support my tribe, and being effectively forced to do so by the antics of the tribe on the Opposition Benches. That does not, however, alter the fundamental issue, which is winning back the trust of the public through transparency.

I ask all hon. Members tonight to reach outside those tribal boundaries—we are freely elected to do so occasionally, and tonight is one of those occasions—in the interests of winning back the trust of those who sent us to this place.

7.5 pm

Mr. Newton: Those right hon. and hon. Members who have been present throughout the debate—which has done, as did our previous debate, considerable credit to the House in spite of occasional heated moments—will realise that, on many of the issues that were mentioned, there is little that I can add to what I said in my speech opening the debate. I certainly do not wish to take up the time available to other Members, making a long, repetitive speech. However, obviously I should comment further on some issues.

First, I shall say a word about what my right hon. Friends the Members for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Sir E. Heath) and for Bridgwater (Mr. King) and several others said during the debate, or said sotto voce by coming and whispering in my ear as I sat on the Treasury Bench, about the rush with which everything has been done and the disadvantages that they believe have resulted. No one who has served on the Committee or taken part in the process would wish to dismiss that. Obviously, everything has been done in a great hurry, but that, I say to my colleagues on both sides of the House, is the position in which, as a House, we were placed by the situation that had developed.

I have no doubt that, had we sought another six, eight or nine months of delay, in which we would have been attacked collectively, not from one side or the other, for failing to respond to public anxiety, and had we let those arguments range and rage in the way that they have done, it would have gravely further damaged the reputation of all of us and of the House. Therefore, it was right to proceed fast. Although I did not wish to spend virtually every waking hour in a Select Committee, trying to do the job that we have done, I believe that it was worth it, and that we have made real progress to the advantage of the House.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Sir T. Higgins) and several others raised the question that my right hon, Friend put as if there were created some hiatus or gap between our comments in the paragraphs of the report referring to speeches, and the terms of the resolution. I would not dismiss what has been said, but it is inconceivable that the commissioner and the new committee would totally disregard the clear basis on which the House has been invited to take a decision tonight. Were that to happen—I do not believe that it could—I would certainly want to give careful and urgent consideration to the position that that would create, for example, for my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) and others. I will say—I mention something that my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) said—that that would be a much stronger argument were I seeking to persuade the House tonight to pass an Act of Parliament or a set of regulations in which we really would be subject to a great deal of legalistic textual interpretation. However, I do not believe that that fear is well founded.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup mentioned unfounded complaints being widely circulated. Paragraph 26 of our first report states:

> "Where, however, the Commissioner decided that no prima facie case had been established, he would merely report the facts to the committee. The Committee would inform both the complainant and the Member concerned, but no details of the complaint would be published."

That passage is underlined in red, so it must have been mentioned earlier. In view of what my right hon. Friend said, it is important for me to put that on the record again.

The other worry that has echoed through today's debate—I understand why, as we on the Committee also wrestled with it—was most eloquently expressed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen). He doubted whether the line could be held in the position where the Committee had proposed it. He may be right on that. One of the problems that we all have to wrestle with is that the world has moved on—that is true even since I entered the House in 1974, and since the creation of the Register of Members' Interests. New problems have arisen, public perceptions have changed, the view about what should be disclosed or registered has changed. Clearly, there may have to be further changes in future. I believe that we could respectably hold the line on the Select Committee's proposal and my resolutions.

The hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) invited me to confirm what I had said about her amendment (b) not taking us straight to the publication of tax returns. I readily confirm that that is my reading of her amendment. I want to reiterate that I am concerned that her proposal will make it much more difficult to hold the line proposed by the Select Committee and will push us steadily further down a path that almost no one in the House wishes to tread and very few think right or desirable.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: I confirm that I do not wish to go down that path, and neither do the amendment's co-proposers. Will the Leader of the House confirm that the amendment that I tabled on disclosure relates only to

[Mrs. Ann Taylor]

the agreements that he is recommending, which should be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, and is therefore limited?

Mr. Newton: That is certainly my understanding. I have never sought to mislead anyone about anything in the affair. I hope that the hon. Lady and all hon. Members will bear in mind when they decide how to vote that I have no doubt that, even though the hon. Lady says that she does not want to move in that direction, her amendment (b) will create a far greater risk of an inescapable slide towards the end that she does not want. I therefore cannot recommend her amendment to the House, and I hope that it will approve my motions.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 587, Noes 2.

Division No. 233] [7.13 pm

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Mrs Irene
Ainger, Nick
Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Ainsworth, Robert *(Cov'try NE)*
Aitken, Rt Hon Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael *(Selby)*
Allason, Rupert *(Torbay)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Anderson, Donald *(Swansea E)*
Anderson, Ms Janet *(Ros'dale)*
Arbuthnot, James
Armstrong, Hilary
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas *(Hazel Grv)*
Ashton, Joe
Atkins, Rt Hon Robert
Atkinson, David *(Bour'mouth E)*
Atkinson, Peter *(Hexham)*
Austin-Walker, John
Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Mole V)*
Baker, Nicholas *(North Dorset)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Matthew *(Southport)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Barnes, Harry
Barron, Kevin
Bates, Michael
Batiste, Spencer
Battle, John
Bayley, Hugh
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Beith, Rt Hon A J
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, Andrew F
Benton, Joe
Beresford, Sir Paul
Bermingham, Gerald
Berry, Roger
Betts, Clive
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Booth, Hartley
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bottomley, Rt Hon Virginia
Bowden, Sir Andrew
Bowis, John
Boyes, Roland
Boyson, Rt Hon Sir Rhodes
Bradley, Keith
Brandreth, Gyles
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Sir Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Gordon *(Dunfermline E)*
Brown, N *(N'c'tle upon Tyne E)*
Browning, Mrs Angela
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burden, Richard
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Peter
Byers, Stephen
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Mrs Anne *(C'bridge)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ronnie *(Blyth V)*
Campbell-Savours, D N
Canavan, Dennis
Cann, Jamie
Carlile, Alexander *(Montgomery)*
Carlisle, John *(Luton North)*
Carlisle, Sir Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Chidgey, David
Chisholm, Malcolm
Church, Judith
Clapham, Michael
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Eric *(Midlothian)*
Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Ru'clif)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coe, Sebastian
Coffey, Ann
Cohen, Harry
Colvin, Michael
Congdon, David
Connarty, Michael
Conway, Derek
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cormack, Sir Patrick
Corston, Jean
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cran, James
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Jim *(Covy SE)*
Cunningham, Rt Hon Dr John
Cunningham, Roseanna
Currie, Mrs Edwina *(S D'by'ire)*
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Dafis, Cynog
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davidson, Ian
Davies, Bryan *(Oldham C'tral)*
Davies, Chris *(L'Boro & S'worth)*
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Quentin *(Stamford)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'dge H'l)*
Day, Stephen
Denham, John
Deva, Nirj Joseph
Devlin, Tim
Dewar, Donald
Dicks, Terry
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Donohoe, Brian H
Dorrell, Rt Hon Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dowd, Jim
Duncan, Alan
Duncan-Smith, Iain
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Durant, Sir Anthony
Dykes, Hugh
Eagle, Ms Angela
Eastham, Ken
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Emery, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Etherington, Bill
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Faber, David
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fishburn, Dudley
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Forsyth, Rt Hon Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Foster, Rt Hon Derek
Foster, Don *(Bath)*
Foulkes, George
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Fox, Sir Marcus *(Shipley)*
Fraser, John
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Gale, Roger
Galloway, George
Gapes, Mike
Gardiner, Sir George
Garel-Jones, Rt Hon Tristan
Garnier, Edward
Garrett, John
George, Bruce
Gerrard, Neil
Gill, Christopher
Gillan, Cheryl
Godman, Dr Norman A
Godsiff, Roger
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gordon, Mildred
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, Sir John
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Sir A *(SW Cambs)*
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth, N)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Grylls, Sir Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Gunnell, John
Hague, Rt Hon William
Hain, Peter
Hall, Mike
Hamilton, Sir Archibald
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Hannam, Sir John
Hanson, David
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, Andrew
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harris, David
Harvey, Nick
Haselhurst, Sir Alan
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hawkins, Nick
Hayes, Jerry
Heald, Oliver
Heath, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Doug
Hendron, Dr Joe
Hendry, Charles
Heppell, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Sir Terence

Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hodge, Margaret
Hoey, Kate
Hogg, Rt Hon Douglas *(G'tham)*
Hogg, Norman *(Cumbernauld)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hoon, Geoffrey
Horam, John
Hordern, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'rd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley North)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Sir Ralph *(N Norfolk)*
Howells, Dr Kim *(Pontypridd)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Kevin *(Doncaster N)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, Rt Hon David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Hutton, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Glenda *(H'stead)*
Jackson, Helen *(Shef'ld, H)*
Jamieson, David
Janner, Greville
Jenkin, Bernard
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn and D'side)*
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Ieuan Wyn *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Jon Owen *(Cardiff C)*
Jones, Lynne *(B'ham S O)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd, SW)*
Jones, Nigel *(Cheltenham)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Jowell, Tessa
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Keen, Alan
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kennedy, Jane *(L'pool Br'dg'n)*
Key, Robert
Khabra, Piara S
Kilfoyle, Peter
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Bir'm E'st'n)*
Knox, Sir David
Kynoch, George *(Kincardine)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Rt Hon Ian
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Legg, Barry
Leigh, Edward
Lennox-Boyd, Sir Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Liddell, Mrs Helen
Lidington, David

Lightbown, Sir David
Lilley, Rt Hon Peter
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lord, Michael
Loyden, Eddie
Luff, Peter
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Lynne, Ms Liz
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McCartney, Robert
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew
McKelvey, William
Mackinlay, Andrew
Maclean, Rt Hon David
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McMaster, Gordon
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
McNamara, Kevin
MacShane, Denis
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Maddock, Diana
Madel, Sir David
Mahon, Alice
Maitland, Lady Olga
Mallon, Seamus
Malone, Gerald
Mandelson, Peter
Mans, Keith
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester, S)*
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martin, Michael J *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Maxton, John
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Mellor, Rt Hon David
Merchant, Piers
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Argyll & Bute)*
Milburn, Alan
Miller, Andrew
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Austin *(Gt Grimsby)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Moate, Sir Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon Alfred *(Wy'nshawe)*
Morris, Estelle *(B'ham Yardley)*
Morris, Rt Hon John *(Aberavon)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mudie, George
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul

Needham, Rt Hon Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, Mike *(N W'kshire)*
O'Brien, William *(Normanton)*
O'Hara, Edward
Olner, Bill
O'Neill, Martin
Onslow, Rt Hon Sir Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Sir Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Pearson, Ian
Pendry, Tom
Pickles, Eric
Pickthall, Colin
Pike, Peter L
Pope, Greg
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Rt Hon Michael
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prentice, Bridget *(Lew'm E)*
Prentice, Gordon *(Pendle)*
Prescott, Rt Hon John
Primarolo, Dawn
Purchase, Ken
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Redwood, Rt Hon John
Reid, Dr John
Rendel, David
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Richards, Rod
Riddick, Graham
Robathan, Andrew
Roberts, Rt Hon Sir Wyn
Robertson, George *(Hamilton)*
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Robinson, Geoffrey *(Co'try NW)*
Robinson, Mark *(Somerton)*
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roche, Mrs Barbara
Roe, Mrs Marion *(Broxbourne)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rooney, Terry
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowe, Andrew *(Mid Kent)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Rumbold, Rt Hon Dame Angela
Ryder, Rt Hon Richard
Sackville, Tom
Sainsbury, Rt Hon Sir Timothy
Salmond, Alex
Scott, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert

Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Sir Michael
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Simpson, Alan
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Chris *(Isl'ton S & F'sbury)*
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Snape, Peter
Soames, Nicholas
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Speed, Sir Keith
Spellar, John
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spicer, Sir James *(W Dorset)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Sproat, Iain
Squire, Rachel *(Dunfermline W)*
Squire, Robin *(Hornchurch)*
Steen, Anthony
Steinberg, Gerry
Stern, Michael
Stevenson, George
Stewart, Allan
Stott, Roger
Strang, Dr. Gavin
Straw, Jack
Streeter, Gary
Sutcliffe, Gerry
Sweeney, Walter
Sykes, John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Sir Teddy *(Southend, E)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Sir Donald *(C'er V)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thornton, Sir Malcolm
Timms, Stephen
Tipping, Paddy
Touhig, Don
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D *(Bexl'yh'th)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trend, Michael
Trimble, David
Trotter, Neville
Turner, Dennis
Twinn, Dr Ian
Tyler, Paul
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Vaz, Keith
Viggers, Peter
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Walker, Rt Hon Sir Harold
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Walley, Joan
Ward, John
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wareing, Robert N

Waterson, Nigel
Watson, Mike
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew
Wheeler, Rt Hon Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Whittingdale, John
Wicks, Malcolm
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Sir Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Willetts, David
Williams, Rt Hon Alan *(Sw'n W)*
Williams, Alan W *(Carmarthen)*
Wilshire, David
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann *(Congleton)*
Winterton, Nicholas *(Macc'fld)*
Wise, Audrey
Wood, Timothy
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Wright, Dr Tony
Yeo, Tim
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Hughes and
Mr. Michael Brown.

NOES

Fabricant, Michael
Sims, Roger

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. John Butterfill and
Mr. Tony Marlow.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Resolution of the House of 15th July 1947 relating to Privileges shall be amended by adding at the end the words—

'and that in particular no Member of the House shall, in consideration of any remuneration, fee, payment, reward or benefit in kind, direct or indirect, which the Member or any member of his or her family has received is receiving or expects to receive—

(i) advocate or initiate any cause or matter on behalf of any outside body or individual, or

(ii) urge any other Member of either House of Parliament, including Ministers, to do so,

by means of any speech, Question, Motion, introduction of a Bill or amendment to a Motion or Bill'.

Madam Speaker: I remind the House that votes should always follow voices when a Division is called. Will the Leader of the House now move formally motion No. 2?

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That—

(1) with effect from Wednesday 15th November 1995, any Member proposing to enter into an agreement which involves the provision of services in his capacity as a Member of Parliament shall conclude such an agreement only if it conforms to the Resolution of the House of 6th November 1995 relating to Conduct of Members; and that a copy of any such agreement, excluding the amount of any fee or benefit payable, shall be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards at the same time as it is registered in the Register of Members' Interests;

(2) any Member who has an existing agreement involving the provision of services in his capacity as a Member of Parliament which conforms to the Resolution of the House of 6th November 1995 relating to Conduct of Members, but which is not in written form, shall take steps to put the agreement into written form; and that no later than 31st March 1996 a copy of any such agreement, excluding the amount of any fee or benefit payable, shall be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and registered in the Register of Members' Interests; and

(3) any Member who has an existing agreement which does not conform to the Resolution of the House on 6th November 1995 relating to Conduct of Members shall, by 31st March 1996, either redraw the agreement so that it conforms to the said Resolution or withdraw from the agreement; and that a copy of any such redrawn agreement, excluding the amount of any fee or benefit payable, shall be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and registered in the Register of Members' Interests by that date.—*[Mr. Newton.]*

Amendment proposed: (b) in line 6, leave out from 'a' to 'shall' in line 7 and insert

'full copy of any such agreement including the fees or benefits payable in bands of: up to £1,000, £1,000-£5,000, £5,000-£10,000, and thereafter in bands of £5,000.'.—*[Mrs. Ann Taylor.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 322, Noes 271.

Division No. 234] **[7.34 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Mrs Irene
Ainger, Nick
Ainsworth, Robert *(Cov'try NE)*
Allason, Rupert *(Torbay)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald *(Swansea E)*
Anderson, Ms Janet *(Ros'dale)*
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Austin-Walker, John
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Bayley, Hugh
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Beith, Rt Hon A J
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, Andrew F
Benton, Joe
Bermingham, Gerald
Berry, Roger
Betts, Clive
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(Dunfermline E)*
Brown, N *(N'c'tle upon Tyne E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Burden, Richard
Byers, Stephen
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Mrs Anne *(C'bridge)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ronnie *(Blyth V)*
Campbell-Savours, D N
Canavan, Dennis
Cann, Jamie
Carlile, Alexander *(Montgomery)*
Carlisle, Sir Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Chidgey, David
Chisholm, Malcolm
Church, Judith
Clapham, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clarke, Eric *(Midlothian)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coffey, Ann
Cohen, Harry
Connarty, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Corston, Jean
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Jim *(Covy SE)*
Cunningham, Rt Hon Dr John
Cunningham, Roseanna
Dafis, Cynog
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davidson, Ian
Davies, Bryan *(Oldham C'tral)*
Davies, Chris *(L'Boro & S'worth)*
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'dge H'l)*
Day, Stephen
Denham, John
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Donohoe, Brian H
Dowd, Jim
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Dykes, Hugh
Eastham, Ken
Etherington, Bill
Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Fabricant, Michael
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Rt Hon Derek
Foster, Don *(Bath)*
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Gapes, Mike
Garrett, John
George, Bruce
Gerrard, Neil
Godman, Dr Norman A
Godsiff, Roger
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth, N)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce

Gunnell, John
Hain, Peter
Hall, Mike
Hanson, David
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harvey, Nick
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Henderson, Doug
Hendron, Dr Joe
Heppell, John
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hodge, Margaret
Hoey, Kate
Hogg, Norman *(Cumbernauld)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hoon, Geoffrey
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'rd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley North)*
Howells, Dr Kim *(Pontypridd)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Kevin *(Doncaster N)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hutton, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jackson, Glenda *(H'stead)*
Jackson, Helen *(Shef'ld, H)*
Jamieson, David
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn and D'side)*
Jones, Ieuan Wyn *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Jon Owen *(Cardiff C)*
Jones, Lynne *(B'ham S O)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd, SW)*
Jones, Nigel *(Cheltenham)*
Jowell, Tessa
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Keen, Alan
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kennedy, Jane *(L'pool Br'dg'n)*
Khabra, Piara S
Kilfoyle, Peter
Kirkwood, Archy
Legg, Barry
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Liddell, Mrs Helen
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Lynne, Ms Liz
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McCartney, Robert
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKelvey, William
Mackinlay, Andrew
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McMaster, Gordon
McNamara, Kevin
MacShane, Denis
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Maddock, Diana
Mahon, Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Mandelson, Peter
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester, S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martin, Michael J *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Argyll & Bute)*
Milburn, Alan
Miller, Andrew
Mitchell, Austin *(Gt Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon Alfred *(Wy'nshawe)*
Morris, Estelle *(B'ham Yardley)*
Morris, Rt Hon John *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mudie, George
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, Mike *(N W'kshire)*
O'Brien, William *(Normanton)*
O'Hara, Edward
Olner, Bill
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Pearson, Ian
Pendry, Tom
Pickthall, Colin
Pike, Peter L
Pope, Greg
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prentice, Bridget *(Lew'm E)*
Prentice, Gordon *(Pendle)*
Prescott, Rt Hon John
Primarolo, Dawn
Purchase, Ken
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Rendel, David
Robertson, George *(Hamilton)*
Robinson, Geoffrey *(Co'try NW)*
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roche, Mrs Barbara
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rooney, Terry
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sainsbury, Rt Hon Sir Timothy
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Simpson, Alan
Sims, Roger
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Chris *(Isl'ton S & F'sbury)*
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spellar, John
Squire, Rachel *(Dunfermline W)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevenson, George
Stewart, Allan
Stott, Roger
Strang, Dr. Gavin
Straw, Jack
Sutcliffe, Gerry
Sweeney, Walter
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Timms, Stephen
Tipping, Paddy
Touhig, Don
Tredinnick, David
Turner, Dennis
Tyler, Paul
Vaz, Keith
Walker, Rt Hon Sir Harold
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N
Watson, Mike
Welsh, Andrew
Wicks, Malcolm
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan *(Sw'n W)*
Williams, Alan W *(Carmarthen)*
Wilshire, David
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Wright, Dr Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John Evans and
Ms Angela Eagle.

NOES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Aitken, Rt Hon Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael *(Selby)*
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas *(Hazel Grv)*
Atkins, Rt Hon Robert
Atkinson, David *(Bour'mouth E)*
Atkinson, Peter *(Hexham)*
Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Mole V)*
Baker, Nicholas *(North Dorset)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Matthew *(Southport)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bates, Michael
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Beresford, Sir Paul
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bottomley, Rt Hon Virginia
Bowden, Sir Andrew
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Sir Rhodes
Brandreth, Gyles
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Sir Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Browning, Mrs Angela
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Peter
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton North)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Ru'clif)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Coe, Sebastian
Colvin, Michael
Congdon, David
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Cormack, Sir Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davies, Quentin *(Stamford)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Deva, Nirj Joseph
Devlin, Tim
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Rt Hon Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Duncan, Alan
Duncan-Smith, Iain
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Sir Anthony
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Emery, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, Dudley
Forsyth, Rt Hon Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Fox, Sir Marcus *(Shipley)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, Sir George
Garel-Jones, Rt Hon Tristan
Garnier, Edward
Gillan, Cheryl

Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, Sir John
Grant, Sir A *(SW Cambs)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Grylls, Sir Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, Rt Hon William
Hamilton, Sir Archibald
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Hannam, Sir John
Hargreaves, Andrew
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Sir Alan
Hawkins, Nick
Hayes, Jerry
Heald, Oliver
Heath, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hendry, Charles
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Sir Terence
Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Hogg, Rt Hon Douglas *(G'tham)*
Horam, John
Hordern, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Sir Ralph *(N Norfolk)*
Hunt, Rt Hon David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert *(Wantage)*
Jenkin, Bernard
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Bir'm E'st'n)*
Knox, Sir David
Kynoch, George *(Kincardine)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Rt Hon Ian
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Leigh, Edward
Lennox-Boyd, Sir Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lidington, David
Lightbown, Sir David
Lilley, Rt Hon Peter
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luff, Peter
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew
Maclean, Rt Hon David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, Sir David
Maitland, Lady Olga
Malone, Gerald
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, Rt Hon David
Merchant, Piers
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Moate, Sir Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Needham, Rt Hon Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Sir Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Sir Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Pickles, Eric
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Rt Hon Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Redwood, Rt Hon John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Richards, Rod
Riddick, Graham
Robathan, Andrew
Roberts, Rt Hon Sir Wyn
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Robinson, Mark *(Somerton)*
Roe, Mrs Marion *(Broxbourne)*
Rowe, Andrew *(Mid Kent)*
Rumbold, Rt Hon Dame Angela
Ryder, Rt Hon Richard
Sackville, Tom
Scott, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Nicholas
Speed, Sir Keith
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spicer, Sir James *(W Dorset)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Sproat, Iain
Squire, Robin *(Hornchurch)*
Steen, Anthony
Stephen, Michael
Stern, Michael
Streeter, Gary
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Sir Teddy *(Southend, E)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Sir Donald *(C'er V)*
Thornton, Sir Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D *(Bexl'yh'th)*
Tracey, Richard
Trend, Michael
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Rt Hon Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Sir Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Willetts, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann *(Congleton)*
Winterton, Nicholas *(Macc'fld)*
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Brown and
Mr. Robert C. Hughes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Amendments (c) and (d) fall. May we be clear that amendment (e), in the name of the hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire), is withdrawn in favour of amendment (f).

Mr. Wilshire: I withdraw the amendment.

Amendment proposed: (f), in line 9, at end insert

'and made available for inspection by the public'.—*[Mrs. Ann Taylor.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House proceeded to a Division.

Mr. Devlin (*seated and covered*): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Amendment (f) appears to repeat the wording of the last line of the amendment on which the House has just voted. In my view, therefore, amendment (f) is necessary.

Madam Speaker: The House is dividing on amendment (f).

The House having divided: Ayes 325, Noes 202.

Division No. 235] **[7.50 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Mrs Irene
Ainger, Nick
Ainsworth, Robert *(Cov'try NE)*
Allason, Rupert *(Torbay)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald *(Swansea E)*
Anderson, Ms Janet *(Ros'dale)*
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Austin-Walker, John
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Bayley, Hugh
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Beith, Rt Hon A J
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Benton, Joe
Bermingham, Gerald
Berry, Roger
Betts, Clive
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(Dunfermline E)*
Brown, N *(N'c'tle upon Tyne E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Burden, Richard
Byers, Stephen
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Mrs Anne *(C'bridge)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ronnie *(Blyth V)*
Campbell-Savours, D N
Canavan, Dennis
Cann, Jamie
Carlile, Alexander *(Montgomery)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chidgey, David
Chisholm, Malcolm
Church, Judith
Clapham, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clarke, Eric *(Midlothian)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coffey, Ann
Cohen, Harry
Connarty, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin

Corbyn, Jeremy
Corston, Jean
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Jim *(Covy SE)*
Cunningham, Rt Hon Dr John
Cunningham, Roseanna
Dafis, Cynog
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davidson, Ian
Davies, Bryan *(Oldham C'tral)*
Davies, Chris *(L'Boro & S'worth)*
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'dge H'l)*
Day, Stephen
Denham, John
Deva, Nirj Joseph
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Donohoe, Brian H
Dowd, Jim
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Eagle, Ms Angela
Eastham, Ken
Etherington, Bill
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Fabricant, Michael
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Rt Hon Derek
Foster, Don *(Bath)*
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Gapes, Mike
Garrett, John
George, Bruce
Gerrard, Neil
Godman, Dr Norman A
Godsiff, Roger
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth, N)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Gunnell, John
Hain, Peter
Hanson, David
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harris, David
Harvey, Nick
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Henderson, Doug
Hendron, Dr Joe
Heppell, John
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hodge, Margaret

Hoey, Kate
Hogg, Norman *(Cumbernauld)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hoon, Geoffrey
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'rd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley North)*
Howells, Dr Kim *(Pontypridd)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Kevin *(Doncaster N)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hutton, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jackson, Glenda *(H'stead)*
Jackson, Helen *(Shef'ld, H)*
Jamieson, David
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn and D'side)*
Jones, Ieuan Wyn *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Jon Owen *(Cardiff C)*
Jones, Lynne *(B'ham S O)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd, SW)*
Jones, Nigel *(Cheltenham)*
Jowell, Tessa
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Keen, Alan
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kennedy, Jane *(L'pool Br'dg'n)*
Key, Robert
Khabra, Piara S
Kilfoyle, Peter
Kirkwood, Archy
Legg, Barry
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Liddell, Mrs Helen
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Lynne, Ms Liz
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McCartney, Robert
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKelvey, William
Mackinlay, Andrew
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McMaster, Gordon
McNamara, Kevin
MacShane, Denis
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Maddock, Diana
Mahon, Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Mandelson, Peter
Marek, Dr John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester, S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martin, Michael J *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun

Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Argyll & Bute)*
Milburn, Alan
Miller, Andrew
Mitchell, Austin *(Gt Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon Alfred *(Wy'nshawe)*
Morris, Estelle *(B'ham Yardley)*
Morris, Rt Hon John *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mudie, George
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, Mike *(N W'kshire)*
O'Brien, William *(Normanton)*
O'Hara, Edward
Olner, Bill
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Pearson, Ian
Pendry, Tom
Pickthall, Colin
Pike, Peter L
Pope, Greg
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prentice, Bridget *(Lew'm E)*
Prentice, Gordon *(Pendle)*
Prescott, Rt Hon John
Primarolo, Dawn
Purchase, Ken
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Rendel, David
Roberts, Rt Hon Sir Wyn
Robertson, George *(Hamilton)*
Robinson, Geoffrey *(Co'try NW)*
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roche, Mrs Barbara
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rooney, Terry
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sainsbury, Rt Hon Sir Timothy
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert

Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Simpson, Alan
Sims, Roger
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Chris *(Isl'ton S & F'sbury)*
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spellar, John
Squire, Rachel *(Dunfermline W)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevenson, George
Stott, Roger
Strang, Dr. Gavin
Straw, Jack
Sutcliffe, Gerry
Sweeney, Walter
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thurnham, Peter
Timms, Stephen
Tipping, Paddy
Touhig, Don
Tredinnick, David
Trimble, David
Turner, Dennis
Tyler, Paul
Walker, Rt Hon Sir Harold
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N
Watson, Mike
Welsh, Andrew
Wicks, Malcolm
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Williams, Rt Hon Alan *(Sw'n W)*
Williams, Alan W *(Carmarthen)*
Wilshire, David
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Wright, Dr Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Andrew F. Bennett and
Mr. Mike Hall.

NOES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Aitken, Rt Hon Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Sir Thomas *(Hazel Grv)*
Atkins, Rt Hon Robert
Atkinson, Peter *(Hexham)*
Baker, Nicholas *(North Dorset)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bates, Michael
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry

Beresford, Sir Paul
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bottomley, Rt Hon Virginia
Bowis, John
Brandreth, Gyles
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Sir Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Browning, Mrs Angela
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Peter

Cash, William
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Ru'clif)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Coe, Sebastian
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davies, Quentin *(Stamford)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Rt Hon Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Duncan, Alan
Duncan-Smith, Iain
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Sir Anthony
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Emery, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Forsyth, Rt Hon Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Rt Hon Tristan
Garnier, Edward
Gillan, Cheryl
Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, Sir John
Grylls, Sir Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, Rt Hon William
Hamilton, Sir Archibald
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Hannam, Sir John
Hargreaves, Andrew
Hawkins, Nick
Heald, Oliver
Heath, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hendry, Charles
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Sir Terence
Hogg, Rt Hon Douglas *(G'tham)*
Horam, John
Hordern, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Hunt, Rt Hon David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jack, Michael
Jenkin, Bernard
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Bir'm E'st'n)*
Knox, Sir David
Kynoch, George *(Kincardine)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lang, Rt Hon Ian
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Leigh, Edward
Lidington, David
Lilley, Rt Hon Peter
Luff, Peter
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacKay, Andrew
Maclean, Rt Hon David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Maitland, Lady Olga
Malone, Gerald
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, Rt Hon David
Merchant, Piers
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Moate, Sir Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Needham, Rt Hon Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Sir Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Sir Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pickles, Eric
Portillo, Rt Hon Michael
Redwood, Rt Hon John
Richards, Rod
Riddick, Graham
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Robinson, Mark *(Somerton)*
Roe, Mrs Marion *(Broxbourne)*
Rumbold, Rt Hon Dame Angela
Ryder, Rt Hon Richard
Sackville, Tom
Scott, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Nicholas
Speed, Sir Keith
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spicer, Sir James *(W Dorset)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Sproat, Iain
Squire, Robin *(Hornchurch)*
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Streeter, Gary
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, Sir Donald *(C'er V)*
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D *(Bexl'yh'th)*
Trend, Michael
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Ward, John
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Rt Hon Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Sir Jerry
Willetts, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann *(Congleton)*
Winterton, Nicholas *(Macc'fld)*
Wood, Timothy
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Brown and
Mr. Robert C. Hughes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendment made: (g), in line 14, leave out from 'a' to 'shall' in line 16 and insert

'full copy of any such agreement including the fees or benefits payable in bands of: up to £1,000, £1,000-£5,000, £5,000-£10,000, and thereafter in bands of £5,000.'.—*[Mrs. Ann Taylor.]*

Madam Speaker: Amendment (h) now falls.

Amendment made: (i), in line 17, after 'Interests', insert

'and made available for inspection by the public'.—*[Mrs. Ann Taylor.]*

Madam Speaker: Amendment (j) therefore falls.

Amendment made: (k), in line 22, leave out from 'a' to 'shall' in line 23 and insert

'full copy of any such agreement including the fees or benefits payable in bands of: up to £1,000, £1,000-£5,000, £5,000-£10,000, and thereafter in bands of £5,000.'.—*[Mrs. Ann Taylor.]*

Madam Speaker: Amendment (l) in the name of the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Dr. Wright) now falls.

Amendment made: (m), in line 24, at end add

'and made available for inspection by the public'.—*[Mrs. Ann Taylor.]*

Madam Speaker: I understand that the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood has withdrawn amendment (n). Is that clear? Amendment (o) now falls.

Amendment proposed: (p) in line 24, at end add—

'(4) notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs 1-3 of this Resolution with effect from Wednesday 15th November 1995, no Member shall enter into an agreement for the provision of services in his/her capacity as a Member of Parliament with any individual or organisation engaged in lobbying or public relations on behalf of more than one client.'.—*[Mr. Salmond.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 48, Noes 243.

Division No. 236] **[8.04 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Alton, David
Ashton, Joe
Austin-Walker, John
Barnes, Harry
Body, Sir Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Canavan, Dennis
Chidgey, David
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cunningham, Roseanna
Dafis, Cynog
Davies, Chris *(L'Boro & S'worth)*
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Don *(Bath)*
Godsiff, Roger
Gordon, Mildred
Harvey, Nick
Hoey, Kate
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jones, Ieuan Wyn *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Nigel *(Cheltenham)*
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Loyden, Eddie
Lynne, Ms Liz

Mackinlay, Andrew
Maclennan, Robert
Maddock, Diana
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Argyll & Bute)*
Mills, Iain
Mullin, Chris
Rendel, David
Salmond, Alex
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Simpson, Alan
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Sir Teddy *(Southend, E)*
Trimble, David
Tyler, Paul
Wallace, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Wise, Audrey

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Margaret Ewing and
Mr. Andrew Welsh.

NOES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Aitken, Rt Hon Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael *(Selby)*
Allason, Rupert *(Torbay)*
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Sir Thomas *(Hazel Grv)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Rt Hon Robert
Atkinson, David *(Bour'mouth E)*
Atkinson, Peter *(Hexham)*
Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Mole V)*
Baker, Nicholas *(North Dorset)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bates, Michael
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Beresford, Sir Paul
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Booth, Hartley
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bottomley, Rt Hon Virginia
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Sir Rhodes
Brandreth, Gyles
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Sir Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Browning, Mrs Angela
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Peter
Carlisle, Sir Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Ru'clif)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Coe, Sebastian
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Cormack, Sir Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davies, Quentin *(Stamford)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Deva, Nirj Joseph
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Rt Hon Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Duncan, Alan
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Sir Anthony
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Emery, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatfield)*
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Fabricant, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, Dudley
Forsyth, Rt Hon Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gallie, Phil
Garel-Jones, Rt Hon Tristan
Garnier, Edward
Gillan, Cheryl
Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, Sir John
Grant, Sir A *(SW Cambs)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Grylls, Sir Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, Rt Hon William
Hamilton, Sir Archibald
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Hannam, Sir John
Hargreaves, Andrew
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Sir Alan
Hawkins, Nick
Hayes, Jerry
Heald, Oliver
Heath, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hendry, Charles
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Higgins, Rt Hon Sir Terence
Hogg, Rt Hon Douglas *(Grantham)*
Horam, John
Hordern, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Hunt, Rt Hon David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert *(Wantage)*
Jenkin, Bernard,
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Bir'm E'st'n)*
Knox, Sir David
Kynoch, George *(Kincardine)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lang, Rt Hon Ian
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Leigh, Edward
Lidington, David
Lilley, Rt Hon Peter
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Luff, Peter
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew
Maclean, Rt Hon David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Maitland, Lady Olga
Malone, Gerald
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Moate, Sir Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Needham, Rt Hon Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Sir Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pickles, Eric
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Rt Hon Michael
Redwood, Rt Hon John
Richards, Rod
Riddick, Graham
Robathan, Andrew
Roberts, Rt Hon Sir Wyn
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Robinson, Mark *(Somerton)*
Roe, Mrs Marion *(Broxbourne)*
Rumbold, Rt Hon Dame Angela
Ryder, Rt Hon Richard
Sackville, Tom
Scott, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Nicholas
Speed, Sir Keith
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spicer, Sir James *(W Dorset)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Spink, Dr Robert
Sproat, Iain
Squire, Robin *(Hornchurch)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Streeter, Gary
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Sir Donald *(C'er V)*
Thornton, Sir Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D *(Bexl'yh'th)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trend, Michael
Trotter, Neville
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Rt Hon Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Sir Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Willetts, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann *(Congleton)*
Winterton, Nicholas *(Macc'fld)*
Wood, Timothy
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Brown and
Mr. Robert C. Hughes.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That—

(1) with effect from Wednesday 15th November 1995, any Member proposing to enter into an agreement which involves the provision of services in his capacity as a Member of Parliament shall conclude such an agreement only if it conforms to the Resolution of the House of 6th November 1995 relating to Conduct of Members; and that a full copy of any such agreement including the fees or benefits payable in bands of: up to £1,000, £1,000-5,000,

£5,000-£10,000, and thereafter in bands of £5,000, shall be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards at the same time as it is registered in the Register of Members' Interests and made available for inspection by the public;

(2) any Member who has an existing agreement involving the provision of services in his capacity as a Member of Parliament which conforms to the Resolution of the House of 6th November 1995 relating to Conduct of Members, but which is not in written form, shall take steps to put the agreement into written form; and that no later than 31st March 1996 a full copy of any such agreement including the fees or benefits payable in bands of: up to £1,000, £1,000-£5,000, £5,000-£10,000, and thereafter in bands of £5,000 shall be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and registered in the Register of Members' Interests and made available for inspection by the public; and

(3) any Member who has an existing agreement which does not conform to the Resolution of the House on 6th November 1995 relating to Conduct of Members shall, by 31st March 1996, either redraw the agreement so that it conforms to the said Resolution or withdraw from the agreement; and that a full copy of any such agreement including the fees or benefits payable in bands of: up to £1,000, £1,000-£5,000, £5,000-£10,000 and thereafter in bands of £5,000 shall be deposited with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and registered in the Register of Members' Interests by that date and made available for inspection by the public.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That this House agrees with the recommendations in the Second Report from the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life (House of Commons Paper No. 816) relating to—

(1) the recording of deputations in the Register of Members' Interests (paragraph 31); and

(2) the cessation of paid advocacy (paragraph 54).—[*Mr. Newton.*]

Amendment proposed: (a), in line 4, leave out paragraph (1).—[*Mrs. Ann Taylor.*]

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 291, Noes 266.

Division No. 237] **[8.15 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Mrs Irene
Ainger, Nick
Ainsworth, Robert *(Cov'try NE)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald *(Swansea E)*
Anderson, Ms Janet *(Ros'dale)*
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Austin-Walker, John
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Bayley, Hugh
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Beith, Rt Hon A J
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, Andrew F
Benton, Joe
Bermingham, Gerald
Berry, Roger
Betts, Clive
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(Dunfermline E)*
Brown, N *(N'c'tle upon Tyne E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Burden, Richard
Byers, Stephen
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Mrs Anne *(C'bridge)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ronnie *(Blyth V)*
Campbell-Savours, D N
Canavan, Dennis
Cann, Jamie
Chidgey, David
Chisholm, Malcolm
Church, Judith
Clapham, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clarke, Eric *(Midlothian)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coffey, Ann
Cohen, Harry
Connarty, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Corston, Jean
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Jim *(Covy SE)*
Cunningham, Rt Hon Dr John
Cunningham, Roseanna
Dafis, Cynog
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davidson, Ian
Davies, Bryan *(Oldham C'tral)*
Davies, Chris *(L'Boro & S'worth)*
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'dge H'I)*
Denham, John
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Donohoe, Brian H
Dowd, Jim
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Etherington, Bill
Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Rt Hon Derek
Foster, Don *(Bath)*
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Gapes, Mike
Garrett, John
George, Bruce
Gerrard, Neil
Godman, Dr Norman A
Godsiff, Roger
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Gunnell, John
Hain, Peter
Hall, Mike
Hanson, David
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harvey, Nick
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Henderson, Doug
Heppell, John
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hodge, Margaret
Hoey, Kate
Hogg, Norman *(Cumbernauld)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hoon, Geoffrey
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'rd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley North)*
Howells, Dr Kim *(Pontypridd)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Kevin *(Doncaster N)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hutton, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jackson, Glenda *(H'stead)*
Jackson, Helen *(Shef'ld, H)*
Jamieson, David
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn and D'side)*
Jones, Ieuan Wyn *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Jon Owen *(Cardiff C)*
Jones, Lynne *(B'ham S O)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd, SW)*
Jones, Nigel *(Cheltenham)*
Jowell, Tessa
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Keen, Alan
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kennedy, Jane *(L'pool Br'dg'n)*
Khabra, Piara S
Kilfoyle, Peter
Kirkwood, Archy
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Liddell, Mrs Helen
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Lynne, Ms Liz
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
Mackinlay, Andrew
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McMaster, Gordon
McNamara, Kevin
MacShane, Denis
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Maddock, Diana
Mahon, Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Mandelson, Peter
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Argyll & Bute)*
Milburn, Alan
Miller, Andrew
Mitchell, Austin *(Gt Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon Alfred *(Wy'nshawe)*
Morris, Estelle *(B'ham Yardley)*
Morris, Rt Hon John *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mudie, George
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, Mike *(N W'kshire)*
O'Brien, William *(Normanton)*
O'Hara, Edward
Olner, Bill

O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Pearson, Ian
Pendry, Tom
Pickthall, Colin
Pike, Peter L
Pope, Greg
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prentice, Bridget *(Lew'm E)*
Prentice, Gordon *(Pendle)*
Prescott, Rt Hon John
Primarolo, Dawn
Purchase, Ken
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Rendel, David
Robertson, George *(Hamilton)*
Robinson, Geoffrey *(Co'try NW)*
Roche, Mrs Barbara
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rooney, Terry
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Simpson, Alan
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Chris *(Isl'ton S & F'sbury)*
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spellar, John
Squire, Rachel *(Dunfermline W)*
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevenson, George
Stott, Roger
Strang, Dr. Gavin
Straw, Jack
Sutcliffe, Gerry
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Timms, Stephen
Tipping, Paddy
Touhig, Don
Trimble, David
Turner, Dennis
Tyler, Paul
Walker, Rt Hon Sir Harold
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N
Watson, Mike
Welsh, Andrew
Wicks, Malcolm
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan *(Sw'n W)*
Williams, Alan W *(Carmarthen)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Wright, Dr Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John Evans and
Ms Angela Eagle.

NOES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Aitken, Rt Hon Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael *(Selby)*
Allason, Rupert *(Torbay)*
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Sir Thomas *(Hazel Grv)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Rt Hon Robert
Atkinson, David *(Bour'mouth E)*
Atkinson, Peter *(Hexham)*
Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Mole V)*
Baker, Nicholas *(North Dorset)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bates, Michael
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Beresford, Sir Paul
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Booth, Hartley
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bottomley, Rt Hon Virginia
Bowden, Sir Andrew
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Sir Rhodes
Brandreth, Gyles
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Sir Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, M *(Brigg & Cl'thorpes)*
Browning, Mrs Angela
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Peter
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alexander *(Montgomery)*
Carlisle, John *(Luton North)*
Carlisle, Sir Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Ru'clif)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Coe, Sebastian
Congdon, David
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Cormack, Sir Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina *(S D'by'ire)*
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davies, Quentin *(Stamford)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Deva, Nirj Joseph
Devlin, Tim
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Rt Hon Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Duncan, Alan
Duncan-Smith, Iain
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Sir Anthony
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Forsyth, Rt Hon Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Rt Hon Tristan
Garnier, Edward
Gillan, Cheryl
Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, Sir John
Grant, Sir A *(SW Cambs)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Grylls, Sir Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, Rt Hon William
Hamilton, Sir Archibald
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Hannam, Sir John
Hargreaves, Andrew
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Sir Alan
Hawkins, Nick
Hayes, Jerry
Heald, Oliver
Heath, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hendry, Charles
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Sir Terence
Hogg, Rt Hon Douglas *(G'tham)*
Horam, John
Hordern, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G *(Harrow W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert *(Wantage)*
Jenkin, Bernard
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Bir'm E'st'n)*
Knox, Sir David
Kynoch, George *(Kincardine)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Rt Hon Ian
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Legg, Barry
Leigh, Edward
Lennox-Boyd, Sir Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lidington, David
Lilley, Rt Hon Peter
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luff, Peter
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, Rt Hon David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Madel, Sir David
Maitland, Lady Olga
Malone, Gerald
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, Rt Hon David
Merchant, Piers
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Moate, Sir Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Needham, Rt Hon Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Sir Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Sir Irvine
Pawsey, James
Pickles, Eric
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Rt Hon Michael
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Richards, Rod
Riddick, Graham
Robathan, Andrew
Roberts, Rt Hon Sir Wyn
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Robinson, Mark *(Somerton)*
Roe, Mrs Marion *(Broxbourne)*
Rumbold, Rt Hon Dame Angela
Ryder, Rt Hon Richard
Sackville, Tom
Sainsbury, Rt Hon Sir Timothy
Scott, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Sir Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Nicholas
Speed, Sir Keith
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spicer, Sir James *(W Dorset)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*

Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Sproat, Iain
Squire, Robin *(Hornchurch)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stephen, Michael
Stern, Michael
Streeter, Gary
Sumberg, David
Sweeney, Walter
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Sir Teddy *(Southend, E)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Sir Donald *(C'er V)*
Thornton, Sir Malcolm
Townsend, Cyril D *(Bexl'yh'th)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trend, Michael
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Rt Hon Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Sir Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Willetts, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann *(Congleton)*
Winterton, Nicholas *(Macc'fld)*
Wood, Timothy
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Fabricant and
Mr. Jacques Arnold.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendment proposed: (b), in line 6, at end add

'and further that a Member with a paid interest should not initiate or participate in, including attendance, a delegation where the problem affects only the body from which he has a paid interest.'.—*[Mrs. Ann Taylor.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 289, Noes 264.

Division No. 238] **[8.30 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Mrs Irene
Ainger, Nick
Ainsworth, Robert *(Cov'try NE)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald *(Swansea E)*
Anderson, Ms Janet *(Ros'dale)*
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Austin-Walker, John
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Bayley, Hugh
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Beith, Rt Hon A J
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Benton, Joe
Bermingham, Gerald
Berry, Roger
Betts, Clive
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(Dunfermline E)*
Brown, N *(N'c'tle upon Tyne E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Burden, Richard
Byers, Stephen
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Mrs Anne *(C'bridge)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ronnie *(Blyth V)*
Campbell-Savours, D N
Canavan, Dennis
Cann, Jamie
Chidgey, David
Chisholm, Malcolm
Church, Judith
Clapham, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(South Shields)*
Clarke, Eric *(Midlothian)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coffey, Ann
Cohen, Harry
Connarty, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Corston, Jean
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Jim *(Covy SE)*
Cunningham, Rt Hon Dr John
Cunningham, Roseanna
Dafis, Cynog
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davidson, Ian
Davies, Bryan *(Oldham C'tral)*
Davies, Chris *(L'Boro & S'worth)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'dge H'l)*
Denham, John
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Donohoe, Brian H
Dowd, Jim
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Eagle, Ms Angela
Eastham, Ken
Etherington, Bill
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Rt Hon Derek
Foster, Don *(Bath)*
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Gapes, Mike
Garrett, John
George, Bruce
Gerrard, Neil
Godman, Dr Norman A
Godsiff, Roger
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Gunnell, John
Hain, Peter
Hanson, David
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harvey, Nick
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Henderson, Doug
Heppell, John
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hodge, Margaret
Hoey, Kate
Hogg, Norman *(Cumbernauld)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hoon, Geoffrey
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'rd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley North)*
Howells, Dr Kim *(Pontypridd)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Kevin *(Doncaster N)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hutton, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jackson, Glenda *(H'stead)*
Jackson, Helen *(Shef'ld, H)*
Jamieson, David
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn and D'side)*
Jones, Ieuan Wyn *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Jon Owen *(Cardiff C)*
Jones, Lynne *(B'ham S O)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd, SW)*
Jones, Nigel *(Cheltenham)*
Jowell, Tessa
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Keen, Alan
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kennedy, Jane *(L'pool Br'dg'n)*
Khabra, Piara S
Kilfoyle, Peter
Kirkwood, Archy
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Liddell, Mrs Helen
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Lynne, Ms Liz
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
Mackinlay, Andrew
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McMaster, Gordon
McNamara, Kevin
MacShane, Denis
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Maddock, Diana
Mahon, Alice
Mandelson, Peter
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Argyll & Bute)*
Milburn, Alan
Miller, Andrew
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon Alfred *(Wy'nshawe)*
Morris, Estelle *(B'ham Yardley)*
Morris, Rt Hon John *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mudie, George
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, Mike *(N W'kshire)*
O'Brien, William *(Normanton)*
O'Hara, Edward
Olner, Bill
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Pearson, Ian
Pendry, Tom
Pickthall, Colin
Pike, Peter L
Pope, Greg
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prentice, Bridget *(Lew'm E)*
Prentice, Gordon *(Pendle)*
Prescott, Rt Hon John
Primarolo, Dawn

Purchase, Ken
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Rendel, David
Robertson, George *(Hamilton)*
Robinson, Geoffrey *(Co'try NW)*
Roche, Mrs Barbara
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rooney, Terry
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Simpson, Alan
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Chris *(Isl'ton S & F'sbury)*
Smith, Llew *(Blaenau Gwent)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spellar, John
Squire, Rachel *(Dunfermline W)*
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevenson, George
Stott, Roger
Strang, Dr. Gavin
Straw, Jack
Sutcliffe, Gerry
Sweeney, Walter
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Timms, Stephen
Tipping, Paddy
Touhig, Don
Trimble, David
Turner, Dennis
Tyler, Paul
Walker, Rt Hon Sir Harold
Walley, Joan
Wareing, Robert N
Watson, Mike
Welsh, Andrew
Wicks, Malcolm
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan *(Sw'n W)*
Williams, Alan W *(Carmarthen)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Wright, Dr Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Mike Hall and
Mr. Andrew F. Bennett.

NOES

Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Aitken, Rt Hon Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael *(Selby)*
Allason, Rupert *(Torbay)*
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Rt Hon Robert
Atkinson, David *(Bour'mouth E)*
Atkinson, Peter *(Hexham)*
Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Mole V)*
Baker, Nicholas *(North Dorset)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bates, Michael
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Beresford, Sir Paul
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Booth, Hartley
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bottomley, Rt Hon Virginia
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Sir Rhodes
Brandreth, Gyles
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Sir Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Browning, Mrs Angela
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Peter
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alexander *(Montgomery)*
Carlisle, John *(Luton North)*
Carlisle, Sir Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Clappison, James
Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Ru'clif)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Coe, Sebastian
Colvin, Michael
Congdon, David
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre For'st)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon Sir John
Cormack, Sir Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina *(S D'by'ire)*
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Davies, Quentin *(Stamford)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Deva, Nirj Joseph
Devlin, Tim
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Rt Hon Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Duncan, Alan
Duncan-Smith, Iain
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Sir Anthony
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans, Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Fabricant, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Forsyth, Rt Hon Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gallie, Phil
Garel-Jones, Rt Hon Tristan
Garnier, Edward
Gillan, Cheryl
Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir A *(SW Cambs)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Grylls, Sir Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, Rt Hon William
Hamilton, Sir Archibald
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Hannam, Sir John
Hargreaves, Andrew
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Sir Alan
Hawkins, Nick
Heald, Oliver
Heath, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hendry, Charles
Hicks, Robert
Hill, James *(Southampton Test)*
Hogg, Rt Hon Douglas *(G'tham)*
Horam, John
Hordern, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert *(Wantage)*
Jenkin, Bernard
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Bir'm E'st'n)*
Knox, Sir David
Kynoch, George *(Kincardine)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Rt Hon Ian
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Legg, Barry
Leigh, Edward
Lennox-Boyd, Sir Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lidington, David
Lilley, Rt Hon Peter
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luff, Peter
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew
Maclean, Rt Hon David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Madel, Sir David
Maitland, Lady Olga
Malone, Gerald
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, Rt Hon David
Merchant, Piers
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David *(NW Hants)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Sir Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Sir Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Sir Irvine
Pawsey, James
Pickles, Eric
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Rt Hon Michael
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, Rt Hon John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Richards, Rod
Riddick, Graham
Robathan, Andrew
Roberts, Rt Hon Sir Wyn
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Robinson, Mark *(Somerton)*
Roe, Mrs Marion *(Broxbourne)*
Rumbold, Rt Hon Dame Angela
Ryder, Rt Hon Richard
Sackville, Tom
Sainsbury, Rt Hon Sir Timothy
Scott, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Nicholas
Speed, Sir Keith
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spicer, Sir James *(W Dorset)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Spink, Dr Robert
Spring, Richard
Sproat, Iain
Squire, Robin *(Hornchurch)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan
Streeter, Gary
Sumberg, David
Sweeney, Walter

Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Sir Teddy *(Southend, E)*
Thomason, Roy
Thompson, Sir Donald *(C'er V)*
Thornton, Sir Malcolm
Townsend, Cyril D *(Bexl'yh'th)*
Tracey, Richard
Trend, Michael
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Rt Hon Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Sir Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Willetts, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann *(Congleton)*
Winterton, Nicholas *(Macc'fld)*
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Brown and
Mr. Robert G. Hughes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House agrees with the recommendations in the Second Report from the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life (House of Commons Paper No. 816) relating to the cessation of paid advocacy (paragraph 54); and further that a Member with a paid interest should not initiate or participate in, including attendance, a delegation where the problem affects only the body from which he has a paid interest.

Ordered,

That—

(1) Standing Order No. 128 (Select Committee on Members' Interests) be repealed;

(2) Standing Order No. 121 (Committee of Privileges) be repealed when the Committee of Privileges shall have reported to the House in respect of the matters of the complaints referred to it; and

(3) Standing Orders (Committee on Standards and Privileges) and (Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards) below be made.

Standing Order (Committee on Standards and Privileges)

(1) There shall be a select committee, called the Committee on Standards and Privileges—

(a) to consider specific matters relating to privileges referred to it by the House;

(b) to oversee the work of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards; to examine the arrangements proposed by the Commissioner for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of the Register of Members' Interests and any other registers of interest established by the House; to review from time to time the form and content of those registers; and to consider any specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests referred to it by the Commissioner; and

(c) to consider any matter relating to the conduct of Members, including specific complaints in relation to alleged breaches in any code of conduct to which the House has agreed and which have been drawn to the committee's attention by the Commissioner; and to recommend any modifications to such code of conduct as may from time to time appear to be necessary.

(2) The committee shall consist of eleven Members, of whom five shall be a quorum.

(3) Unless the House otherwise orders, each Member nominated to the committee shall continue to be a member of it for the remainder of the Parliament.

(4) The committee shall have power to appoint sub-committees consisting of no more than seven Members, of whom three shall be a quorum, and to refer to such sub-committees any of the matters referred to the committee; and shall appoint one such sub-committee to receive reports from the Commissioner relating to investigations into specific complaints.

(5) The committee and any sub-committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and records, to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House, to adjourn from place to place, to report from time to time and to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the committee's order of reference.

(6) The committee shall have power to order the attendance of any Member before the committee or any sub-committee and to require that specific documents or records in the possession of a Member relating to its inquiries, or to the inquiries of a sub-committee or of the Commissioner, be laid before the committee or any sub-committee.

(7) The committee shall have power to refuse to allow proceedings to which strangers are admitted to be broadcast.

(8) Mr. Attorney General, the Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, being Members of the House, may attend the committee or any sub-committee, may take part in deliberations, may receive committee or sub-committee papers and may give such other assistance to the committee or sub-committee as may be appropriate, but shall not vote or make any motion or move any amendment.

Standing Order (Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards)

(1) There shall be an officer of this House, called the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, who shall be appointed by the House.

(2) The principal duties of the Commissioner shall be—

(a) to maintain the Register of Members' Interests and any other registers of interest established by the House, and to make such arrangements for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of those registers as are approved by the Committee on Standards and Privileges or an appropriate sub-committee thereof;

(b) to provide advice confidentially to Members and other persons or bodies subject to registration on matters relating to the registration of individual interests;

(c) to advise the Committee on Standards and Privileges, its sub-committees and individual Members on the interpretation of any code of conduct to which the House has agreed and on questions of propriety;

(d) to monitor the operation of such code and registers, and to make recommendations thereon to the Committee on Standards and Privileges or an appropriate sub-committee thereof; and

(e) to receive and, if he thinks fit, investigate specific complaints from Members and from members of the public in respect of—

(i) the registration or declaration of interests, or

(ii) other aspects of the propriety of a Member's conduct,

and to report to the Committee on Standards and Privileges or to an appropriate sub-committee thereof.

(3) The Commissioner may be dismissed by resolution of the House.—*[Mr. Newton.]*

Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards

8.41 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): I beg to move,

That Sir Gordon Stanley Downey, KCB, be appointed Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards on the terms of the Report of the House of Commons Commission (HC 789), dated 30th October.

It might be helpful if I say a few words about the role of the House of Commons Commission. It was given the task of coming up with a name acceptable to the House, believes that it has done so and invites the House to accept the proposal.

8.42 pm

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I want to raise a number of points. As a Government Back Bencher, I find it offensive that the House, through the House of Commons Commission, should seek to appoint Sir Gordon Downey as the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards at a salary of £72,500. I admit that he is a distinguished person, but he is retired and in receipt of a very substantial index-linked pension, yet he will be assessing the position, salary and circumstances of Back Benchers who, for a full week's work, will be in receipt of less than half of his salary. Setting up this gentleman in the position that he will hold is offensive to Parliament. I believe that it is the first time in history that this High Court of Parliament will, to all intents and purposes, have an outsider deciding its behaviour—in short, the behaviour of Members of this House. I do not believe that we should agree to that.

Tonight, the House of Commons has committed suicide. The independence of the House is now very much in doubt, as is its authority and influence. To all intents and purposes, we have set up a House of Commons that will be ruled by the civil service, because the overwhelming majority of hon. Members will have neither the experience nor the authority to exercise an influence that is good for Government, good for Parliament and good for this country.

I say to the House that it will rue this day and rue the decisions that have been taken. It is a pity that the Press Gallery is almost deserted, because it is only a matter of time before Sir Gordon, or a successor, will be looking at the interests of those privileged individuals, the Lobby journalists, who exercise immense influence—dare I say it, much more influence than a Back Bencher? The abilities of Back Benchers will be immensely restricted by the decisions that the House has taken.

I must ask the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) what expertise Sir Gordon has—

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Bugger all.

Mr. Winterton: The hon. Gentleman is, from time to time, pertinent and accurate in his remarks. I must confess that, while I disagree with the language, I admire his plain speaking.

We have an outsider to this High Court of Parliament. Surely this High Court of Parliament can rule itself, judge itself and, when necessary, penalise those who abuse their position. But to have an outsider, indeed, a retired outsider, on such a substantial salary—more than twice as much as a Back Bencher and more than a Cabinet Minister—presiding over the standards of those in public life and responsible for standards in this place is offensive.

I know the problems that you face, Madam Speaker, and I well understand why the amendments in my name and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) have not been selected, but perhaps there are times when we should look to other democracies to see how they would operate in such circumstances. Of course, in the United States of America no public servant is in receipt of a salary higher than that of a member of Congress. That rule should obtain in this House. If it did, Members of Parliament would be very much better paid—which they all deserve for the hours that they put in and for the increased work that Parliament decides they should undertake—and, dare I say it to hon. Members on both sides of the House, would better meet the expectations of their electorates.

I rise to speak briefly on this part of our debate in sadness and with regret. I put the question again to the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed—

Mr. Skinner: He is a Liberal.

Mr. Winterton: Indeed, he is a Liberal Democrat—educated in my constituency at King's school, but that is only an aside.

What qualifications does Sir Gordon Downey have to undertake the tasks that the House is allocating to him? What justification is there for giving him, as a retired civil servant in receipt of a substantial index-linked pension, a salary of more than twice as much as the people whose standards of behaviour he will be assessing? That is an insult to democracy and a disaster for Parliament. I am very unhappy and sad at what the House has done today to the authority of Parliament.

When I came to the House nearly 25 years ago—

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): A quarter of a century.

Mr. Winterton: My hon. Friend says a quarter of a century ago. It is not yet that long. I hope that I may be honoured to serve my constituents for a quarter of century and beyond. I hope that they will accept that at no time in the years that I have been the Member for Macclesfield have I done anything dishonourable about which I would not be prepared to talk to them openly.

How can the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, who chairs the House of Commons Commission—I apologise Madam Speaker: you chair it and he speaks on its behalf—justify to the House what the Commission is doing in appointing this individual to deal with what I agree are very important matters? I believe that standards of behaviour are critical. Sadly, I do not believe that what the House has done tonight will improve the image of Parliament in the eyes of electorate. That can be done only by the individual examples of every right hon. or hon. Member.

I seek to set an example and I know that many other hon. Members do so too. The fact that there are a few rotten apples in the basket does not mean that the whole House should be summed up in that way. I believe that Parliament has served the United Kingdom well. I fear

[Mr. Winterton]

that it will not be able to do so in future and I hope that the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed will justify what we are supposed to agree to tonight.

8.52 pm

Mr. Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge): I understand that some years ago the Government Whips Office offered a jeroboam of champagne to anybody who spotted the late Bonner Pink and Sir Frederic Bennett in the Division Lobby at the same time. I do not know whether that champagne was ever called upon but it could also have been offered for the first occasion on which my name and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) appeared together on an amendment to a motion.

My hon. Friend and I proposed amendments because we both have a keen sense of the ridiculous. As someone who has wanted to be a Member of the House for as long as I can remember, and as someone with a sense of history and of the traditions of the House, I am worried that, despite all the partisan glee on the Opposition Benches—which will continue as the night goes on—we are in severe collective danger as a House of Commons of making ourselves ridiculous.

It is worth pausing and reflecting for one moment on how we got into this position at all. It was because two stupid, silly greedy Members did something that most of us would never do. The story that both sides of the House should have run with was that, of the 20 hon. Members approached, only two behaved in that way—80 per cent. did not. That is the message that we should have communicated to the people outside. We signally failed to do so.

After that, it was downhill all the way, with a committee presided over by a judge who made it clear at the outset that he had already reached his conclusions and was hoping to find some evidence to back them up. Those of us who have made a living in the courts often suspected that that is what the judiciary did but we had not expected to have it confirmed in such a spectacular way.

From inauspicious and tiny beginnings, we have reached the position that we are in today. Whatever else we say, we should not disguise from ourselves the anomalous and paradoxical situation that we have created. How on earth can we ask Sir Gordon Downey to police a distinction between our advisory work and the other things that we do?

For example, I heard the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) on a radio programme yesterday. He was being employed not for the lightness of his wit or the elegance of his table manners but because he was a Member of Parliament.

I have a high regard for my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) but having briefly, in a misguided moment, dipped into "A Parliamentary Affair", I should think that people would read that book not because they think that she is the personification of Tolstoy but because they think that, as a Member of Parliament, she might have something to say.

Those are examples of hon. Members receiving remuneration that arises directly from their membership of the House. They are not included in the proposed arrangements. Why not? It is because too many Labour Members would suddenly find that they had to declare their income. It would mean that we would have to find out—because morality is absolute and does not start only tonight—from the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) how much she was, until recently, really paid by Westminster Communications. We could find out how a former Labour Prime Minister was able to buy a Suffolk dairy farm on the wage of a Back-Bench Member of Parliament.

We could go into a great deal to try to get a vision of the matter. A commissioner for ethics? I do not know where Opposition Members have been. I have about 75,000 commissioners for ethics—my electorate. I have the judgment of my peers, of my hon. Friends and of Opposition Members. There are many examples of hon. Members whom one may not like but whose probity one understands. The idea that we can substitute the judgment of our electorate, of our hon. Friends and of the House of Commons by setting up a commissioner for ethics is bizarre.

Consider the salary involved. Ethics are relative; they vary. One has to put oneself, to an extent, in the position of those who are making those difficult judgments—the judgments that we all have to make. We make those judgments when we back our Government's view against our inclinations. As party people on both sides of the House, hon. Members realise that we can make progress only if we combine in a political party. That can produce some pretty hard choices for hon. Members, especially for those in government.

There are all sorts of difficulties, such as when one feels that one has a duty to one's region but there is a conflict with the interest of one's county. Such conflicts happen all the time. All hon. Members deal with them by working a seven-day week and by earning £33,000 a year.

I understand why some of my hon. Friends have done so, but I have never criticised the payment of a parliamentary salary under the present arrangements. If, however, the commissioner for ethics is to do anything other than sum up what a ridiculous spectacle we have made of ourselves, he should have some insight into the people on whom he passes judgment. He might even care, as my third amendment proposes, to be on the salary of a Back Bencher. Alternatively—I note that he thinks that he can do the job in four days a week—perhaps he would like to work for four sevenths of the salary of a Back Bencher and nod along on £18,000 a year.

I tabled the amendments to make the point about how ridiculous this proposal is. I do not suggest for a moment that Members of Parliament—we may hear cries of "Shame" in a moment—should be paid £126,000 a year, but if Sir Gordon Downey is giving us an example of what a Member of Parliament should be paid for his four days, that is what the salary would amount to. It would make us look ridiculous. The idea that, ultimately, we shall impress our electorate, raise the standards of this House or serve our constituents better by employing somebody at that salary makes us a laughing stock.

When was the job advertised? Are we supposed to believe that, despite all the efforts of the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), no one could be found to do a four-days-a-week job for less than £74,000? Perhaps it comes to this: if one is to do such a ridiculous job, the very institution of which underlines and undermines everything that the House should stand for, the salary must be made very high indeed.

I have no criticism of Sir Gordon Downey, who has clearly had a career of distinguished public service. In his twilight years, he must have thought that this was the best thing that had ever happened to him. On one level, so say all of us, but when this House legislates not to try to take forward the condition of the people but to exact political revenge on its opponents, it has a good night out but it demeans itself and this institution.

In due course, the lawyers among us will swarm over the fine print of the recommendation to make sure that it hangs Opposition Members when we really get stuck into the nature of their trade union funding. The mere fact that we can enjoy that does not alter for a moment the fact that what we have done tonight, in a spirit of rancour on one side of the House and sheer cravenness on the part of many of my hon. Friends, undermines an institution to which our constituents sent us to preserve. Many of us should be ashamed of ourselves.

9 pm

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): I favour the appointment of Sir Gordon Downey. It is sad that we have had to make such an appointment, but we have had to do so because there have been abuses. It is a red herring for Conservative Members to argue about his salary. When unemployed people in my constituency look at my salary and those of other hon. Members, they wish that they had such a salary. It cannot be argued that a Member of Parliament should not be appointed because of his salary.

I have seen problems that could be referred to an independent body. I left the Select Committee for Trade and Industry because I was deeply concerned about what hon. Members were doing when they visited countries at the expense of this House. When I went with the Select Committee to China, we were treated like royalty. I was deeply ashamed when members of the delegation handed out their business cards, which were written in Chinese for the benefit of their hosts, and said, "This is my business card. Get in touch with me if you need advice on a particular industry." One day, an hon. Member took an interpreter supplied to us by the Chinese Government to a meeting on private business for a telecom company with which the hon. Member was involved. Now that this appointment has been made, hon. Members can at least go to the commissioner, say that something is worrying them and ask whether he will look into it so that standards do not deteriorate.

Hon. Members on both sides of the House have seen the setting up of all-party groups. Anyone can tell that those groups are set up to become involved in lobbying in the House. Sir Gordon Downey, and even we in this House, could look into that ridiculous set-up. We have the best facilities that can be offered in the centre of London. They are given free of charge to hon. Members with an important all-party affair that they want to bring forward. Yet at this very moment, lobbyists are going around Parliament seeking to set up all-party groups for their own ends. Perhaps Sir Gordon will also look at the activities of those so-called all-party groups.

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): I am following the hon. Gentleman's argument carefully. Surely, a Member who suspects that another Member is doing something wrong can report that either to Madam Speaker or to the Chairman of the Privileges Committee, or some such body. What is wrong with that?

Mr. Martin: It is getting to the stage when so many complaints are made that the Chief Whips and you, Madam Speaker—I know that I should not draw you into the argument—are fed up with listening to Members like me talking about the type of abuses that are going on.

Dr. Robert Spink (Castle Point): Rubbish.

Mr. Martin: The hon. Gentleman and many others have attacked me because I am a sponsored member of a trade union. I have put on my declaration the information that my constituency party, not me, gets £150 a quarter. There is a big difference between that and what some hon. Members are getting from promoting their consultancies in the House.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: We appreciate the service that the hon. Gentleman gives to the House. I have never cast any aspersions on what sponsorship or support he may get, but a little earlier he cast aspersions on a member of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry which visited China. He said that one or more members of that delegation handed over a business card, as he put it—a visitors' card, or personal card—to those Chinese people whom they met in the People's Republic of China.

Does the hon. Gentleman accept that, when Members of Parliament go abroad, those whom they meet, whatever their position—Members of Parliament, civil servants, business people and people in social work—frequently give them a card? I have thousands in my desk that I have been given over the years. Does the hon. Gentleman not understand that that frequently happens?

Madam Speaker: Order. Let me remind hon. Members that we are straying from the motion on the Order Paper. We have little time for this debate. Many wish to speak, so I hope that Members who are called will make their points briefly.

Mr. Martin: I will be brief, but I should like to point out that I sat through the previous debate, so I have not just come into the Chamber.

Let me spell it out to the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton)—I do not think that he listened to what I said. Certain Members gave out their private business cards when they were part of a delegation visiting China on the business of the House. One hon. Member took away the interpreter who had been supplied for the benefit of the Select Committee in order to do business for a private company. That is the point that I am trying to make, and if the hon. Gentleman has not picked it up, there must be something wrong with his hearing. You are right, Madam Speaker: perhaps I am straying from the motion. I see standards deteriorating all the time. That must stop, for the benefit and good name of the House.

I hope that the commissioner will also look at the activities of some people in the press, because they are not so honourable. They are prepared to take payments to write certain stories that suit their own ends. There are also lobbyists going around this building who are interested not in our constituents or in the honour of the House but merely in their own private and personal gain.

9.8 pm

Mr. John Butterfill (Bournemouth, West): I regret that the decisions made earlier this evening will make it necessary for us to appoint Sir Gordon Downey. That is no criticism of Sir Gordon, whom I have known for many years. He is a man of great ability and integrity. There are few people we could choose who would do the job better than him.

The difficulty is that what we have done this evening has created a situation in which we will be seen as naughty schoolchildren, who have had to put someone above us in order to ensure that we behave. That is a tragedy.

As you know, Madam Speaker, I was one of those who voted against the first motion, and I then voted against the amendment tabled by the Opposition. I did so, as you know, not because I was worried about disclosing what I receive in consultancy payments for the British Venture Capital Association and for the British Insurance and Investment Brokers Association—because you know that I had intended in my speech, before the Division, to reveal what I was paid by those organisations. I shall reveal it now, because I do not want it to be thought that I was in any way going to be forced to do so.

I am paid by each of those organisations a sum of between £10,000 and £15,000, to use the bracket of revelation that we must now use. I have never done anything for either of those organisations of which I would be ashamed. However, what we have done tonight is to ensure that, because of the ban on advocacy and because we shall have to go to Sir Gordon to obtain permission to do things now, we cannot now speak freely in the House in the way that we might have done previously—a right that we won from Charles I and have given away this evening.

For example, when we introduced the insurance premium tax a little while ago, I and other hon. Members who represent the insurance industry in the House said to the insurance industry, "You cannot resist the imposition of that tax, but we must ensure that the way in which it is implemented is as efficient as possible, both for the public and for the industry."

The Government were proposing that the tax should be implemented on net payments after commission. The problem with that was that it would have been impossible to calculate the tax because of the various commission structures and bonus commissions and everything else, so I, along with others, went to Ministers and said, "That is a crazy way to proceed; it must be calculated on gross commissions." The net effect of persuading them that that was the case is that it is much easier for the Inland Revenue to collect money, and the industry has a much easier way to proceed.

In future, we shall not be allowed to do that; we shall have to go to a commissioner and obtain permission.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): The hon. Gentleman can do those things. Nothing in the world stops him from doing them. All he has to do is to resign his consultancy.

Mr. Butterfill: I accept what the hon. Gentleman says, but he knows that those of us who take on that work engage in considerable additional work to do so, and it is not necessarily unreasonable that we should be paid. I do not suppose that the hon. Gentleman takes on consultancies of that nature free, although I have done some free. I acted, for example, for—

Madam Speaker: Order. I must bring the attention of the House back to the motion before us. We are not concerned with an earlier debate. We are simply concerned with the appointment of a parliamentary commissioner, and that is set out in three lines on the Order Paper. Hon. Members must relate what they have to say to that motion and not stray as far as they are doing now.

Mr. Butterfill: I am grateful to you, Madam Speaker, and I shall return to that issue.

What I object to in the appointment of a commissioner is that we, as Members of the House, are making ourselves subject to someone who is not a Member of the House. We should not be accountable to a commissioner. We should not be accountable to a Select Committee set up by the Government and Opposition Whips Offices. We should not even, with great respect to your person and your office, Madam Speaker, be accountable to you. We should be accountable only to our constituents.

By doing what we are doing tonight, we are taking away that sovereignty of Parliament in a way that I believe is damaging. I believe that we shall not restore the confidence of the public because now we shall be seen to be behaving only because we have to behave.

If we had had a voluntary register and the opportunity to register all the details of our employment—I am grateful that we now have that opportunity because, as you are aware, Madam Speaker, I would have so registered—we should have had to account to each of our constituents as to why we were not registering those things that our constituents thought that we should enter. We would be behaving like honourable Members, and that is the only way ultimately that we shall obtain the respect of the public.

9.13 pm

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): As someone who has never sought to have paid interests outside the House, I have no personal problem in being made accountable to the proposed commissioner. My right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Sir E. Heath) spoke for many of us in the House, both in his speech tonight and in what he wrote in the *Evening Standard* earlier today, when he posed serious questions about the effect of tonight's business on the well-being of the House of Commons. I heartily agree with what he said and wrote.

To turn directly to the matter before the House, I shall ask a succinct question of the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), who speaks for the House of Commons Commission. Precisely how was the sum of £72,000 per year that Sir Gordon is to receive arrived at? What was the basis of fixing on that precise level of payment to Sir Gordon? Is there any truth in the suggestion that that was the minimum that he said he would have to be paid if he was to accept the appointment? Could the right hon. Gentleman answer those direct questions?

9.15 pm

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): I do not take the same apocalyptic view as the hon. Members for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) and for Teignbridge

(Mr. Nicholls) who spoke at the beginning of the debate. I wonder how the commissioner will be able to fill four days a week after the initial flurry of activity—I think that he will be pressed to do so. I think that there should be full disclosure of Members' incomes from all sources—that would resolve the problem, as we would not have to pay his £72,000 a year to arbitrate on the different sources of Members' incomes.

I have a few questions to ask the Leader of the House—who appears to have made a run for it—or his representative on earth about how the commissioner was appointed. Was the job advertised? I believe that it was. How many applications were received? How many names were short-listed? What form did the interviews take? I hope that before the end of the debate the Leader of the House or his representative will answer those questions, as I am curious to know the answers.

9.17 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I am deeply concerned about what we are doing this evening. When, over the passage of time, people look at the votes that took place earlier and at the appointment to which the motion refers, they will wonder why we went to so much trouble when the mechanisms required to discipline, organise and manage this place already exist.

The unwritten United Kingdom constitution was our inheritance and we were fortunate to inherit it. As a Member of Parliament who represents a minority of the UK population who live in Scotland and look to this place to look after their interests within the UK, I am aware of the deep concern among my constituents that the High Court of Parliament will no longer take the final decisions on matters affecting their representative. I do not represent a narrow partisan view, any more than does anyone else in this place. All my constituents have the right to come to me and to expect me to be able to ask questions on matters that directly affect them as constituents.

I am concerned that we are putting in place a structure, a mechanism, that is substantially flawed. Anyone who has attempted to read the measure on which we voted earlier will realise that the commissioner will face considerable problems. How does one ask an individual to arbitrate on articles that have been written in newspapers about specific matters affecting future votes in the House on how money is spent? Often, the individual concerned is paid handsomely for his efforts because he is a Member of Parliament.

Articles written by hon. Members appear in the Scottish press every week. Will those hon. Members be debarred from leading parliamentary delegations that may affect the national health service or from asking questions or initiating and participating in debates? I believe that we have put in place the most appalling, structurally deficient measures, which are comparable to what has come out of Europe in recent years. They do the House no favours.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I understand the hon. Gentleman's concerns. Hon. Members would be debarred only if they had already entered into some form of commercial contract with a pharmaceutical company, for example, and they are not obliged to do that.

Mr. Walker: I make it clear that I do not have any problems with the measures personally. However, I am concerned about what we are asking the ombudsman to do. I believe that lawyers will have a field day with the measures that we have attempted to insert into the structures and rules of this place. The hon. Member for Newham, South shakes his head, but he may live to regret his actions.

I return to the example of hon. Members who write articles for newspapers. Those individuals are paid to write articles because they are Members of Parliament and because they have direct access to the House. In fact, they often base their articles on questions that they have asked in this place. I do not want those hon. Members to stop writing articles, any more than I want other hon. Members to cease gaining similar experience outside the House. It is that sort of experience that makes the Chamber what it is. If all hon. Members shared the same backgrounds and experiences, the Chamber simply would not function properly. The unwritten constitution of the United Kingdom depends vitally on the independence of hon. Members who represent all their constituents.

As an aside, I was astonished to hear the hon. Member for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin) criticise all-party groups. I think particularly of the delightful Scotch whisky all-party group, of which I regularly speak in favour although I am a teetotaller. I digress for a moment because I find his comments horrendous.

I believe that the House is more important than any narrow, partisan point-scoring exercise. I want my grandchildren to inherit what we were lucky enough to enjoy: all the benefits that the unwritten constitution of the United Kingdom provides.

9.22 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): I did not intend to speak in the debate until a few moments ago. However, the tone of the debate that has followed the voting suggests that Conservative Members are bitter about what has occurred tonight. That underlying bitterness is coming through in the debate.

I am among those who have followed the debate very closely over the years and I suspect that many hon. Members are exaggerating the effect of the changes that we have made. There will be much discussion about the changes in the Committee that is to be established. I believe that a number of rulings will be arrived at through precedent and, when those rulings are laid down, hon. Members will be able to identify to what extent they are in order when they speak in the House of Commons or use the procedures of this place. Hon. Members must take stock and not react in the hysterical manner that seems to have characterised the debate tonight.

Mr. Butterfill: The hon. Gentleman is wrong in what he says about feelings of bitterness: we accept what has happened. However, even if we ban advocacy, there is not a legislature in the world where that does not occur. Surely all that we have done tonight is drive it underground, and that is never a good thing.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I do not want to stray from order and it would not be in order for me to reply directly to the hon. Gentleman, but he should consider what he has said. To suggest that advocacy will be driven underground suggests that some Members are prepared and are now giving notice of the fact that they intend to breach the

[Mr. Campbell-Savours]

rules of the House of Commons. That would be a grave error of judgment and I hope that the hon. Gentleman has the opportunity to correct what he said.

Mr. Butterfill: I shall happily do so.

Madam Speaker: Order. I have cautioned the House before that we are dealing with a very small motion and hon. Members in their interventions are leading those hon. Members who have the Floor down quite the wrong path. I hope that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) will not give way. He must speak to the motion that is before us. The hon. Gentleman's interventions do not deal with the motion at all.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Let me say something in defence of Sir Gordon Downey. Together with other members of the Public Accounts Committee, I worked closely with him for many years. I was on the Public Accounts Committee for 11 or 12 years and Sir Gordon was there for about six of them. He has an extremely incisive mind and sees his way through very complicated issues. That came out often during deliberative sessions of the Public Accounts Committee. Anyone who was on that Committee in those years can only endorse what I have to say.

If Conservative Members are concerned about what will happen in the Committee, they will find that Sir Gordon, in bringing his mind to the problems that may confront us, will certainly find ways to resolve those problems that will be endorsed by the Committee.

Mr. Winnick: Does my hon. Friend accept that, if the proposal had been put before us some years ago, I probably would have opposed it? Does he agree that it was the failure of the Select Committee on Members' Interests time and again to tackle some of the issues which undoubtedly embarrassed the House and which has now made such a measure inevitable? It is right that we should go ahead with the appointment.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Sadly, that is the case. When I was on the Select Committee on Members' Interests we had a very good team. The Chairman of the Committee, the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) was here this evening, but he is not in his place at the moment. He will recall that we had a particularly good team and worked very well together through a number of difficult inquiries. However, late last year and at the beginning of this year, the Committee ran into the long grass and found that it could no longer proceed. I was not on the Committee, as I came off it two years ago.

The Committee was required to examine a couple of complaints. It was almost impossible for it to proceed because, for a variety of reasons outside the Committee's control, Parliament was polarising on those issues in the light of the scandals that had been reported in the national press. In my view, that polarisation made it difficult to proceed without the intervention of an independent person or persons to adjudicate on those matters. We effectively started with Nolan. Nolan was there to some extent to adjudicate on the best way forward and make recommendations to Parliament with which we could then proceed. We have now reached the next stage and perhaps an independent element will help the Committee avoid the log jams that will inevitably arise over the coming months.

Mrs. Ann Winterton (Congleton): I would like to bring the hon. Gentleman back to the central point of our debate this evening. He has given his opinion of the gentleman who will preside over the new Committee. The hon. Gentleman has now recommended him to the House. No one is making slighting references to the gentleman in question. The point surely is that many hon. Members on both sides of the House think that a salary of £72,000 is obscene—not to mention the cost of his secretarial back-up, his office and so on. Perhaps if the man in question has retired on an index-linked pension and is comfortably off, he should be public-spirited enough to offer to do the job for nothing.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Lady's intervention reminds me to correct an error in what her spouse said earlier. Sir Gordon Downey was an Officer of the House of Commons: he is not an outsider. He understands this House. If, over time, he believes that his salary is not warranted, it will come as no surprise to hon. Members to hear me say that he will probably ask for the salary to be renegotiated. He is not the sort of man to demand such a salary ad infinitum if he knows he does not warrant it. He sought a salary of that grade on the basis that he felt that the amount of work required of him would go with a substantial salary—

Mr. Nicholls: Four days a week!

Mr. Campbell-Savours: We do not know that—

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) has already made a contribution to the debate.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I do not usually spend my time defending salaries of this size; but in certain circumstances we have to pay the market price if we want good people. Sir Gordon will not be working four days a week. He will probably spend much of his week just as we spend ours. The public think we work three and a half or four days a week, but the hon. Member for Teignbridge talked about our working seven days a week. During his first year in the job, Sir Gordon will certainly not work a four-day week. He will find that he has to do an immense amount of work that will certainly warrant a large salary in the early period. But eventually he may volunteer to have the salary renegotiated.

Mr. Nicholls: The resolution refers to a four-day week, although there may be a little more work to begin with. The hon. Gentleman appears to be saying that he is authorised by Sir Gordon to say that he will apply for a pay cut in the near future. The hon. Gentleman is an experienced Member of this House, so may I ask him whether he thinks £72,000 a year is too much, too little or just right?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I must sit down soon, but I will end on this note. My party has stood accused for decades of promoting the politics of envy. I sense a little envy in what the hon. Gentleman is saying this evening.

9.33 pm

Mr. Beith: With the leave of the House, I shall try, in the time available, to reply to the main points of the debate. I do so not, as the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) thinks, on behalf of the Leader of the

House, nor, as the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) thinks, on behalf of the Liberal Democrats, but on behalf of a Commission on which Front and Back Benchers of all three parties are represented, under the independent chairmanship of Madam Speaker.

Aspects of the debate have gone over the same ground as the previous debate. The Commission had no authority to question the House's decision to appoint a Commissioner for Standards, which was taken on 19 July. The Commission has no power whatever over the salaries of Members, which are decided on a resolution of the House. So we could do nothing about either matter even if we had chosen to do so.

The Commission considered the question of salary carefully and at some length. In fixing the annual salary at £72,000, on the basis of what has been determined as a four-day week, the commission was obliged to take account of a number of factors. They included the importance attached to the duties involved, the previous salaries of likely suitable candidates and our statutory responsibility to pay salaries in line with those in the civil service. We also had regard to the problem presented by the difference between salary levels suggested to us and the salaries of right hon. and hon. Members, with whom the commissioner will have to deal. Some of us held particularly strong views on that point.

The recommended salary, which is at the bottom end of the permanent secretary scale reduced by one fifth because of the four-day week, represents a compromise—and one that I hope that the House will accept, so that there will be no delay in the detailed implementation of the decisions taken by the House this evening.

Mr. Ray Whitney (Wycombe): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Beith: First, I must try to answer the questions of right hon. and hon. Members who have taken part in the debate.

The hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) asked how the choice was made. The Commission was assisted by the board, chaired by the First Civil Service Commissioner, and benefited from advice given by consultants who contacted 135 individuals in a general trawl. Eighty applications were received in response to advertisements in two newspapers. Short and long lists were devised. At the end of that extended process, the commission was unanimous in approving the appointment of Sir Gordon Downey.

I say to the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) that Sir Gordon's wide experience and considerable reputation suited him well for the post. The details of his career are set out in the report on which the resolution is based, which the hon. Gentleman can read. As Comptroller and Auditor General—and I attach particular importance to that post, as did the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours)—Sir Gordon had extensive experience of the workings of the House, of Committees and of Members of Parliament individually, as well as of the pressures under which they work. All those represented compelling reasons for appointing Sir Gordon.

Mr. Mullin: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Beith: I will give way to the first hon. Gentleman who asked me to do so.

Mr. Whitney: Against the background that the misdemeanours that gave rise to the whole Nolan process have been so few and far between, is the right hon. Gentleman telling the House that he and the Commission seriously believe that when the arrangement is in operation, there will be a sufficient number of problems of the kind in question to keep Sir Gordon occupied four days every week? Did the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues on the Commission really reach that conclusion?

Mr. Beith: We were advised by the Select Committee. If the hon. Gentleman will read its report, he will find references to the possibility of full-time and part-time work in the post. Initially, the Commission reached the conclusion that for the first year or two at least, a full-time post could be fully justified. Only after some discussion was the post reduced to one of four days a week. We recognise that once the system has become established, it may prove possible for the work to be undertaken with a smaller commitment of time. We envisage that happening, and it is assumed that the post will be reviewed at an appropriate stage. Perhaps the number of days will be reduced, in which case the salary will be adjusted accordingly.

Mr. Harris: Can the right hon. Gentleman refute the suggestion that £72,000 was the absolute minimum that Sir Gordon would accept? In other words, that he insisted on being paid £72,000—true or false?

Mr. Beith: If I had been a party to any negotiations with individuals, which I was not, I would not disclose them on the Floor of the House—any more than one would expect any person to do. The Commission made a decision as to the level of salary and made a recommendation to the House. It did so having considered a range of factors that go in conflicting directions. The salary is less than that paid to others in the service of the House. Even the full-time equivalent—I touch on a point made by the right hon. Member for Worthing (Sir T. Higgins)—is less than the salary of the Comptroller and Auditor General, who is paid significantly more.

Sir Terence Higgins: I did not actually say that. As right hon. and hon. Members will be required to deposit their contracts with Sir Gordon, can the right hon. Gentleman say whether Sir Gordon's contract has been deposited in the Library? In particular, can the right hon. Gentleman remind the House of the term of Sir Gordon's contract and the circumstances under which it may be renegotiated?

Mr. Beith: The Select Committee made it clear that the commissioner should be in a position of some independence and be capable of being dismissed only on a resolution of the House. The contract is, if I recall rightly, a three-year term, and it can only be ended short of that period on such a resolution. Most of the details of the appointment are set out in the report itself. I commend it to the House.

Sir Terence Higgins: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Madam Speaker: Is the right hon. Gentleman giving way, or has he finished?

Mr. Beith: I have finished, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Does the right hon. Gentleman wish to make a speech, as there is time?

Sir Terence Higgins: Briefly, as it seemed appropriate to ask what the term was. I am not at all clear why, if we are to renegotiate the terms, it should be a three-year term.

9.39 pm

Mr. Phil Gallie (Ayr): I had not intended to get involved in the debate, but I am a bit stunned. I follow the excellent speeches that were delivered by my hon. Friends the Members for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) and for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton). I find it astounding that, month by month, year by year, we hear from Opposition Members how wrong it is for individuals with high salaries to be appointed, particularly to run industries where wealth can be accrued, but where, as suggested by Opposition Members, individuals should not benefit to the full level of their contribution.

Here we have an individual who is in retirement, who has undoubtedly given great service to this country in the past, but who is being brought out of retirement on a salary of £72,000 a year. I feel quite sure that Opposition Members will find it very difficult indeed to justify to their constituents how they can support such a move.

I honestly feel that the House has got it wrong on this issue and that it is setting a very bad example indeed.

Mr. Mullin: Did the hon. Gentleman hear me ask a moment ago how many people were on the shortlist for that particular job and how many were interviewed? Did he notice that I got no reply and that when I attempted to intervene to follow it up I was the only person who failed to catch the attention of the hon. Gentleman concerned? Does he think that we should have an answer to that question?

Mr. Gallie: I believe that the hon. Gentleman should have had an answer. I believe that such a position should have been advertised to the fullest extent, in line with the wishes and desires of Opposition Members and so many expressions in the past—

It being one hour after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, Madam Speaker put the Question, pursuant to Order [3 November].

The House divided: Ayes 231, Noes 71.

Division No. 239] **[9.42 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Ainsworth, Peter *(East Surrey)*
Ainsworth, Robert *(Cov'try NE)*
Alison, Rt Hon Michael *(Selby)*
Amess, David
Anderson, Donald *(Swansea E)*
Anderson, Ms Janet *(Ros'dale)*
Arbuthnot, James
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, Peter *(Hexham)*
Baldry, Tony
Barnes, Harry
Barron, Kevin
Bates, Michael
Battle, John
Beckett, Rt Hon Margaret
Beith, Rt Hon A J
Bellingham, Henry
Beresford, Sir Paul
Bermingham, Gerald
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Booth, Hartley
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter *(Eltham)*
Bowis, John
Brandreth, Gyles
Bright, Sir Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, N *(N'c'tle upon Tyne E)*
Browning, Mrs Angela
Burden, Richard
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Peter
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Mrs Anne *(C'bridge)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D N
Canavan, Dennis
Cann, Jamie
Carlile, Alexander *(Montgomery)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chapman, Sir Sydney
Chisholm, Malcolm
Clappison, James
Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth *(Ru'clif)*
Clifton-Brown, Geoffrey
Coe, Sebastian
Cohen, Harry
Colvin, Michael
Congdon, David
Connarty, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David *(Skipton & Ripon)*
Dalyell, Tam
Davidson, Ian
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Deva, Nirj Joseph
Delvin, Tim
Dewar, Donald
Donohoe, Brian H
Dorrell, Rt Hon Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dowd, Jim
Duncan, Alan
Eastham, Ken
Eggar, Rt Hon Tim
Elletson, Harold
Evans, Jonathan *(Brecon)*
Evans Nigel *(Ribble Valley)*
Evans, Roger *(Monmouth)*
Evennett, David
Faber, David
Fatchett, Derek
Fishburn, Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Rt Hon Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Foulkes, George
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Dr Liam *(Woodspring)*
Fraser, John
Freeman, Rt Hon Roger
French, Douglas
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garnier, Edward
Gillan, Cheryl
Godman, Dr Norman A
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Rt Hon Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth, N)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Gunnell, John
Hague, Rt Hon William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Rt Hon Jeremy
Hanson, David
Hardy, Peter
Hawkins, Nick
Heald, Oliver
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Doug
Hendry, Charles
Higgins, Rt Hon Sir Terence
Hill, Keith *(Streatham)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hoon, Geoffrey
Horam, John
Hordern, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, George *(Knowsley North)*
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Helen *(Shef'ld, H)*
Jenkin, Bernard
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd, SW)*
Jones, Robert B *(W Hertfdshr)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Jowell, Tessa
Kennedy, Charles *(Ross,C&S)*
Kennedy, Jane *(L'pool Br'dg'n)*
Khabra, Piara S
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Mrs Angela *(Erewash)*
Knight, Rt Hon Greg *(Derby N)*
Kynoch, George *(Kincardine)*
Lait, Mrs Jacqui
Lang, Rt Hon Ian
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lidington, David
Lloyd, Rt Hon Sir Peter *(Fareham)*
Luff, Peter
McAvoy, Thomas
McFall, John
MacKay, Andrew
Mackinlay, Andrew
Maclean, Rt Hon David
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McMaster, Gordon
Maitland, Lady Olga
Malone, Gerald
Martin, Michael J *(Springburn)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Rt Hon Dr Brian
Merchant, Piers
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Argyll & Bute)*
Milburn, Alan
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Sir Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Pearson, Ian
Pickles, Eric
Pike, Peter L
Pope, Greg
Portillo, Rt Hon Michael
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prentice, Bridget *(Lew'm E)*
Prescott, Rt Hon John
Rathbone, Tim
Reid, Dr John
Richards, Rod
Roberts, Rt Hon Sir Wyn
Robertson, George *(Hamilton)*
Robertson, Raymond *(Ab'd'n S)*
Robinson, Mark *(Somerton)*
Rooker, Jeff
Rumbold, Rt Hon Dame Angela
Ryder, Rt Hon Richard
Sackville, Tom
Sainsbury, Rt Hon Sir Timothy
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Rt Hon Gillian
Shersby, Sir Michael
Short, Clare
Simpson, Alan
Sims, Roger
Smith, Chris *(Isl'ton S & F'sbury)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Nicholas
Spencer, Sir Derek
Spink, Dr Robert

Spring, Richard
Sproat, Iain
Squire, Robin *(Hornchurch)*
Streeter, Gary
Sweeney, Walter
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thomason, Roy
Tredinnick, David
Trend, Michael
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Waterson, Nigel
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Rt Hon Sir John
Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Sir Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Willetts, David
Winnick, David
Wood, Timothy
Worthington, Tony
Young, Rt Hon Sir George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Michael Brown and
Mr. Robert G. Hughes.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Allason, Rupert *(Torbay)*
Alton, David
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Rt Hon Robert
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Andrew F
Budgen, Nicholas
Carlisle, John *(Luton North)*
Chidgey, David
Corbyn, Jeremy
Davies, Chris *(L'Boro & S'worth)*
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Sir Anthony
Foster, Don *(Bath)*
Gallie, Phil
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, Sir John
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grylls, Sir Michael
Hannam, Sir John
Hargreaves, Andrew
Harris, David
Harvey, Nick
Haselhurst, Sir Alan
Hicks, Robert
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Nigel *(Cheltenham)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Bir'm E'st'n)*
Knox, Sir David
Lawrence, Sir Ivan
Leigh, Edward
Lewis, Terry
Loyden, Eddie
Lynne, Ms Liz
Maddock, Diana
Madel, Sir David
Mills, Iain
Moate, Sir Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Neubert, Sir Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Patnick, Sir Irvine
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Redwood, Rt Hon John
Rendel, David
Scott, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Skinner, Dennis
Spicer, Sir James *(W Dorset)*
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Stephen, Michael
Sykes, John
Taylor, Sir Teddy *(Southend, E)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Sir Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D *(Bexl'yh'th)*
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Walker, Bill *(N Tayside)*
Wallace, James
Whitney, Ray
Winterton, Mrs Ann *(Congleton)*
Winterton, Nicholas *(Macc'fld)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Marlow and
Mr. Michael Stern.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That Sir Gordon Stanley Downey, KCB, be appointed Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards on the terms of the Report of the House of Commons Commission (HC 789), dated 30th October.

Orders of the Day

Medical (Professional Performance) Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Clause 2

VOLUNTARY REMOVAL FROM THE REGISTER

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 3, leave out lines 25 to 29 and insert ("—

> (a) providing for the erasure by the Registrar from the register of medical practitioners of the name of any person who applies, in the manner prescribed by the regulations, for his name to be erased from the register;
>
> (b) providing for the refusal by the Registrar of applications under paragraph (a) above in such cases and circumstances as may be prescribed by the regulations;
>
> (c) making provision")

9.48 pm

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Geoffrey Lofthouse): With this, it will be convenient to discuss also Lords amendment No. 2.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Lords amendment No. 1 relates to the part of the Bill that allows registered medical practitioners voluntarily to withdraw from the register. The debate in this place, both Upstairs in Committee and here, was inevitably linked to the reasons for that, to the acceptance or otherwise of a voluntary application for erasure from the register and—I put this within the ambit of this discussion—to the terms on which there should be any application for readmission to the register.

Labour Members' concern was recalled by the noble Baroness Cumberlege, and I understand that I can quote her on this matter as she is a member of the Government, giving a Government view: She said:

> "during the debate in another place there was concern that some doctors might abuse the provisions of clause 2 to avoid proceedings concerning serious professional misconduct. The Opposition tabled a number of amendments aimed at addressing that but none of them gave the GMC the flexibility it requires."

I fear that she was not reading at least some of the concerns of Labour Members and, I hope, of the whole House. Parliament lays down the ambit for the rules within which the General Medical Council works, but it appeared from her remarks that the GMC was requesting a degree of flexibility that at least Labour Members, both in Committee and on Report, were asking for, and it was denied on those grounds.

The amendment provides

> "(a) . . . for the erasure by the Registrar from the register of medical practitioners of the name of any person who applies, in the manner prescribed by the regulations, for his name to be erased from the register",

and

> "(b) . . . for the refusal by the Registrar of applications under paragraph (a) above in such cases and circumstances as may be prescribed by the regulations".

[Mr. Nigel Spearing]

The obvious purport of that amendment was made clear by the noble Baroness Cumberlege when she said:

> "If a doctor decides he cannot maintain a good standard of performance or does not wish to undertake remedial training, he should be allowed to remove his name from the register. Clause 2 provides for this and other similar circumstances in which a doctor may simply no longer wish to be registered; for example, if he is going to work abroad. It also has the effect of providing a quick and easy way for a doctor to remove himself from practice."

The Government and the noble Baroness claim that the loophole allowing a doctor to remove his name from the register when he is about to be, or suspects that he is to be, subject to either the performance channel, which is opened up in the Bill, or the professional conduct channel, which is there at present, is to be stopped up to some extent, but that is not so, at least in relation to the wishes of the House. The loophole is stopped up to allow the registrar to act on regulations prescribed by the General Medical Council, and we do not know what those are.

A continuous theme of the debate both upstairs and on the Floor of the House was that the Bill provides the General Medical Council with powers to make regulations and a very wide discretion which, in the view of many hon. Members, were too imprecise. The regulations to which the amendment refers cover one of seven pages of the schedule and about three pages of the main Bill and therefore there is concern that the clause, although no one could oppose it because it partially stops up something that has been spotted, does not go anything like far enough. The provision is not linked in any precise way with the following part of the clause, which is not being amended and which allows for application for reinstatement.

The GMC has the discretion to restore a member. That does not reassure the public, despite the fact that the noble Baroness said:

> "The amendments will enable the GMC to make regulations to allow its registrar to refuse applications for voluntary removal in defined circumstances."

I interpret those circumstances to be those defined in regulations, not defined by this House. She continued:

> "this will not only give the GMC flexibility, but also send a message to the profession and the public that the GMC takes a grave view of matters of serious professional misconduct."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 21 July 1995; Vol. 566, c. 490-91.]

It being Ten o'clock, further consideration of the Lords amendment stood adjourned.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business),

That, at this day's sitting, the Lords Amendments to the Medical (Professional Performance) Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Dr. Liam Fox.]*

Question agreed to.

Question again proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Spearing: I beg to contest the noble Baroness's statement. As I said, it is a very loose arrangement with the regulations being entirely in the hands of the GMC. My understanding—the Minister can correct me if I am wrong as these matters are not simple because there is a whole mass of interlocking regulations—is that the regulations must have the approval of the Privy Council, which was the historic origin of the GMC, quite properly, a century ago, and indeed, probably quite properly, of its court of appeal.

I am not sure whether the regulations relating to voluntary removal and reinstatement have to come back to the House under a negative procedure. I am sure that it will not be the affirmative procedure because that proposal was thrown out in Committee. I suspect that the regulations will require only the approval of the Privy Council and no more. If that is so, contrary to what the noble Baroness said, it is evidence that the question of serious professional misconduct and what then happens is in the hands of the Privy Council and the GMC alone, without any reference to this House.

Another matter that was debated in Committee in the other place was raised by Lord Rea. He referred to me because his amendment related to the Archer case, which is well known to the GMC and to the House. His amendment would have allowed the existing professional conduct committee, of which the noble Baroness is so proud, to deny its right to send back to the professional performance committee a finding on a doctor whose performance was considered to be professional misconduct, but not serious. It was suggested that the matter would have to go back to the screener.

Although I do not think that anyone could oppose the Lords amendment, it exemplifies not only the complexity of the Bill and the schedule, but the fact that virtually the whole Bill allows the GMC enormous scope to make its own regulations. This House will have very little opportunity—in fact, none in some cases—to approve the regulations. The operation of the Bill, when it is enacted, may not provide—not least because the professional procedure is in secret—the advantages and the improvements that the GMC says that it wants and that the Government say that the Bill will produce.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Tom Sackville): I am glad that the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) said that no one could oppose the amendment. I am sure that we can dispose of it fairly quickly. I am glad that he approves of the amendment in principle, recognising the concern that some doctors could take advantage of the clause and the Bill to avoid proceedings for serious professional misconduct and that there could therefore be instances when the public interest would be served by a doctor remaining on the register and facing a committee hearing. The hon. Gentleman suggested that the regulations allowed by the amendment are too broad but we believe that experience shows that we can give the GMC the flexibility that it needs to strike a balance in the matter. I commend the amendment to the House.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 2 agreed to.

New clause

Lords amendment: No. 3, after clause 2, to insert the following new clause—*Preliminary proceedings: interim orders*—

" .—(1) Section 42 of the Medical Act 1983 (preliminary proceedings as to professional misconduct and unfitness to practise) shall be amended as follows.

(2) In subsection (3), in paragraph (c) for the word "two" there shall be substituted the word "six".

(3) In subsection (4), for the words "No order for interim suspension or for interim conditional registration shall be made by the Preliminary Proceedings Committee" there shall be substituted the words "No order under subsection (3)(b) or (c) above or (6A)(b) to (d) below shall be made by any Committee".

(4) In subsection (5), for the words "If the Committee decide" there shall be substituted the words "If the Preliminary Proceedings Committee decide".

(5) In subsection (6), for the word "two" there shall be substituted the word "six".

(6) After subsection (6) there shall be inserted—

"(6A) Where an order for interim suspension or for interim conditional registration has been made in relation to any person under any provision of this section (including this subsection) the Preliminary Proceedings Committee, the Professional Conduct Committee or the Health Committee may, subject to subsection (4) above—

(a) revoke the order or revoke any condition imposed by the order;

(b) vary any condition imposed by the order;

(c) if satisfied that to do so is necessary for the protection of members of the public, make an order for interim suspension; or

(d) if satisfied that to do so is necessary for the protection of members of the public or is in the interests of the person concerned, make an order that his registration shall be conditional on his compliance, during such period as is specified in the order, with such requirements so specified as the Committee think fit to impose for the protection of members of the public or in his interests.

(6B) An order under subsection (6A)(c) or (d) above—

(a) shall take effect as from a date not later than the date on which the interim suspension or interim conditional registration would otherwise come to an end; and

(b) shall specify a period not exceeding three months.

(6C) If an order is made under subsection (6A)(a) to (d) above the Registrar shall forthwith serve a notification of the order on the person to whose registration it relates.

(6D) Where an order has been made under any provision of this section, the court (within the meaning of section 38 above) may—

(a) in the case of an order for interim suspension, terminate the suspension,

(b) in the case of an order for conditional registration, revoke or vary any condition imposed by the order,

(c) in either case, substitute for the period specified in the order some other period which could have been specified in the order when it was made;

and the decision of the court on any application under this subsection shall be final.".

(7) Subsection (7) shall cease to have effect."

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 4 to 8, 12, 13 and 15.

Mr. Sam Galbraith (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): Lords amendment No. 3 allows for the suspension of a doctor by the General Medical Council, through its preliminary proceedings committee, for the safety of the public in a case in which an issue has been raised against the doctor in respect of his or her health or professional conduct.

There is a difference between suspension on health grounds and on professional conduct grounds in that suspension on health grounds is unlikely to be controversial and there would be only limited doubt about it. However, a doctor could be suspended because of allegations about his or her professional conduct without having had a chance to answer the allegations.

In most cases, that will not be a problem. I accept that because I foresee that, in the majority of cases, complaints would have been raised with the health board or hospital, which would have pursued the matter and may or may not have then terminated the doctor's contract. The matter would then be further referred to the GMC and no controversy would be involved.

However, there will be cases where allegations will be made specifically by the public without the employing authority or the doctor having been involved. In that case, suspension by the General Medical Council will have serious implications for the employment of doctors before they have had the chance to answer the allegations against them.

I know that the GMC is separate from the employing authority. I understand that distinction and it is right that the matter is not covered in the Bill. I hope that the Minister will accept that this is one of the difficult grey areas relating to employment which arise as a consequence of the Bill. I hope that he will discuss the matter with the British Medical Association when it reaches conclusions about the future employment of its members who are suspended under those conditions.

Mr. Sackville: I certainly accept the hon. Gentleman's point. The House will agree, because it was discussed extensively during earlier stages of the Bill, that interim suspension should be extended to a longer period to allow the General Medical Council more time to bring proceedings. I welcome the hon. Gentleman's acceptance of that.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 4 to 15 agreed to.

PETITION

Channel Tunnel Rail Link

10.10 pm

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): I have the honour to present a petition on behalf of the national officers and council of executive members of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers.

Tonight, of all nights, I had better declare an interest. I am a member of the RMT and was a member of the union when it was known as the National Union of Railwaymen, of which my father was also proud to be a member.

The officers and council of executive members declare that it is in the interests of the economy, industry and environment of the United Kingdom, and in the best interests of those employed in the railway industry of the United Kingdom, that a high-speed railway line between London and the Channel tunnel be constructed as expeditiously as possible. It is a sad commentary on our transport policy that, when a high-speed line has already been constructed in France and is in the process of construction in Belgium, I should have to bring this petition before the House. The petitioners therefore request that this House of Commons uses its influence to ensure that such a high-speed railway line is constructed at the earliest possible date.

I do not have to remind you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the depth of railway experience among the officers and members of the executive. On their behalf, the petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

To lie upon the Table.

Campbell Soups

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. McLoughlin.]*

10.11 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): This is a story of deception, intrigue, exploitation and injustice. It is the story of how a large multinational company, with profits of $698 million last year, more than $7 billion in net sales world wide and an international reputation—a company responsible for marketing a branded product, known throughout the world for its quality—targeted for closure a small, technologically advanced, highly profitable food company in north-west England. In so doing, it totally undermined the morale of a town.

The multinational company concerned is Campbell Soups of America, one of the largest food producers in the world. The plant in north-west England is Homepride Cook-in Sauces in Maryport, a town reeling from the effects of escalating unemployment, which, in parts, reaches nearly 25 per cent.

Having purchased Homepride's operations in Maryport under the procedure of a mock auction, that multinational company in pursuit of profits gave those in the work force assurances as to their employment, fooled the vendor as to the plant's future and effectively stole the brand name. Within eight weeks, it announced the sacking of the work force with a spurious offer of transfer to other plants. That created mayhem, distress, anger and a deep sense of seething injustice and resentment among the local community.

In 16 years of being the Member of Parliament for Workington, I have witnessed and experienced many closures. I have seen the rundown of the footwear industry, with the closure of Bata and other footwear companies. I have witnessed the rundown of parts of British Steel Corporation's Workington operations, the closure of the Leyland-Volvo bus plant, and many other closures. But this closure has been the worst of the lot because it can be justified neither morally nor commercially and because a poor but proud and loyal community is being punished for having made a success of a company that threatened the market share of a predator multinational.

I want to say a few words about the background to the sale. Dalgety, the former owner of the cook-in sauce business, having recently acquired Quaker European pet foods operations for £422 million, found that it needed to raise a substantial amount of money. To raise those funds, it decided to sell off a number of its more profitable processed food operations.

Earlier in March, Dalgety had said that it was looking for bids for various food operation divisions. In the case of Homepride in Maryport, a number of organisations were either invited by Dalgety or approached by it with a view to purchasing those Homepride operations.

A de facto auction was announced and over a period of months a number of organisations became involved in the bidding arrangements. They included, first, BSN Danone—I understand that that company is registered in France; secondly, the CPC organisation; thirdly a venture capital arm of the National Westminster bank; fourthly, Schroder—its interest appears in part to have centred on its role as adviser for CPC; fifthly, a separate arm of Schroder specialising in venture capital projects; and, sixthly, Legal and General Insurance. Those are but some of the organisations that expressed an interest in acquiring the Homepride Maryport operations.

A number of bids came from organisations that were putting together packages that involved a combination of privately held equity, institutional equity and offshore funding. Even organisations such as Investors in Industry—3i—were partially involved. Some bids relied on the services of a management buy-out team, which in certain circumstances would have held direct equity, and perhaps even share options.

One of the problems was that it was recognised that a trade buyer would always be more risky than acquisition by a consortium sponsored by a financial institution, but no one could say anything. No one was allowed to warn the work force of the dangers. Why? Because the whole sale was shrouded in confidentiality. The Homepride sales prospectus, a veritable limited edition publication, was kept under lock and key. Any individual or institution in any way involved in the sale or purchase of Homepride was bound by what can only be described as an oath of confidentiality. In other words, "Keep your big mouths shut, because if you don't, we'll sue." That meant that no one could identify the motives of the individual players.

What I can now reveal is that, apart from one, all the people who were bidding wanted to keep the plant open. They all realised that it was a highly profitable company; indeed, it was the jewel in the crown of Dalgety's profitability. They recognised Maryport Homepride, with its ever-increasing production and profit potential, as a cash cow. There was, however, one company bidding that did not want to keep the plant open—Campbell Soups. It knew that it had to close the plant down because it threatened its strategy for the United Kingdom.

Campbell Soups was so determined to close the plant down that it outbid all the other bidders and signed a deal on 4 August. What did it buy? It bought a business with a book asset value of £9 million and a profit of £4 million on a turnover of £28 million—all for the princely sum of £58.6 million. The size of that figure suggests the desperate nature of its desire to acquire the business, grab the brand name and close down Maryport operations.

Sadly, in the final hours of the negotiations, Dalgety failed to recognise the dangers, with the effect that it failed to secure an undertaking guaranteeing the retention of the work force on the Maryport site, as had happened in the Reckitt and Colman sale of its sauces business in a back-to-back deal with Bass and Unilever.

Campbell Soups, of course, did not want such a deal, so why did it want to close the operation down? First, it wanted to acquire the substantial brand name of Homepride. Its overriding, overarching obsession with brand names is clearly demonstrated in the 1995 annual report of the United States parent operation. Secondly, it wanted to acquire a turnover injection of nearly £30 million in Campbell's United Kingdom operations. It desperately needed that because of its failure to turn in good figures on its existing operations, which some in America were questioning.

Finally, Campbell's desperately needed to secure the removal of capacity from the Maryport site, which could potentially damage its commercial objectives in the cook-in sauce market. We have to understand that the Maryport operation, in spite of a high profit against asset/turnover ratio, still left immense scope for further production and profit taking.

At the time of the takeover of 4 August, in a series of carefully prepared news releases and statements, Campbell's, hiding behind ambiguity, set out to convince the West Cumbrian public, the Maryport work force and, to some extent, even City institutions that the acquisition was good news for Maryport. Certainly the work force was misled because, at a meeting between Mr. Al Simpson and Mr. Daryl Brewster and the work force held on site at the beginning of August, they even had the gall to suggest that they were considering bringing new products to Maryport. I quote them:

"We are thinking of bringing pasta sauces to Maryport".

I further quote from a letter of 4 August 1995 from Mr. J.W.T. Mustoe:

"We are proud to be the new owners of Homepride sauces. There is no doubt that it is a fine brand, and, as many of you will know, Homepride Sauces was at the forefront of developing the cook-in sauce market. It fits in very well with our portfolio of brands which included Campbell's Soups, Fray Bentos, Rowat Pickles and Campbell's/Food service Businesses. You may be unaware that Campbell's is the biggest sauce manufacturer in the world and it is fitting that the UK's largest cook-in sauce brand"—

Homepride—

"has joined us. We believe that we can build on the strength of the Homepride Sauces name as well as develop and grow"

business in

"the cook-in sauce market."

To avoid those in the work force being alerted to the impending disaster confronting them, Campbell's even went through the spurious exercise of conning local management, who in the main appeared to have been in blissful ignorance of what was happening, into organising, in August, Investors in People status for the Maryport plant. The document produced by the company and given to the work force in August stated:

"We"—

the company—

"firmly believe that implementing the Investors In People Programme as part of our overall strategy will allow our Company to continually develop, expand and build on the success of introducing new product ranges and processes into our operations here at Maryport . . . The Programme will cover everyone within the Company and we firmly believe that it will be a major benefit to our organisation and to everyone working within the Company and further demonstrate our commitment to the development of people within Maryport, however, we recognise that our success with the Investors in People will only be achieved with everyone working together."

Furthermore, having put local management through that hoop of deception, Campbell's then had Mr. Mustoe, United Kingdom group managing director, tell me that local management supported the closure as it thought that there was no alternative. Closure of that highly profitable plant—what a betrayal of the truth and of his own newly acquired employees.

It was all a deception, which has now persisted for more than 14 weeks, and we are only at the beginning of a struggle.

As recently as last week, I learned of a decision that had been taken in early August to put a new production line into another Campbell's plant for the production and handling of Homepride cook-in sauces. Last week, the company

[Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours]

announced that 50 workers were seriously considering moving to Campbell's other plants. Another "porky"—the real figure is nearer 10 and may be as low as six.

Perhaps the company's wriggling and shifty footwork of last week is an even clearer sign of its intentions. Last week, I asked the Campbell's UK group managing director whether he would arrange for me to address the board of Campbell's at its New Jersey headquarters in the United States of America. I offered to cross the Atlantic. I also asked to be given the option to attend the annual general meeting, which is due on 16 November, and Campbell's could have allowed me to enter as a guest. I understand that that is the position under American law.

A public relations company started ringing up both myself and the media offering irrelevant responses in an attempt to evade the central questions that I have been asking. My questions still remain unanswered and I shall be tackling those issues when I visit King's Lynn next week, to appeal to the workers of the King's Lynn Campbell plant to black production lines transferred from Maryport in my constituency.

This is a saga of deceit and dishonour. The conduct of the company's UK operations is totally at variance with the standards of corporate governance set out in the memorandum of 6 October 1995 provided to shareholders who were invited to attend this year's annual general meeting in Camden, New Jersey in 10 days' time. Paragraph 18 of that document—which has only just been published in America and was sent over from America to me last week by sympathetic people—states:

> "The company does not have a poison pill"—

the Campbell company is talking about itself—

> "or other anti takeover devices because it believes that the way to remain independent is via superior performance in building shareholder wealth".

The people of Maryport did just that: they built the shareholder wealth of Dalgety through its Homepride operations. They, too, did not have a poison pill because they believed that they were the jewel in the Dalgety crown.

I am sure that well-respected and internationally regarded old-money members of the Dorrance family on the board of Campbell's American operations will understand what I mean when I suggest that new-money business decisions taken in little old England appear to lack principle. If the Dorrance family still remain unconvinced, I would ask them to look at the memorandum that I have just mentioned. Under the heading,

> "Requirements of Managers and Directors"

it refers to

> "Strong, principled and ethical leadership".

The family have been let down by people on this side of the Atlantic who should have known better. I beg them to intervene out of a sense of Christian conscience. What is happening is wrong; it is immoral; it is unprincipled and must be stopped.

10.27 pm

The Minister for Competition and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Jonathan Evans): I appreciate the force of the concerns expressed by the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), who has sought to raise the issue in the House on a number of occasions. I have been present when he has made points of order and asked questions of myself and ministerial colleagues. I congratulate him on his success in bringing the subject to the Floor of the House tonight. By the emotion that he brought to his remarks, he demonstrated his strength of feeling over the issue.

It must be recognised that industry generally operates in a competitive environment, and the Campbell company has existed in the United Kingdom since 1959. It currently employs more than 2,000 people—I think the figure is 2,100—in five locations in the United Kingdom. It has plants in King's Lynn, in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham), who is watching tonight's debate, and in the constituency of my former hon. Friend, now the hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth). It has three other plants in Glasgow, Salford and Peterlee, but they are not so central to the change in operations mentioned by the hon. Member for Workington. In my remarks I hope to outline the way in which the Office of Fair Trading has previously considered the issue.

Campbell's has invested quite heavily in the United Kingdom food industry in the past 12 months. The hon. Gentleman referred to its £56 million purchase of the Homepride sauces plant and, collectively, I believe that its expenditure has been about £100 million. In the context of tonight's debate—the impact of Campbell's decision on Maryport in the hon. Gentleman's constituency—I recognise that announcements such as that to which the hon. Gentleman referred can be a body blow in areas of high unemployment. That fact was reflected in the force of the hon. Gentleman's remarks.

For what it is worth, Campbell's has sought to safeguard the 123 jobs at its plant by offering employment at its two sites at Stratford-on-Avon and King's Lynn. I recognise, however, that the practicalities of accepting such offers are bound to be limited. The hon. Gentleman said that the company announced last week that some 50 people might take advantage of the offer. Irrespective of whether 10 or 50 people do so, they must deal with the practical difficulty of moving from the hon. Gentleman's constituency to the two alternative locations.

I recognise that the closure is a deep disappointment in Maryport. In dealing with such matters, the Government endeavour to do their best to assist in developing new job opportunities within the constituency affected. I shall detail those endeavours later in my speech.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will the Minister give me a straight answer to a very simple question? Does he believe that it is right in principle that a company such as Campbell Soups of America can move into a constituency such as mine and close down an extremely profitable operation with huge potential? I have seen the Dalgety production forecasts well into the next century. Does he believe that it is right in principle that a foreign conglomerate with a huge international reputation should have the market power to move in and destroy jobs in an area of high unemployment? Will the Minister give me a straight answer to that question, because it is what my constituents want to hear?

Mr. Evans: I shall certainly give the hon. Gentleman a straight answer in the context of the reaction of any

Member of Parliament facing a similar difficulty. I am sure that all hon. Members would share the great concerns that he has expressed. However, he invites me to come to the Dispatch Box as a Minister and to outline the Government's response to the situation. He knows well that the Government are not in a position to intervene, other than in certain circumstances that I shall outline briefly in the course of my remarks.

Before I do so, it is important to list some of the areas in which the Government are providing assistance both in the hon. Gentleman's constituency and, more broadly, in the north-west. I think that the hon. Gentleman will be aware of the work of the local training and enterprise council and Inward in trying to attract businesses to the area. As the Department of Trade and Industry Minister with special responsibility for the north-west, I have been present in the Chamber when the hon. Gentleman has paid tribute to the work undertaken by Inward in an attempt to attract additional investment to his constituency. I know that he recognises that work.

I am also aware that Cumbria training and enterprise council has met Campbell's to offer its guidance and help to employees at this particularly difficult time. The training for work programme has been very successful in the Cumbria area. I understand that 74 per cent. of participants in courses held as part of that programme have gone on to secure other jobs or to engage in further education and training. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is aware that west Cumbria enjoys assisted area and European objective 2 status, which I am sure will prove helpful in the long term.

I shall now clarify an issue that the hon. Gentleman did not raise tonight but which he has raised previously. The Department of Trade and Industry paid a regional selective assistance grant to the Dalgety company in order to safeguard jobs at the Maryport plant. One instalment of the grant was paid in July 1993. The Government office for the north-west will be seeking the recovery of those moneys in view of the circumstances that the hon. Gentleman has outlined.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: May I press the Minister again on the issue that I raised with him previously? I am seeking a value judgment. Do the Government condemn the actions of multinational companies that go into assisted areas of the United Kingdom which have been helped to grow by Government resources and close down profitable companies irrespective of the impact on the local economy? Ministers must have a view on such matters. I am asking for a value judgment. Do the Government find it acceptable and feel that it is all part of the play of market forces or do they say, "No, we do not like these activities"? I want an honest response about the Minister's position.

Mr. Evans: I gave the hon. Gentleman a fairly honest response previously. Although he is disappointed by the announcement, at least two hon. Members will have gained because new job opportunities have been announced in King's Lynn and in Stratford-on-Avon arising from those circumstances. With respect, I am showing sympathy for the predicament of the hon. Gentleman's constituents.

The hon. Gentleman has mentioned on previous occasions his concern about how takeover rules apply in such circumstances and I am aware of that.

The merger control procedures that we operate under the Fair Trading Act 1973 place a duty on the Director General of Fair Trading to advise my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade on merger matters. The hon. Gentleman will know from his previous questions that the Director General of Fair Trading advises on whether a merger should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, but it has to be a qualifying merger. He will know that the general policy that the Government have adopted is to consider the impact of a proposal on the development of competition. That remains our broad policy.

In compiling his advice, the Director General of Fair Trading takes account of all relevant factors, including the views of third parties, but not all mergers are large enough to be considered by him under the Fair Trading Act: one of two tests has to be met. One is that the assets being acquired are worth at least £70 million.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: This is not relevant to Campbell Soups.

Mr. Evans: I am raising the matter with the hon. Gentleman because I am very much aware of the concern that he raised specifically in his press release, drawing attention to the impact of takeover rules. It is important for his constituents that I outline exactly what those rules are and explain that in the circumstances the tests were not satisfied for the merger control procedures to be activated.

The Director General of Fair Trading examined the matter before reaching the conclusion that it did not qualify and that under merger control procedures he was unable to make any recommendation to the Government. In those circumstances, the Government have no power to act or intervene.

Furthermore, I am aware of factors concerning the development of the soup market generally. The hon. Gentleman did not refer specifically to it, so I do not intend to deal with the Government's view of Campbell's role in the soup market.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Destructive.

Mr. Evans: I am aware that the hon. Gentleman feels that, as he represents the area that is most markedly affected.

In essence, the Government broadly sympathise with the hon. Gentleman's constituents. The training and enterprise council and the inward investment bodies in the north-west stand ready to assist in the development of new job opportunities in Maryport. Although I certainly recognise that the hon. Gentleman remains very worried about the activities of Campbell's, which acquired a plant and closed it down within two months, that is ultimately a matter for the commercial judgment of the company. It is not a matter in respect of which the Government are in a position to intervene.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-two minutes to Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 7 November 1995

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Education Authorities (Budgets)

1. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how much more money would be available for schools if every education authority had a 95 per cent. delegated budget. [40039]

The Secretary of State for Education and Employment (Mrs. Gillian Shephard): In 1995-96, some £650 million more would be in schools' budgets if every LEA were delegating 95 per cent. of its potential schools budget.

Mr. Evans: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, however much we spent on schools, members of the shadow Cabinet would still send their children to grant-maintained or private schools, while promoting policies that deprive working-class children and their families throughout the country of the same choice and opportunity?

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman should know by now that the Secretary of State is in charge of Government policy, not Opposition attitudes or policies. He must ask questions that enable the right hon. Lady to explain her policies to the House.

Mr. Evans: Will my right hon. Friend tell me, then, whether the leader of our party would send his child to the London Oratory school while telling all the kids in Islington to get stuffed?

Madam Speaker: I do my best.

Mrs. Shephard: So does my hon. Friend.

Unlike some Opposition Front Benchers, Conservative Members believe that grant-maintained schools provide diversity, choice and excellence. The point of my hon. Friend's question is that the money available for grant-maintained schools is not top sliced, so schools have the flexibility to handle all the resources to which they are entitled. It is that independence that makes them such a success, and so popular with parents—including those on the Opposition Front Bench.

Mr. O'Hara: Is not the truth behind the question that the real problem with education at present is central Government underfunding? Robbing Peter to pay Paul by diverting money from LEA budgets to delegated budgets would do nothing to stop those problems, but it would undermine core services such as those that deal with special educational needs—to which the Government pay cynical lip service—and advisory services, which are very important if the Government are serious about raising standards in schools.

Mrs. Shephard: I wonder whether I might gently point out to the hon. Gentleman that he is missing the point. He needs to understand that, if the total amount available to schools is top sliced by LEAs before budgets are set—which happens in many LEAs—schools receive less money. That is what the Labour party's policy fails to address.

Mr. Harry Greenway: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the policy of bringing grant-maintained schools within the ambit of local authorities would take away their independence and their drive for excellence in teaching? That is why that policy must be resisted strongly by the Conservative party and the Government.

Mrs. Shephard: As the right hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) has often pointed out, grant-maintained schools are state schools, but they receive 100 per cent. of their budgets rather than a percentage—however it is calculated—from LEAs. That gives them greater flexibility, and more independence to enable them to run their own affairs. That is what they prize, and what gives them quality.

School Funding

2. **Mr. Robert Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what representations she has received from local education authorities concerning the funding levels for schools in 1996-97. [40040]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Employment (Mr. Robin Squire): Funding for schools is currently under consideration in the public expenditure survey. We have received a number of representations on levels of funding for 1996-97.

Mr. Ainsworth: The whole country knows that last year the Minister's policies deprived schools of £500 million, and led to the sacking of thousands of teachers. Does he intend to restore that money? If not, why not, and if so, why on earth was the action taken in the first place? Are we not in the same position? The Tory Government are cynically looking to cobble together a policy on a matter of public concern immediately before a general election.

Mr. Squire: As the House knows, I cannot comment on the detail of the public expenditure round for 1996-97; the hon. Gentleman and the House will have to be a little more patient and await its outcome. The hon. Gentleman has a short memory. I am pleased that, under this Government, we have significantly increased funding for education. Despite its fine words, when it was in power the Labour party cut education funding in real terms. Although the current year's settlement was tight, it was manageable, as has been shown by the fact that many local authorities have managed to fund in full the pay and price increases arising.

Mr. Viggers: Does my hon. Friend agree that for education establishments with a degree of independence—for example, St. Vincent college in my constituency, of which I happen to be chairman and which in the past two years has found funds for a splendid new library and refectory—hands-on management is good for facilities, for morale generally and for education standards?

Mr. Squire: My hon. Friend is right and I hope that the thrust of his point will be accepted on both sides of the Chamber because the success of local management of schools, of devolved budgets—we have already heard the advantages of grant-maintained schools—and the setting free of further education institutions has transformed those establishments and enabled them to achieve better value for money than under the previous system.

Mr. Don Foster: Will the Minister confirm that local authority associations have advised the Secretary of State for Education and Employment that, even before inflation and the future teachers' pay award is met, a £1.3 billion increase in local authority budgets is required to enable education provision to remain at a standstill? Will he confirm that, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer announces a budget increase of less than £1.3 billion, there will be real cuts in the education service?

Mr. Squire: I suppose that was a nice try, but the hon. Gentleman must understand that it is unrealistic to expect full uprating, year in, year out, for full pay and prices for organisations such as local authorities, which spend hundreds of millions of pounds a year. We expect them and other organisations to make efficiency savings, and we did so this year. If he is saying, in so many words, that he expects full uprating year in, year out for all these things, he is saying that there is no scope for efficiency savings, and that is why his party promises to tax much more.

Sir Alan Haselhurst: Does my hon. Friend accept that there may be pressure next year on primary schools, especially where reserves have been used properly in the last year, and that growing concern exists about the discrepancy, which has arisen since the introduction of the national curriculum, between funding per pupil in the last year at primary school and funding in the first year at secondary school? Will he bear those points in mind in the forthcoming settlement?

Mr. Squire: I will certainly bear my hon. Friend's points in mind and I emphasise that the attention that the Select Committee on Education paid to this point was reciprocated by the Government.

Mr. Spearing: Does the Minister agree that salaries for teachers constitute about 60 to 65 per cent. of local authority education expenditure? If the Government persist in the injustice of not funding the increase that was agreed this year, and if there is no scope for efficiency savings—and there will not be, since authorities have suffered cuts in previous years—will not the Government fail to provide the means for the ends that they specify? Will he name a single Conservative-controlled authority that did not complain about the injustice of funding this year?

Mr. Squire: On the hon. Gentleman's first point, if I cannot comment yet on the outcome of the 1996-97 settlement, it follows that I can comment even less on the outcome of the independent standing review body for teachers, beyond observing that, as in all past years, it will reach its conclusions in the knowledge of the settlement that has been announced. As for representations, without some notice obviously I cannot confirm to him what the comments of individual local education authorities have been.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Has my hon. Friend received any representations from Cheshire county council about the resources allocated to the education authority under the standard spending assessment, with particular reference to the fact that the area cost adjustment does not adequately reflect the costs incurred by my county? That view is shared across all the political parties in the county. Will my hon. Friend respond positively to my inquiry?

Mr. Squire: I can confirm that representations have been received. I can also confirm—it would be ungallant not to—that my hon. Friend has been indefatigable in pursuing this point with me in correspondence. I am sure that he will be pleased to hear that recently my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Urban Regeneration announced a full-scale review of the operation of the area cost adjustment and its impact within the standard spending assessment.

Ms Estelle Morris: Does the Minister realise how complacent those answers must seem to parents whose children are already in classes of over 40? As the Government are so keen on league tables, is not the Minister ashamed that his education cuts have put Britain at the bottom of the education spending league? Can he explain how he suddenly managed to find millions of pounds for assisted places and nursery voucher paperwork when he could not raise an extra penny for what parents really want—reduced class sizes?

Mr. Squire: The House will note that, not for the first time, Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen are taking their cue from the National Union of Teachers. The hon. Lady could not be more wrong. The independent inspectorate, Ofsted, has confirmed that standards are rising at all ages. That is what parents want. They want to know that their children have the chance of a better education than they might otherwise have enjoyed. That is happening under this Government, as independent reports suggest. As the hon. Lady is aware, and as we have said many times, education receives the highest priority from the Government.

Spoken English

3. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans the Government have to improve the standards of spoken English in schools. [40041]

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I attach a great deal of importance to spoken English, on which I recently made an announcement.

Mr. Butler: I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer. I welcome the inclusion of a standard mark for spoken English in GCSE certificates in future. Does she accept that the English language, both written and spoken, is our greatest national heritage and that the ability to communicate, which is demonstrated occasionally even in the Chamber, is the most important tool for our young people in an increasingly competitive world?

Mrs. Shephard: Yes. It is obviously important that young people and adults should be able to express themselves clearly and comprehensibly and that they should be able to demonstrate that they can do so. As my hon. Friend points out, employers have complained that job applicants cannot always communicate clearly. That must be put right and the work of the new campaign group, and all the other measures that we have put in place, will help towards that end.

Mr. Mike O'Brien: How does it improve the standards of spoken English to impose on a county such as Warwickshire the financial crisis that it now faces in education? It faces the prospect of closing its nursery schools and of classes of over 40. Is that a record of which the Secretary of State is proud? What does she intend to do to improve the prospects of the children of Warwickshire?

Mrs. Shephard: The short answer is probably to elect a Conservative council. That was a nice try from the hon. Gentleman. As my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary has just said, and as the chief inspector has consistently reported, there is no clear correlation between class size and quality and rising standards. I accept that very large classes are difficult to handle, but the inspector consistently provides contrary advice. The findings at Hackney Downs school, which I am minded to close and on which I am consulting, are interesting. Spending there is exactly two and a half times the national average per pupil and the pupil-teacher ratio is 8:1. I wonder what lessons the hon. Gentleman draws from that.

Mr. Peter Griffiths: Does my right hon. Friend agree that if improvements in the standards of spoken English are to be achieved, that will require an effort much wider than just from our schools? If the presenters of children's television programmes were to set an example to our young people—such as used to be set by Auntie Muriel—would not that be one step in the right direction?

Mrs. Shephard: I am not sure that even I can remember Auntie Muriel, although I am sure I should, but my hon. Friend's point is well made. Effort across the community is clearly necessary. That is the point of the work of the group that will be campaigning for better standards. Representatives from business, the media, trade unions, sport and education have already been signed up.

Education Funding (Northumberland)

4. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what recent representations she has received about education funding in Northumberland. [40042]

Mr. Robin Squire: On behalf of my right hon. Friend, I had a useful meeting with a delegation from Northumberland on 30 October to discuss education funding. We have also received a number of other representations.

Mr. Beith: Did the Minister understand from those representations the effect of standard spending assessments, the capping limit, the teachers' pay settlement and the problems of running an education service in a scattered rural area? Did he realise the desperate state to which those have reduced parents, governors and councillors of all parties, as they look to the hon. Gentleman to fight for an improvement in the funding for education in Northumberland after the Budget?

Mr. Squire: I confirm that some of the points mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman were raised at the meeting. I made the point then, and I repeat it now, that the one element within the standard spending assessment that is at a higher value than our research would indicate it merits is that for sparsity. That will be of particular benefit to a constituency such as the right hon. Gentleman's. I note that Northumberland, notwithstanding the difficulty of the settlement to which I previously referred, managed to increase its education spending this year.

Teachers (Maintained Sector)

5. **Mr. Jamieson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many extra teachers could be provided in the maintained sector by an input of £100 million. [40043]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Employment (Mrs. Cheryl Gillan): The cost of employing the average teacher is about £25,000. That means £100 million would pay for about 4,000 extra teachers.

Mr. Jamieson: Is the Minister aware that parents are now beginning to realise that £100 million would provide another 4,000 teaching posts in LEA and grant-maintained schools? Is she further aware that parents are contrasting the approach of the Prime Minister, who put £100 million into extra places in private schools, with the approach of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition, who has said that he would use that money to reduce class sizes in maintained schools?

Mrs. Gillan: The abolition of the assisted places scheme would not save £100 million as most of that money would be needed to pay for the children's education in state schools. If we spent £100 million in primary schools, it would reduce the average class size by only half a pupil.

Mr. Pawsey: Will my hon. Friend disregard the politics of envy from Opposition Members? Is she aware that about 750,000 of the nation's children are educated in grant-maintained schools and under the assisted places scheme? Is she further aware that one of those children happens to be the son of the leader of the Labour party?

Mrs. Gillan: I am aware of that fact. I hope that the parents of children on the assisted places scheme will note the Labour party's policy on that scheme. I remind the House of what my right hon. Friend said about class sizes. In Hackney Downs, the pupil-teacher ratio is 8:1 and the annual expenditure per pupil for the financial year 1995-96 is two and a half times that in GM schools. It is the quality of teaching that is important, not class sizes.

Mr. Blunkett: Will the Minister tell the nation whether she thinks that it is a good idea for 60,000 pupils to be assisted to escape from what the Deputy Prime Minister described as inadequate inner-city schools or whether, instead, 2 million infant children should be allowed to be educated in classes of no more than 30 so that they can learn to read, write and add up without suffering from the cuts inflicted by the Government—cuts that the Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire), when replying to the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Foster), confirmed will once again be inflicted through reductions in revenue support grant and in other services if the Government go ahead with their Budget proposals, as outlined to the press, on 28 November?

Mrs. Gillan: It goes without saying that the assisted places scheme represents very good value for money. I remind the hon. Gentleman that, when Labour was last in power, there were twice as many pupils in primary classes of more than 35. Perhaps he should listen to voices such as those of Mr. Pollard of the Fabian Society, who has criticised the Leader of the Opposition for his policy to abolish assisted places.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: How much of the £100 million does my hon. Friend the Minister believe would get through to the schools to enable them to employ teachers? I cite the example of the Labour and Liberal Democrat-controlled Kent county council, which received a 2.1 per cent. increase in funding this year but nevertheless increased funding to Kent schools by only 1 per cent.

Mrs. Gillan: I hear what my hon. Friend says, and pupils, governors and teachers outside will do so too. We shall be doubling the assisted places scheme over time and there will, of course, be new money going into the scheme as well as the savings to the LEAs involved.

Unemployment

6. **Mrs. Bridget Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many people who are currently unemployed have been unemployed since April 1992. [40044]

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The latest available figures show that the number of people unemployed for three years and over is falling. It stands at 337,622.

Mr. David Shaw: This one is GMB sponsored.

Madam Speaker: Order. I have heard enough of the hon. Gentleman. I shall deal with him on the next occasion. I want no parrot-fashion talk here. He will resume his seat; otherwise, I shall use the Standing Order against him.

Mrs. Prentice: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Does the Secretary of State feel no shame that more than 330,000 people have been and remain unemployed during the lifetime of this Government? Is she aware that another 8.5 million people have become unemployed twice in that time? Is not it time that the Secretary of State began to do something about long-term unemployment and insecurity at work, instead of continuing with the self-congratulatory tone that is a shameful characteristic of Conservative government?

Mrs. Shephard: I am rather surprised that the hon. Lady does not express her delight about the fact that unemployment in her constituency has come down by 8 per cent. in the past year—what a pity. Clearly, I accept that unemployment, and especially long-term unemployment, is an extremely demoralising experience. Thankfully, the unemployed are not a static mass. Most people leave unemployment very quickly—half of them do so within three months, two thirds within six months and 80 per cent. within a year. However, it is clearly important to continue to push the trend downwards. We are committed to reducing long-term unemployment. We have a wide range of programmes to help the long-term unemployed and many have successful outcomes.

Mr. John Marshall: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the participation rate in the United Kingdom is very much higher than in almost any other European country? Will she also confirm that unemployment is very much lower in this country than in Spain, which follows the policies proposed the Opposition?

Mrs. Shephard: Yes, I can confirm that in the United Kingdom the proportion of people of working age in employment is, at 68 per cent., very much higher than the EC average of 60 per cent. That is partly because of the pursuit by some of our European partners of mistaken policies embraced by the Labour party, such as a national minimum wage, which causes unemployment. Any fool knows that, as the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) once memorably said.

Mr. Meacher: Was it not the Prime Minister who, in a speech on 7 April 1992 entitled "Ten Tory Truths for a Glorious Future", urged people to vote Conservative on Thursday and the recovery will continue on Friday? How does the right hon. Lady explain that, despite all the programmes to which she has just referred, more than a third of a million people have been continuously unemployed every day since the election? That is an increase of 128,000 since April 1992. Is not that yet another Tory broken promise? Far from producing a recovery, the Prime Minister has brought about the most massive increase in job insecurity since the war.

Mrs. Shephard: I welcome the hon. Member to the Dispatch Box. I am not quite sure in what role he appears—it does not seem evident to his hon. Friends—but his smiling demeanour is always a pleasure. I am surprised that, on his first appearance in his new role, he did not join me in welcoming the news that unemployment has fallen for 24 consecutive months and is now at its lowest point for four and a half years. I am sure that he will put that right next time.

7. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what comparisons she has made between the United Kingdom's record on reducing unemployment and that of other major EU countries. [40135]

The Minister of State, Department for Education and Employment (Mr. Eric Forth): The United Kingdom is the only major European Union country in which unemployment is lower than it was three years ago.

Mr. Bellingham: Will my hon. Friend confirm that in the country as a whole, and, indeed, in my constituency, unemployment has fallen dramatically over the past two years? Does not that compare favourably with France and, as my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) pointed out, Spain, where unemployment runs at 22 per cent., but where youth unemployment, largely because of the minimum wage, stands at almost 40 per cent? When unemployment was going up, the Labour party complained and whined, but will my hon.

Friend explain why, now that it is coming down, the Labour party is still complaining, whining, whingeing, and running Britain down?

Mr. Forth: Yes, my hon. Friend is right. He is at least more gracious than Labour Members to welcome the fall in unemployment in his constituency, which, as he points out, has been substantial not only over the past year but over the past several years. That is in contrast to Labour Members who—again my hon. Friend is right—persistently ignore the fall in unemployment, because, I suspect, they are embarrassed by it politically. The real truth is that our record of performance on unemployment—long-term unemployment, youth unemployment or unemployment among men or women—is better than that in most other European Union countries. That speaks volumes for our labour market policies and the strength of our economy.

Mr. Grocott: Instead of comparing unemployment rates in Britain and other countries of Europe, would not it be much more illuminating to compare unemployment rates under this Tory Government with those under Labour Governments of the 1960s and 1970s? Does the Minister recall, as I do, the job opportunities for school leavers in the 1960s and 1970s and the abundance of apprenticeships? In order to be precise about the extent of Tory failure, will he answer the following question? How many more years would it be necessary for present policies to continue for unemployment to fall to its level under Labour?

Mr. Forth: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman asked that question because in 1979—I pick the date more or less at random—UK unemployment was just below the average in the then European Community. Unemployment in this country today is substantially lower than the European Union average. I accept that the figure is higher now for the rest of Europe and for this country than it was in 1979. That says a lot about the difficulties of the global trading economy, but this country has sustained its record of keeping our unemployment rate below the European rate and has performed better on unemployment than our European partners.

Mr. Tredinnick: Will my hon. Friend confirm that unemployment in Leicestershire has been falling in the past two years? Is it not a fact that, not only in Spain but in Belgium, Italy, Germany and Portugal, unemployment is increasing? What impact would a minimum wage have in this country?

Mr. Forth: I am sure that my hon. Friend's constituents not only appreciate the fact that unemployment is falling but understand that our social chapter opt-out has given us protection against the high-cost regime which prevails in so much of the continental mainland and which, sadly, makes so many of our competitors and partners less competitive than we are. That is understood much more by my hon. Friend's constituents than it ever seems to be by the Opposition.

Mr. Janner: The Government do recognise that the current unemployment figures are open to question, to put it mildly, and have asked someone called David Steel to report to them by the end of January on the way in which unemployment figures are produced and on whether the method can be improved. As the Government have seen fit to attempt to abolish the Select Committee on Employment at the end of February or on 1 March, may we at least have a guarantee that the report will be out and available to the House, as promised, by the end of January?

Mr. Forth: I am surprised, given the hon. and learned Gentleman's position on the Select Committee on Employment, that he is attempting to peddle the sad old story about the inaccuracy of the unemployment figures. He should know as well as I do—he obviously does not—that all the different measures of unemployment, including those internationally accepted by the International Labour Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, well demonstrate that the level of unemployment is what it is, that it is on a downward trend and that it compares favourably with the level in any of the countries that are our partners and competitors. Until the hon. and learned Gentleman accepts that fact, we shall not get much further.

Mr. Day: Will my hon. Friend take note that, whenever the unemployment figures come down, the Labour party questions the method by which they are calculated? Has he noticed that, when unemployment rises, Labour Members say that the figures are accurate? They cannot have it both ways. Can they not accept that this Government's policies are working?

Mr. Forth: I am grateful to my hon. Friend; what he describes appears to be the case. Opposition Members must sort out in their own minds what they accept in terms of a measurement of unemployment—the internationally accepted figures to which I referred a moment ago or something else. They would be much better advised to welcome the success we have enjoyed in recent years in bringing unemployment down, although, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has said, we are by no means satisfied by the level. We have many innovative programmes in place to try to help people, especially those who suffer from long-term unemployment. These are working and will continue to work.

Craft Apprenticeships

8. **Mr. Touhig:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many craft apprenticeships were offered in the United Kingdom in the last year. [40045]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Employment (Mr. James Paice): Information on the number of craft apprenticeships offered during the year is not collected.

Mr. Touhig: Craft apprenticeships were once the core of British industry. In 1965, British industry offered 125,000 craft apprenticeships; they have now all but disappeared. The result is a skills shortage which is harming our economic recovery. Will the Under-Secretary explain why Britain is experiencing a massive decline in skills training? Will he comment on an article in the *Industrial Relations Journal* which says that the Government have become increasingly less helpful in supporting craft apprenticeships and that Tory Governments are concerned about craft apprenticeships because they associate them with the craft unions? Is this another example of Tory right-wing dogma harming British industry and threatening the skills of our work force?

Mr. Paice: I am afraid that it is a clear example of the hon. Gentleman not having done his homework properly. The fact is that he asked how many craft apprenticeships were offered. Those statistics are not and, to the best of my knowledge, never have been collected. If the hon. Gentleman had asked how many people were on craft apprenticeships at any particular time, I would have told him. The most recent labour force survey, in spring this year, showed that 191,000 people declared themselves to be on apprenticeships and that, of those people, 101,000 were on craft apprenticeships. The labour force survey is the means by which the measurements are collected, and it has been for many years.

Mr. James Hill: Does my hon. Friend agree that some of the decline in the building industry could be put down to bad workmanship resulting from the lack of a thoroughgoing apprenticeship scheme? Such an apprentice scheme was the backbone of the building industry at one time. Is there any way in which we can encourage more apprenticeships in the building industry?

Mr. Paice: My hon. Friend will be aware that the building industry is the only remaining industry with a compulsory levy and a statutory training board, and apprenticeships are still offered in all aspects of the construction industry. The real problem is not the absence of apprenticeships but the trend towards more subcontract work throughout the industry. That matter is now being addressed by the construction industry training board as it reviews its training programmes.

Mr. Byers: The Minister failed to refer to the Government's modern apprenticeship scheme in relation to craft apprenticeships. Was that because of the widespread failure to recruit due to weaknesses in the scheme, with only 4,000 places being filled nationally? Does the Minister acknowledge that training and enterprise councils have had their budgets cut by some £200 million this year? How will a combination of a lack of apprenticeships and training budget cuts give our people the skills they need to get them back into work and to bring prosperity back to this country?

Mr. Paice: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to the Opposition Front Bench. His appointment perhaps accounts for the vast number of questions that he constantly tables on these issues, despite the fact that virtually all the information that he requests is available in the Library.

I did not refer to modern apprenticeships, because nobody asked me about them. I am glad that the hon. Gentleman asked me about the scheme, because it did not go unnoticed that he tabled a question yesterday about the number of modern apprenticeship starts. The hon. Gentleman failed to point out that the figure of 4,000 starts was for the first month of the scheme—it had only just started. There is absolutely no evidence to substantiate his totally unjustified challenge, and the reality is that a vast number of employers are keen to take on employees. The hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do that the Government hope to get about 30,000 starts in the current year. That statement is already on the public record, and I am happy to reaffirm it to the hon. Gentleman.

As for cuts for TECs, the hon. Gentleman needs to do his homework better. There have been no cuts in the budgets for modern apprenticeships and youth training.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my hon. Friend agree that any decline in craft apprenticeships and training occurred during the years when the smokestack and labour-intensive industries were phased out and when the Labour party, in collusion with the unions, forced the wages of apprentices to levels that made their employment no longer viable?

Mr. Paice: My hon. Friend is quite right. Most reasonable people agree that the wages of people who are learning should be commensurate to their status, but that, as they develop and improve—*[Interruption.]* On the subject of learning, I am pleased to welcome the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), as he might learn something. The right hon. Gentleman said that any fool knows that a minimum wage will cause a shake-out, and that is precisely the problem to which my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) is referring. If there is a minimum wage which applies to everybody regardless of skill levels, how does one address the need for differentials for those people who have been through apprenticeships? The Opposition have failed year in, year out to answer that question about their minimum wage proposals.

Economic Regeneration, Wolverhampton

9. **Mr. Purchase:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what contribution her Department is able to make to economic regeneration in the travel-to-work area containing British Steel Tubes Division, Wolverhampton. [40046]

Mr. Paice: This Department makes a major contribution through the activities of the Employment Service and Wolverhampton training and enterprise council, which has formed a task force with other bodies to help those who are made redundant by British Steel.

Mr. Purchase: That is welcome, but does the Minister not understand that, by Christmas, 1,000 more people in Wolverhampton will lose their jobs at British Steel, Manders Paints and Edge Shoes, with all that that means to those workers and their families? Does he think that it would be meaningful to make a special contribution to the local partnership that we have formed so that we can investigate fully, question and, if necessary, fight those closures and so that we can help those workers who may well be displaced at the end of this particular debacle?

Mr. Paice: I am sure that everybody understands the sadness of people who lose their jobs. I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's concern, which he has explained on a number of occasions in the House. It is not for me or the Government to question the commercial judgment of the businesses which employed those people. We have to recognise that the redundancies take place against a background of falling unemployment in the hon. Gentleman's constituency: it has fallen by almost 1,000 in the past year. He will be aware that Wolverhampton has succeeded in the first round of the single regeneration budget in obtaining an extra £16.5 million to be spent in the area. Of course, there are other businesses taking on new staff. The hon. Gentleman should recognise the good things that are happening, not just the bad things.

Mr. Budgen: I congratulate my hon. Friend on the sympathetic way in which he deals with this sad situation. Will he point out that, in the past two years, Wolverhampton has enjoyed a considerable increase in prosperity, particularly in the metal bashing industry, which has enjoyed an enormous increase in exports directly as a result of the depreciation of the currency which followed the events of September 1992?

Mr. Paice: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his words. I can count on him always to introduce the European dimension into any question. I am pleased to hear what he has to say about Wolverhampton.

PRIME MINISTER

Unemployment (European Union)

Q1. **Sir Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the implications of the level of unemployment in the EU. [40127]

The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Michael Heseltine): I have been asked to reply.

I can confirm that employment and unemployment in the European Union will be on the agenda for the next European Council in Madrid in December.

Sir Teddy Taylor: Will my right hon. Friend insist that the Council gives urgent attention to the forgotten army of 18.5 million unemployed in the European Union, a total which has soared by 5 million in the past three years? In particular, could he tell our friends in France, who are at present creating extra unemployment on top of a 12 per cent. total by setting artificial exchange rates, that they could learn a great deal from Britain, which escaped from the exchange rate mechanism and the social chapter and has found that unemployment has been falling ever since?

The Deputy Prime Minister: My hon. Friend makes a most valuable contribution, particularly when he points out that this Government will not accept the social chapter, and neither will we impose the overheads of a minimum wage on the competitive manufacturing base that we have here today. The whole House can welcome the fact that unemployment in this country is down by 713,400 since December 1992.

Mr. Hutton: On the subject of unemployment within the European Union, does the Deputy Prime Minister recognise it as a fact that, since 1979, the United Kingdom has had the third highest unemployment rate within the European Union? When will he drop the damaging dogma of his party and start to work with our European partners to tackle the scandal and the waste of almost 20 million people unemployed in Europe?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is very convenient for the hon. Gentleman to choose 1979, when we had to start the process of undoing the stranglehold that the trade unions had on the British economy, of privatising the industries that are now leading the British recovery across the world and of creating in this country the enterprise centre of Europe, all in the teeth of Labour party opposition.

Engagements

Q2. **Mr. Nigel Evans:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 7 November. [40128]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is travelling to New Zealand to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting.

Mr. Evans: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the most significant vote last night was that passed by 587 votes to two, which bans paid advocacy, which was the recommendation of the Select Committee on Standards in Public Life and went further than the Nolan committee, and contrasts sharply with the sheer stench of trade union-sponsored humbug on the Opposition Benches?

The Deputy Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely right in pointing out the justification for the determination of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to set up the Nolan committee so that the House would have an opportunity to deal with the matter of restoring public confidence in the House. It was my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister who ensured that such matters were thoroughly and comprehensively considered. The work was carried out by an independent committee. As a result, the House was able to pass by an overwhelming majority the far-reaching change to which my hon. Friend has drawn attention.

Mr. Prescott: Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that he and the Prime Minister were completely out of step with public opinion in wanting to keep the outside earnings of Members of Parliament secret? Does he share my sense of outrage that some Conservative Members are already making it clear that they will not observe the decision of the House? Will he make it clear that that would be totally unacceptable to him and the Prime Minister?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman raises a most important question for the House. I can say unreservedly on behalf of the Prime Minister and myself, since he asked me specifically, that both of us believe that it is right for all right hon. and hon. Members to enter into the spirit of the letter of the decisions taken yesterday evening. That was the will of the House. As to what the House should determine to do in the event of any right hon. and hon. Member not making such a decision, that is properly a matter for the House of Commons.

Mr. Prescott: In view of his reply, will the right hon. Gentleman now ask the Prime Minister to reconsider his rejection of Labour's proposal to refer the funding of political parties to the Nolan committee? Is it not time that the Prime Minister came clean on where his party gets his money, or has the Tory party got something else to hide?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Of course, we all know that the Opposition want to pass the cost of party politics on to the taxpayer. They want one-track Members of Parliament with no outside interests and who are totally beholden to the party Whips, with all the draconian centralisation of power that that would represent. That would be a wholly alien development in the constitutional history of this country.

Mr. Prescott: Why cannot the public know where the Tory party gets its money? Who has paid for a knighthood? Who has bought a peerage? And which foreign business men have bankrolled the party, fleeing the country? I ask him again, what has his party got to hide?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman is up to the sort of sleazy politics characteristic of the Labour party. The fact of the matter is that his party has sold out hook, line and sinker to the trade unions—it always has. He is the first person to complain that he has to ring up trade union leaders to ask their permission before he takes a simple decision on behalf of the Labour party.

Mr. Peter Griffiths: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, however hon. Members may have voted in the Divisions last night, those who seek to gain party advantage from the issue simply demean the institution that they claim to honour?

The Deputy Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is right, but he characterises the Labour party in too generous terms. It is undermining the credibility of this House by constantly criticising the performance of a tiny number of right hon. and hon. Members. The fact of the matter is that the overwhelming majority of people who come into this House are motivated by the highest standards of public service.

Mr. Beith: Now that the House has made an important decision, with the votes of hon. Members in all parties, on the conduct of Members of Parliament, would the Deputy Prime Minister move the agenda on to the other things that would make Parliament more relevant to the lives of people, such as electoral reform—because that would make far more difference to the lives of people than even the decisions we made last night—or will he do as the Prime Minister did last night and attach his cause to the side which in the end will lose?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The right hon. Member may see that as moving the agenda on; I would regard it as moving it back into a wholly unacceptable dark age.

Social Chapter

Q3. **Sir Ralph Howell:** To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to rewrite the social chapter of the EU. [40129]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister rejected a new social chapter at Maastricht because it would have reduced competitiveness and destroyed jobs. The Government will not accept it, or anything like it, at next year's intergovernmental conference.

Sir Ralph Howell: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. In view of the fact that the social chapter has few friends in the House except on the Labour Front Bench, would it not be constructive for the Government to produce a more acceptable alternative social chapter? Will my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister urge the Government to make the Right to Work Bill the cornerstone of that new social chapter to eliminate involuntary unemployment and save £5 billion per annum in this country alone?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I know that my hon. Friend brings a particular expertise to this subject and there is a great deal to which we should listen in what he has to say. I know that he will welcome the introduction of the earnings top-up scheme, which is designed to help people move into and stay in work without the burden of a minimum wage, and he also will look forward to the introduction next year of the jobseeker's allowance.

Mr. Keith Hill: Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that, in the absence of the social chapter, Britain has the longest working hours, the fewest holidays, the poorest pensions, the lowest wages and the highest levels of job insecurity of all the leading nations of Europe? Which of those facts does the right hon. Gentleman deny, and do they not explain why the British people are longing for a Labour Government with our promise to bring in the social chapter?

The Deputy Prime Minister: What the hon. Gentleman does not recognise is that Britain has one of the fastest falling levels of unemployment and one of the fastest growing economies in Europe. What he threatens by his proposals is that the flood of inward investment coming here, not only from north America and Asia but from Europe itself, would come to a halt if Labour threw away the competitive advantages that our economy possesses.

Engagements

Q4. **Mr. Alexander:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 7 November. [40130]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Alexander: Does my right hon. Friend recollect that tomorrow the new Gas Act is likely to receive Royal Assent? I remind him that, by opening the market to competition, new entrants are likely to come in and that standing charges in that industry are likely to be a thing of the past in a couple of year's time. As standing charges are widely resented by the elderly and those on fixed incomes, will he urge British Gas and the other utilities to start abolishing those charges now, before competition and a change in the law oblige them to do so?

The Deputy Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely right in drawing the attention of the House to the fact that the privatisation programme, and that includes British Gas, has, of course, been a triumph for British consumers. The fact is that competition has cut prices for gas consumers; standing charges are down by 29 per cent. since privatisation; gas prices are down by over 20 per cent. since privatisation; and the legislation to which my hon. Friend referred has already led to the possibility of experiments in the south-west. I read in this week's newspapers that perhaps another 10 to 15 per cent.

will come off the prices to the domestic consumer as a result of that enhanced competition. What that all stands for is that the Conservative Government, by privatising these industries, have not only created world-class companies but served the consumer in a way that nationalisation could never have begun to do.

Q5. **Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 7 November. [40131]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Roche: Given that, in the United States of America, it is illegal for foreign nationals to make donations to political parties, why do the Government not introduce the same legislation here? Are the Deputy Prime Minister and the whole of the Conservative Government frightened to let the British people see how the modern Conservative party is funded?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I know of no restriction in this country that says that foreign nationals who are members of trade unions cannot give money to trade unions, which is then directed to the Labour party.

Mr. Quentin Davies: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, if investment is to thrive, costs must be kept down and business taxes kept low? Does he therefore agree that it would be a disaster for investment, and therefore for our prospects for growth and employment in the future, if the Labour party were able to implement its plans to allow local authorities to fix their own business rates?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Labour party in power has always put up costs, prices and taxes. Whether it is a national Labour Government or local Labour government, the same process is at work. In either case, it would be a disaster for Britain's investment potential.

Q6. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 7 November. [40133]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Jones: Will the Deputy Prime Minister ask the Prime Minister when he returns what is the precise role of the Deputy Prime Minister? It seems to be costing £40,000 a month for the Deputy Prime Minister to answer even fewer questions than his right hon. Friend.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Just the other day, people were complaining because I had brought £1 billion of Siemens investment to the north-east. I think that I am cheap at the price.

Madam Speaker's Statement

3.31 pm

Madam Speaker: I have a short statement to make.

The hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) recently made serious allegations against parliamentary colleagues. He later withdrew the accusation made yesterday against the hon. Member for Barking (Ms Hodge). I asked him to provide written details of his earlier charge against the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Ms Jackson) and he has now done so. I have studied what he says with care, and I have asked the Serjeant at Arms to look into the aspect that concerns the use of stationery. Whatever the outcome of that inquiry, I do not believe that any of the facts laid before me sustain the charge of corruption in the use of parliamentary facilities.

Free speech is one of this House's most treasured possessions. For that reason, it must be used responsibly and not abused.

The hon. Member for Dover should take careful note of that in future. I would prefer his co-operation in this matter than to be compelled to any more drastic course of action.

Points of Order

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Some hon. Members have drawn a distinction between statute law as such and complying with resolutions of the House. Are the resolutions passed last night to be implemented and honoured? Is it not the case that, if a resolution of the House is passed, it has all the authority of the House of Commons and there can therefore be no excuse whatever for any hon. Member to argue that, because it is not statute law, it has no bearing on him or her?

Madam Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is asking me hypothetical questions at this stage. It remains to be seen how we begin to implement the resolutions that we accepted last night.

BILLS PRESENTED

METRICATION (REMOVAL OF PENALTIES)

Sir Roger Moate presented a Bill to amend the Weights and Measures Act 1985 so as to remove any criminal penalty upon persons using imperial measures unless it is proved that such use was intended for fraudulent purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 192.]

FAMILY HOMES AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (NO.2)

Mrs. Diana Maddock, supported by Mr. A. J. Beith, Ms Liz Lynne, Mr. David Rendel, Mr. Archy Kirkwood, Mr. Chris Davies, Mrs. Ray Michie, Mr. Charles Kennedy, Mr. David Chidgey and Mr. James Wallace, presented a Bill to make provision, in relation to cases where a dwelling-house is, has been, or was intended to be, the home of two or more persons, as to their respective rights of occupation; to make provision for preventing the molestation of one person by another; to enable a court to include in certain orders under the Children Act 1989 provision relating to the occupation of a dwelling-house; to make provision for the transfer of tenancies between spouses and persons who have lived together as husband and wife; to apply section 17 of the Married Women's Property Act 1882 to persons who live together as husband and wife; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 193.]

Patients Rights

3.33 pm

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to give patients certain rights in their dealings with general practitioners.

My Bill would extend the patients charter to give patients certain rights in their dealings with general practitioners. Those rights would include a requirement for GPs in a practice of four or more, where a doctor-patient relationship has broken down, first, to offer a patient a second chance to stay in that practice by counselling that patient and issuing a warning that that behaviour will not be tolerated in the case of bad behaviour or, secondly, to offer the patient the right to visit another doctor in the same practice. Thirdly, if no other GP in the practice is willing to take the patient, the patients charter should include a requirement that patients be given reasons in writing stating why they are being removed from a GP's list.

This is not a doctor-bashing Bill. I have the greatest respect for our GP service and I recognise the dedication, skill and professionalism of our doctors. However, I believe that there is an injustice against patients and I am sure that, if good will and tolerance were shown by all sides, that injustice might be rectified.

Self-evidently, a good doctor-patient relationship must be based on mutual trust and respect. At present, GPs have the right to request that any patient be removed from their list, and that doctor is under no obligation to say why.

The consequences of such actions can be very far-reaching indeed. For example, if the patient belonged to a large practice, losing his and his family's right to be registered with their nearest GPs might be extremely inconvenient and might involve lengthy travelling, which obviously incurs extra costs.

I have a constituent who was struck off—she believes, for contacting her doctor at 8 o'clock at night to ask him to attend a fairly sick five-year-old. The doctor refused, but the child was admitted to hospital the same evening. The mother and the family were struck off, and now she must travel three miles with her youngest children to the next practice. Her youngest child needs to visit a doctor regularly, and that low-income family has been penalised by a doctor who, I believe, knew that he was wrong not to visit the child and covered his action by striking the whole family off his list.

I know that that is not the usual practice, but that family was never told why it had been struck off. Surely a much better outcome would have been for other doctors in the same practice to take on responsibility for that family.

Another consequence of being struck off a doctor's list without being given a reason is the great hurt that is felt by many people when they are.

Another constituent told me that she rarely visited a doctor, but that when she did on one occasion, the receptionist mistook her for someone else and a few words were exchanged. Realising the mistake, my constituent drew attention to it—fairly calmly, she claims—and made an appointment to visit her doctor, only to receive a letter two days later, telling her that she had been struck off. She told me that at first she felt anger at the injustice and then she experienced a loss of confidence and a feeling of humiliation. She said that she would be very reluctant to visit a doctor again, however ill she felt.

Another constituent, a very brave 86-year-old, Mrs. Marion Greenwood, a pensioner, was struck off her doctor's list when she was ill. Her daughter, who lives with her, called the GP out when her mother became ill. The GP was angry because it was in the evening and was quite cross with the old lady. Mrs. Greenwood was admitted to hospital a couple of days later in a critical condition. While in hospital, she received a letter from her GP, telling her that she was being struck off and that she should find another doctor. I could go on reciting case after case, but time will not allow.

Obviously, there are instances when GPs have a legitimate right to say, "I personally cannot treat this patient any more." The following reasons were outlined in the advice given by the General Medical Services Committee last year as acceptable reasons for striking patients off a register.

A patient may be struck off if there is violent or threatening behaviour towards a doctor and his family, but even then, the GMSC believes that GPs should use their clinical judgment to determine whether a patient's violent behaviour results from his or her medical condition, and that if the patient is mentally ill, consideration should be given to the condition of that patient.

Other reasons for striking off might be a complete breakdown of the doctor-patient relationship, such as might occur if scurrilous, unfounded allegations were made against a doctor, or prescription fraud or the persistent breaking of appointments, which did not improve after a warning. However, the advice from the GMSC is not firm enough and weighs heavily in the doctor's favour.

There is growing support for my view. The Association of Health Councils in England and Wales is concerned that patients may be removed from lists simply for making a complaint. One woman told me that she was suffering from a back injury and took her son along to the doctor's receptionist. She could not sit down because of her injury. She was told that she might have to wait and the receptionist asked her to sit down. The woman said that she could not and would prefer to stand. Three days later she received a letter striking her off the doctor's list. I saw the letter and the only indication of why she had been struck off was the sentence that stated:

> "We hope when you find a new GP there will be comfortable chairs in his waiting room."

That is clearly another exceptional case, but it is unacceptable and exposes the inadequacy of the existing legislation. The woman was struck off the list for something trivial.

There is a growing perception that clients are being removed from GPs' lists because their treatment is too costly. The advent of the internal market and GP fundholding has fuelled that perception. Unfortunately, information on the number of patients being removed from lists at the request of doctors has been available from the Department of Health only since 1992-93. In that year, the total for England was more than 78,000. Those figures do not differentiate between GP fundholders and non-fundholders, so there is no hard and fast evidence.

[Mrs. Alice Mahon]

However, there is anecdotal evidence that GP fundholders do not want patients whose care is too costly. The Association of Health Councils in England and Wales has expressed concern. Yesterday we learnt that a doctor in Wales intended to strike eight children off his list to increase his practice income by £2,000. Clearly, that has to stop. It is simply not good enough for the Department of Health to talk about unacceptable behaviour. We are entitled to ask what the Department will do about it.

Patients trust doctors less because of the introduction of GP fundholding. They are now, almost daily, made aware of the cost of treatment. Where once a clinical decision was given and accepted, there now lurks a suspicion that a treatment might be advised against owing to the cost. The vital ingredient of trust between patient and doctor is being seriously undermined, which is one reason why it is essential to end GP fundholding.

If implemented, the Bill, which contains moderate measures, could provide the first step towards restoring the trust between patients and their GPs, and I commend it to the House.

3.43 pm

Sir Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): I have considerable sympathy with much of what the hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) has said. I do not wish to call a Division, but I want to raise one valid point.

Our procedure in the House confuses people outside. It is always a pity to excite expectations that one can never fulfil. There is a problem in allowing ten-minute Bills to be introduced within 18 hours of the Prorogation of Parliament. There is no chance of the hon. Lady's Bill, however worthy, passing on to the statute book. It is important for us to put down a marker on the subject.

I hope that the powers that be—the appropriate Committee—will consider whether or not it would be sensible to stop the ten-minute Bill procedure a few weeks before the Prorogation of Parliament, perhaps providing a half-hour Adjournment debate on a Wednesday morning for the purpose. The hon. Lady's speech would have been ideally suited for such a debate.

I shall not oppose the hon. Lady's leave to bring in her Bill now, but it is a pity that the procedure of the House is allowed to operate in this way.

Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 19 (Motions for leave to bring in Bills and nomination of Select Committees at commencement of public business), and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mrs. Ann Clwyd, Mr. Harry Barnes, Mr. Eddie Loyden, Ms Jean Corston, Mr. Neil Gerrard, Mr. Alan Simpson, Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe, Mrs. Audrey Wise, Mr. John Gunnell, Mr. Dennis Skinner and Mr. Malcolm Chisholm.

PATIENTS RIGHTS

Mrs. Alice Mahon accordingly presented a Bill to give patients certain rights in their dealings with general practitioners: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 194.]

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As you know, it is a long-standing convention that an hon. Member who opposes a ten-minute Bill is supposed to follow his voice with his vote. I did not hear anyone shout "No".

What is more, the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Sir P. Cormack) said that it would be a good idea to get rid of ten-minute Bills so close to the end of the Session. As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Back Benchers have lost opportunities to speak on various issues on a number of occasions in recent years. The ten-minute Bill provides hon. Members with an ideal opportunity to advance propositions, although they may not become law. I hope that you will not give consideration to the hon. Gentleman's suggestion, or pass it on.

I should also like to know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, your view of an hon. Member who opposes a ten-minute Bill while making it abundantly clear that he has no interest in voting against it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael Morris): I refer the hon. Gentleman to page 464 of "Erskine May", on which all will be revealed. It explains that an hon. Member may speak against a ten-minute Bill, but need not voice a "No" when the Question is put.

Orders of the Day

Criminal Injuries Compensation Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael Morris): Before I call the Minister, I must make an announcement. Madam Speaker has accepted a manuscript amendment in the name of the right hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair), of which copies are available in the Vote Office and the Division Lobbies.

Clause 2

BASIS ON WHICH COMPENSATION IS TO BE CALCULATED

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 2, line 11, at end insert

("or otherwise determined in accordance with the Scheme")

3.47 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Maclean): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Michael Morris): With this, it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendment No. 2.

Mr. Maclean: Lords amendment No. 1 makes it clear beyond doubt that the scheme may provide for awards in fatal cases to include, in addition to the fixed-tariff award, additional amounts calculated in accordance with the scheme. That will allow payment to be made for such other elements as reasonable funeral expenses, loss of dependency and loss of parental support. Those elements are not fixed or specified, so provision could not be made for them under subsection (2)(d) as it originally stood. They will be calculated by reference to the circumstances of the case, rather than on the basis of the fixed tariff. The amendment simply ensures that such payments can properly be made.

Let me now deal with Lords amendment No. 2. On introduction, clause 3(1)(c) enabled provision to be included in the scheme in regard to repayment of compensation for breach of conditions subject to which an award was made. However, the scheme also needs to include provision for repayment in other circumstances, such as when the applicant receives compensation from other sources in respect of the same criminal injury, and when that other compensation was not taken into account when the award was made from our scheme. That simply replicates the situation under the present scheme, and is intended to prevent the applicant from receiving compensation twice for the same injury. As originally drafted, the Bill would not have allowed a provision to be included in the scheme providing for such recovery; it accordingly needed to be amended to permit recovery in those wider circumstances.

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): I am particularly grateful to the Minister for accepting Lords amendment No. 1, which we pursued in the House. It makes the position clear beyond doubt in allowing awards in fatal cases to include funeral expenses and expenses incurred by loss of dependency and loss of parental support.

Will the Minister clarify the way in which the power conferred by Lords amendment No. 2 will be exercised? I understand the intention of the amendment, which is to ensure that money can be reclaimed.

I was hoping that the Minister would answer my question, but I apologise for interrupting the conversation that is taking place on the Government Front Bench.

It is obviously right to deal with cases in which there has been an oversight or a lack of information at the time when an award was made, so that no deduction has been made for the availability of compensation elsewhere; but the provision could also be used in "blanket" ways, and inappropriate amounts could be deducted. Will the Minister therefore clarify how the retrospective power that is given under the amendment will be used in practice? Will the ways in which it is to be used be specified in the scheme, to be published shortly in its final form?

Mr. Maclean: No retrospection is intended. In the present scheme, no one is compensated twice: that is a normal rule of government, the law and insurance law in particular. We never intended that, under the new tariff scheme, someone could receive double compensation. All the amendment does is clarify the law and ensure that the same rule as operated by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is carried forward into the tariff scheme. In practice, it will operate in exactly the same way as at present.

No blanket retrospection is applied—I do not know how that could apply. We should bear it in mind that, even moving as quickly as possible, it takes some time to process awards. The board and those operating the tariff scheme will want to receive full information on the means and situation of the victim and on any other income, expenses or money that he acquires. If they find that someone is receiving a full insurance pay-out, or, properly, that the criminal has been ordered to pay compensation to the victim and there is a compensation order against the criminal, so that the victim has received money from the criminal offender, they will reduce the award or not pay it. We are not, however, applying the provision retrospectively to take money back from people who have been properly paid. It merely continues the normal system.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 2 agreed to.

Clause 5

APPEALS

Lords amendment: No. 3, in page 3, line 42, at end insert

("except so far as the provision relates to functions of persons mentioned in subsection (3)(d)(ii)")

Mr. Maclean: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 4 and 5.

Mr. Maclean: The first two amendments have the simple aim of ensuring that claims officers or staff appointed by the scheme manager can act as presenting officers at appeals in addition to their more normal job of determining claims.

[Mr. Maclean]

As to the third amendment, clause 5(9) was added to the Bill in Standing Committee to make it clear beyond doubt that the scheme may include provision for adjudicators to reduce awards when they consider that an appeal is frivolous or vexatious. That minor, technical amendment to delete the words "under this section" was necessary as appeals are not determined under the Bill, but are determined in accordance with the provisions of the scheme that is to be made under the powers conferred by clause 1. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr. Michael: I have one query for the Minister, which he may have clarified in his statement. He has been extremely helpful, for which I am grateful to him, in providing information about the intentions of amendments that he expected to come from the Lords. In a letter to me, he refers to the amendments to clause 5, saying that they would allow claims officers to act as presenting officers at appeals in addition to their main role in determining appeals. That leads to confusion, but it may simply be a misprint—their main role is in determining claims rather than appeals. If that is the case, I am happy to support the Minister in seeking to pass the amendment.

Mr. Maclean: It certainly sounds like a misprint. Claims officers determine claims, not appeals and they may then present the information to the appeals panel, which will determine the appeal.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 4 and 5 agreed to.

Clause 8

ANNUITIES

Lords amendment: No. 6, in page 6, line 11, at end insert—

("(3) In this section "the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme" means—

(a) the scheme established by arrangements made under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act 1995; or

(b) arrangements made by the Secretary of State for compensation for criminal injuries and in operation at any time before the commencement of that scheme.")

Mr. Maclean: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must inform the House that this amendment involves privilege.

Mr. Maclean: The amendment fulfils a promise made in the Standing Committee to extend the benefits of structured settlements so that they are available under the new tariff scheme to applicants under the current common law damages scheme or any other previous version of it, whose claims have not yet been settled. The necessary complementary amendment to the 1990 scheme to permit payment of compensation by the purchase of annuities will, as we also promised, be made administratively as soon as the Bill receives Royal Assent. This is an excellent amendment, which I commend to the House.

Mr. Michael: We support the objective of the amendment. The Minister says that people whose claims have not been dealt with will have the opportunity of structured settlements and the tax arrangements that are allowed for under the Bill. What will the cut-off date be? Will the ability to deal with claims by structured settlement date from the time when the Bill began its passage through the House and the declaration of the Government's intentions, from the date on which Royal Assent is signified or from a future date when the Government or Home Secretary implement that aspect of the Bill? I am sure that the Minister will agree that it is important to be clear on those points. I hope that he will give the earliest possible date, so that the advantages of the new scheme will have the widest possible application.

On the Order Paper today there is a written question tabled by the hon. Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Evans), who sometimes asks questions that are regarded as convenient to Ministers. The hon. Gentleman asks whether structured settlements will be offered under the current criminal injuries compensation scheme. If any new information is to be provided to the hon. Gentleman, will the Minister share that information with us?

I ask that question because it is quite common for members of the press to have information about written parliamentary answers long before hon. Members. I am sure that the Minister will agree that it would be courteous to give the House as much information as possible in view of the fact that that question—coincidentally, I am sure—has been tabled on the day of this debate.

Mr. Maclean: I am not aware that I have any extra information to present to the House. I was not aware that my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Evans) had coincidentally decided to ask a question, which might correspond with an urgent need that I had to present information. I shall be advised on it and I hope that I shall be able to confirm whether that is the case. We intend to have structured settlements. We think that they are a good idea. If any new information needs to be presented, I shall do so.

Mr. Michael: As I understand it, the Minister is answering that written question today, so if I speak slowly, any additional information might wend its way to him. If there is no additional information that is not already available to the House, I would be happy if, at this late stage in the Bill's proceedings, the Minister could confirm that.

Mr. Maclean: I have no extra information to provide, and nothing new to say on it. I can only conclude that my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield was not fully aware of all the information that we had issued previously when he decided to ask for an update. The update will provide the same information.

The earliest date of implementation will be Royal Assent. This part of the legislation cannot be retrospective because that would create tremendous anomalies. The question might arise whether, in some cases, the generous settlements that we are making under some aspects of the tariff award should not also be made retrospective. That would be very unfair. We expect the benefits of structured settlements to take effect when the Bill receives Royal Assent.

Lords amendment agreed to [Special Entry].

New clause

JURISDICTION OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION

Lords amendment: No. 7, after clause 9, to insert the following new clause—

".—(1) In the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967, insert after section 11A—

"The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

11B.—(1) For the purposes of this Act, administrative functions exercisable by an administrator of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme ("Scheme functions") shall be taken to be administrative functions of a government department to which this Act applies.

(2) For the purposes of this section, the following are administrators of the Scheme—

(a) a claims officer appointed under section 3(4)(b) of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act 1995;

(b) a person appointed under section 5(3)(c) of that Act;

(c) the Scheme manager, as defined by section 1(4) of that Act, and any person assigned by him to exercise functions in relation to the Scheme.

(3) The principal officer in relation to any complaint made in respect of any action taken in respect of Scheme functions is—

(a) in the case of action taken by a claims officer, such person as may from time to time be designated by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this paragraph;

(b) in the case of action taken by a person appointed under section 5(3)(c) of the Act of 1995, the chairman appointed by the Secretary of State under section 5(3)(b) of that Act; or

(c) in the case of action taken by the Scheme manager or by any other person mentioned in subsection (2)(c) of this section, the Scheme manager.

(4) The conduct of an investigation under this Act in respect of any action taken in respect of Scheme functions shall not affect—

(a) any action so taken; or

(b) any power or duty of any person to take further action with respect to any matters subject to investigation."

(2) In Schedule 3 to the Act of 1967 (matters not subject to investigation), insert after paragraph 6B—

"6C. Action taken by any person appointed under section 5(3)(c) of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act 1995, so far as that action is taken at the direction, or on the authority (whether express or implied), of any person acting in his capacity as an adjudicator appointed under section 5 of that Act to determine appeals."

(3) The amendments made by this section do not affect the following provisions of this Act—

(a) section 3(5)(b);

(b) section 3(7)(b);

(c) section 5(4)(b)."

Mr. Maclean: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

The amendment fulfils undertakings given during earlier Commons stages that we would bring the administrative actions of the administrators of the scheme and those supporting the independent appeals system within the jurisdiction of the parliamentary ombudsman. Although the amendment appears to be long and complicated, it is a simple measure to ensure that the administrative aspects of the new system come within the ken and purview of the ombudsman.

4 pm

Mr. Michael: We certainly take pleasure in this amendment because the Opposition pressed the Government strongly to ensure that the administrative functions of the authority and the appeals panel would come within the jurisdiction of the ombudsman. We strongly believe that that is necessary to ensure the proper administration and operation of the various elements of the Bill.

I should be grateful if the Minister could provide a little clarification on the exclusions contained in the proposed new clause. As he said, the wording is complex but the principle is clear. However, it is possible within complex wording for things easily to slip out of sight.

There are two elements on which I should like clarification. First, subsection (2) appears to exclude certain actions from investigation. How will that operate? Can we be absolutely certain that nothing will be excluded from the scrutiny of the ombudsman which this House would wish him properly to scrutinise? What will be the precise effect of the proposed new clause on the question of exclusion?

Secondly, subsection (3) refers to three places in the Bill where, effectively, the actions of officials are defined as not being taken by the Secretary of State or on his behalf. The Minister will recall that we commented on that when the House debated the Bill. We were concerned that the exclusion of actions of officials from being acts taken by or on behalf of the Secretary of State might mean that they were not properly scrutinised by the ombudsman. It appears that those actions are still omitted from the effects of the proposed new clause. Can the Minister reassure me on that point?

The Minister said that the new clause was a complicated addition to the Bill. We wish to ensure that something that we want scrutinised does not, through an oversight at this stage, drop off the agenda or be considered to be outside the capacity of the ombudsman. I should be grateful for as much clarification of that issue as the Minister can give me.

Mr. Maclean: We hope that there has been no oversight. The drafting is as accurate as parliamentary draftsmen can make it, but it has some clear aims. Through the drafting of the various subsections, we aim to apply the powers of the ombudsman, in full, to certain aspects of the scheme—the normal areas of government that the ombudsman can examine. What is not included is a decision on the merits of an award. Initially, that is a matter for the scheme officials to decide. It is not for the ombudsman to say, "I think Mrs. Smith should have got £20,000, not £15,000." Decisions on the merits are not for the ombudsman. Subsection (3) of the proposed new clause outlines the exceptions.

Similarly, as there is an appeals process built in, it is not for the ombudsman to become the appellate authority for people who are disgruntled with the quality of the decision on its merits. There is an appeal body for that. Nor is it the ombudsman's place to question ministerial policy, whether there should be a tariff scheme at all or whether it would be better done another way. We have therefore tried to apply in law the duties of the ombudsman to administrative action by the civil servants running the scheme.

[Mr. Maclean]

We have attempted faithfully to make the powers that the ombudsman requires in this instance the same as in every other aspect of government. Administrative action would encompass things such as delays, failure to process the paperwork within a reasonable time or failure to process it at all, not implementing the scheme properly or failing to implement it as laid down. Those are administrative actions. We believe that we have got it right.

Mr. Michael: I should like a little more clarification. The Minister said that the merits of the case would perhaps lead a claims officer to decide whether an applicant should receive £20,000 rather than £10,000. He seeks to exclude that decision—the way in which a decision is made on the merits of the case—from investigation by the ombudsman. I understand what he is saying, but does he agree that the ways in which such a decision was reached—whether proper information was sought, whether clarification was sought if necessary, and whether the papers were examined properly—are administrative actions, as distinct from the judgment based on them, and would be a proper matter for the ombudsman? Clarification would be helpful.

Mr. Maclean: What the hon. Gentleman has described is, I suspect and hope, the exact legal position. A judgment on what a person should get is a quasi-judicial decision outwith the purview of the ombudsman. However, if in coming to that conclusion the official did not operate the scheme properly but failed to contact the applicant or check the forms and did not take a medical report as was perhaps required and then made a judgment based on that, it would seem prima facie to be a case of maladministration. That is the type of behaviour that ombudsmen are there to investigate. I hope that that clarifies the position for the hon. Gentleman.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Clause 10

PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL

Lords amendment: No. 8, in page 6, line 34, leave out from beginning to ("the") in line 38, and insert—

("Before making the Scheme, the Secretary of State shall lay a draft of it before Parliament.

(1A) The Secretary of State shall not make the Scheme unless the draft has been approved by a resolution of each House.

(2) Before making any alteration to the Tariff or to any provision of")

Mr. Maclean: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 9 to 13.

There is a manuscript amendment to Lords amendment No. 13, to leave out from '(4B)' to end of line 17 and insert

'Where the Secretary of State is required to lay a statement before Parliament under the provisions of subsection (4A) above, he shall not give effect to the altered provision unless the statement has been approved by a resolution of each House.'.

Mr. Maclean: These amendments are inter-related and it may be helpful if I deal with them in two sub-groups. Amendments Nos. 8, 9, 11 and 13 change significantly the extent of Parliament's control over the scheme. The Bill, on introduction, required the Secretary of State to lay a copy of the tariff and any subsequent alterations to it before Parliament. It also required the Secretary of State to lay before Parliament statements of other 'key provisions' made by the scheme, namely those bearing on quantum.

Under the amendments, however, the Secretary of State will now be required to lay a draft of the scheme in its entirety before Parliament. The scheme will not be able to start until that draft has been approved by both Houses under the affirmative resolution procedure. Thus specific parliamentary approval will be required for every aspect of the new arrangements before we can kick off.

Once the new scheme has started, any changes to it, however minor, will also be subject to parliamentary control. Changes to the tariff itself and to the key features of the scheme will require approval by the affirmative resolution procedure, while changes to the more minor, more routine features will be subject to the negative resolution procedure. We think that that strikes the right balance, requiring Parliament positively to approve changes to the more important aspects of the scheme, while leaving Parliament the choice as to whether changes to more minor matters should go through with or without a debate and with or without a vote.

The amendments make it quite clear where ultimate control over the scheme rests. The Executive will of course still be able to propose changes, but it cannot give them effect without recourse to Parliament.

Amendment Nos. 10 and 12 will have the effect of requiring more features of the scheme to be subject to parliamentary approval by the affirmative resolution procedure should change be considered necessary or desirable once the scheme has started. Those features relate to the appeals provision of the scheme.

Amendment No. 10 makes it clear that, before any changes can be made to a provision of the scheme which gives a right of appeal, or which specifies the circumstances in which an appeal is to be dealt with by an oral hearing, parliamentary approval by the affirmative resolution procedure will be necessary. Amendment No. 12 is minor and consequential. Effectively, therefore, any provision of the scheme which touches on eligibility for an appeal or the circumstances in which an oral hearing can be granted is caught.

More minor provisions relating in the main to more technical or administrative matters can still fall to be changed only by the negative resolution procedure. That will mean of course that if Parliament does not like even minor changes, it will still be able to pray against them and make its dissent known in that way.

Perhaps it would be sensible at this stage to say a word or two about the Opposition amendment. As I hope that I have explained and will be clear from the Lords amendments to clause 10, the degree of parliamentary control has changed significantly. Before the whole scheme can come into force, Parliament must approve it by affirmative resolution. We are then suggesting that the key features of the scheme, if we wish to change them in future, can by changed only by affirmative resolution. Everything else, all the hundreds of minor and technical things, could still be changed only by negative resolution procedure.

The Opposition amendment seeks to make every change in future subject to the affirmative resolution procedure. I happen to think that that is just a bit over the top. It would not be a good use of Parliament's time to have to approve any change, however uncontentious, technical or minor, by the affirmative procedure.

I understand the thinking behind what the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth is trying to do. I hope that he will be satisfied, however, that, since we have put in the affirmative resolution procedure before the thing can start, and we are keeping its use for the scheme's key points, the negative procedure will be satisfactory to deal with the other parts of the scheme if we wish to change them in future.

Mr. Michael: I am grateful to the Minister for seeking to reassure us that he intends to use the negative resolution route only for uncontentious issues. The problem is that the Government have not defined what those uncontentious issues are and have not limited in their definition the areas of activity which could be covered under the negative resolution procedure.

The Minister has rightly identified and, indeed, expanded on something that we support: those elements which have to go through the affirmative resolution procedure. In particular, we welcome the fact that the amendments bring the most important aspects of the appeals procedure within the key features of the scheme, and therefore require such changes in the appeals procedures to be undertaken through the affirmative resolution procedure rather than the negative resolution procedure.

The Minister needs to explain, however, how the scheme will operate and how he intends to use the powers. The clause, as it originally stood, referring not to the scheme but to the tariff only, was entirely framed in terms of affirmative resolution. The negative resolution elements were introduced in another place.

The Minister referred to the issues that could be covered by the negative resolution procedure as "everything else". I think that he will accept that that is rather a portmanteau way of describing the matter. That is why we have tabled an amendment which seeks to bring the whole scheme under the affirmative resolution procedure, which of course is what we sought when the Bill first came before the House and before it went to another place.

I shall give two examples of issues that would be contentious. Perhaps the Minister will tell us that they would not be dealt with other than through the affirmative resolution process. First, there is the appointment of the scheme manager and, secondly, there is the possible and highly contentious avenue for the Government to pursue of contractorisation of the operation of the criminal injuries compensation scheme. We would like the Minister to reassure us that there is no way in which such issues will be pursued without them coming before the House and another place, which will ensure that the full support of Parliament is given to such a contentious decision.

4.15 pm

In that context, we have tabled our amendment. The matters that will have to be dealt with through the affirmative resolution procedure are specified to some extent. The issues that are not specified would come under the negative resolution procedure. I have just referred to two matters that are not defined as coming under the affirmative resolution procedure and about which there is, therefore, doubt and concern. We are concerned that in those two matters, the Government may pursue the dogmatic approach adopted elsewhere. That would surely be wrong in relation to such an important aspect of public administration as compensation for victims of the most serious crimes.

We understand that it is likely that the Minister or the Home Secretary will bring the scheme and the tariff, in their final form, before the House very soon after the Queen's Speech, when Parliament reassembles. In that case, it is extremely important that we should have some assurances from the Minister about the way in which the remaining issues will be dealt with. It is, of course, the case that under the affirmative resolution procedure, although the House is able to have a say before anything is implemented, it cannot amend legislation. The House can only accept or reject it.

In general, there have been improvements in the scheme. I commend the Minister on one point. He has made the scheme and amended schemes available so that proper debate has been able to take place and discussion has been possible with those who have specialist knowledge. That is welcome and is an improvement on the way in which other legislation has been dealt with. I commend the Minister on being much more open than has been the case on other occasions in terms of allowing proper debate. That may lead him into all sorts of difficulties with the Government, but the Opposition welcome his openness, as do those outside the House who have taken a detailed interest in the matter. It is only right that the Minister's openness in that regard should be acknowledged and praised in the House.

There are still issues that have to be dealt with and I hope that the Minister can reassure us that there will continue to be improvements to them and consideration of them. Three obvious elements on which I hope he will give us reassurance are how pregnancy following rape is to be dealt with, how age and sex criteria are to be dealt with and whether multiple injuries will be dealt with in the way that the Minister has been urged to adopt.

During the passage of the Bill, a number of other issues were referred to as matters that would be dealt with under the provisions of the scheme. There is still the question of the qualifications of those who deal with appeals and their ability, as a team, to advise the Government and to be proactive in terms of changes that are needed in the scheme.

The Minister knows that reassurances were given in debates in another place about the way in which care costs would be dealt with and he has received representations on how care costs can be linked to earning capacity. Again, there are fears that the Government's intentions will not be met. It is possible for a person to be providing care without there being any effect on that person's earning capacity. Although that person may have lost considerable time in which he or she could have been, in theory, earning, that is not the same as having one's earnings capacity affected. The earning capacity remains the same, but the amount of time available for earning has changed, which is a different matter. Linking that issue to earning capacity does not take account of the fact that many carers would not have earning capacity as such. The

[Mr. Michael]

carers might have been parents or spouses not in work and not intending to be in work when called upon to undertake care responsibilities. I hope that the Minister will give us an assurance that these issues will be dealt with in a constructive way and that they will be covered properly when the measure to approve the scheme and the tariff comes before the House early in the next Session.

The treatment of psychiatric injury remains a matter of concern. The definition contained in the latest draft of the scheme still leaves aspects to be covered, and I know that the Minister has received representations on the issue of railway suicides. There is concern that the way in which that matter is dealt with may result in railway staff being excluded from bringing a psychiatric injury claim, even though they are specifically included in paragraph 9(d) of the scheme.

The issues dealt with in relation to psychiatric injury include such aspects as loss of earnings. We have stated that damage could be done to those who are not able to claim during the 28 weeks after an injury, and particularly those who are unable to claim sick pay. Others might be disadvantaged due to the level of sick pay being considerably lower than what they would have obtained in employment. These issues must be dealt with by the provisions of the amendment through the affirmative resolution procedure.

It would be helpful if the Minister could indicate that he is still willing to respond to the serious points which have been made in another place and outside Parliament. The scheme and the tariff that the Minister will bring forward for consideration by this House in the near future must deal fully with all of the issues which have been brought to his attention. The amendment which the Opposition have tabled seeks to make the whole of the scheme subject to the affirmative resolution procedure. The devil is in the detail in criminal injury compensation and the detail is in the scheme and the tariff.

The House must not allow its authority over important elements of detail in the scheme to be diminished. We are concerned that the amendment tabled by the Minister tabled this afternoon contains some indeterminate elements. I have given two examples of issues which could be dealt with by negative resolution, and which could be implemented in advance of the opinion of both Houses of Parliament being obtained.

Mr. Maclean: First, may I thank the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) for his kindness and courtesy? I am the perfect epitome of the remark, "I am from the Government—I am here to help you", and I am well known for my compassionate and caring approach. It would be fair—and perhaps more honest—to thank my staff, and particularly my private office staff, who have constantly reminded me when another letter to a shadow spokesman is due and that it might be helpful to lay out the main features of the Bill. Without that reminder, the hon. Gentleman would not have been able to thank me for being so helpful.

I should point out that what is to be done by affirmative resolution is clearly laid down by statute. We will operate the system in future in accordance with the law as set out in the Bill. Clause 10 states that the Secretary of State must lay before Parliament the tariff which he proposes and any alteration that he proposes to make to that tariff. Clause 10(4) states that the tariff must be approved by a resolution of the House. Clause 10(2) states that measures to be laid before Parliament include any provision to deal with any additional amount,

> "the circumstances in which compensation may be payable with respect to a criminal injury of a kind for which no provision is made by the Tariff . . . the calculation of compensation in respect of multiple injuries . . . compensation payable in respect of children conceived as a result of rape . . . the circumstances in which an award may be withheld or compensation reduced.. any limit on compensation imposed by a provision made by virtue of section 2(7)(a)."

All of those things are specified in the Bill, which we hope will shortly be an Act, and can be altered only be affirmative resolution. In addition, of course, we have the amendments that we are considering today. It is true to say that we are setting some key and important issues on one side. We have responded to concerns expressed in the House, in Committee and in the other place by making all the matters that most worried parliamentary colleagues subject to the affirmative resolution procedure.

We think that we have got the draft scheme about right now. We found it helpful to publish the draft. Following comments from colleagues, the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, the Law Society, experts in the other place and others, the draft has been altered. We are almost at the final stage, but we are still listening and willing to hear any representations that we have not yet heard on how we see the tariff scheme operating in practice.

Following all the consultation and the tweaking that we have done, we think that we have got the tariff scheme about right and as good as it possibly can be. However, it is not set in stone. Medical knowledge improves and changes all the time. Legal knowledge changes. If in future years we become convinced that a change has to be made to a category, type or sub-division of injury or that multiple injuries could be dealt with better—although I am not convinced of that at present—it would be open to us to alter the tariff by affirmative resolution or, if it is a minor matter, by the negative procedure. I hope that I have been able to satisfy the hon. Gentleman on those points.

Mr. Michael: The Minister spoke rapidly. A phrase which answered my two questions may have flashed by me, but I do not recall him dealing with the appointment of a scheme manager or the possibility of contractorisation, which I hope is unlikely, but must be a possibility with this Government. Could those matters be dealt with other than by affirmative resolution? Will he reassure us on those two points?

Mr. Maclean: I can only repeat the assurances that I gave in Committee that we had no proposals to do either of those things. I cannot forecast what will happen in the future, but I suspect that the workload of the organisation and the need to get the scheme bedded down mean that the matters to which the hon. Gentleman refers are not a prospect in the immediate future.

We will be bound by the Act. The appointment of a scheme manager and contractorisation are not covered by clause 10. I do not believe that primary legislation would be necessary to make those changes. Changes to the administration of the scheme would be made by the negative resolution procedure. Neither the affirmative nor negative procedure might be necessary if the relevant sections of the Act have given the Secretary of State the authority to make such changes. The matters to which the hon. Gentleman refers are not covered by clause 10, which requires the affirmative resolution procedure.

Mr. Michael: With the leave of the House. The Minister has confirmed what we believe to be wrong with the state in which we have ended up, even though there is a requirement for affirmative resolution on some matters. As I understand the Minister's reply, the Government would be able to deal with matters such as the appointment of a scheme manager or even contractorisation, which would take criminal injury compensation decisions outside the scope of public servants, without having to return to the House under an affirmative resolution. Indeed, the Minister seemed to go further and suggested that the Government might not need the approval of the House at all. As the Minister gave the strongest assurances earlier in the passage of the Bill through the House that the Government had no intention of going down that road and as it is the clear intention of both Houses that affirmative resolution should be the avenue for the most important aspects of the Bill, it would be entirely wrong for the Government to take criminal injury compensation decisions outside the scope of public servants or appoint a scheme manager without coming back and putting specific resolutions to the House.

We should be quite clear. The Government have no right to congratulate themselves on the Bill. The Home Secretary acted illegally in trying to introduce the new scheme without any parliamentary scrutiny. That was the Bill's gestation period—the Home Secretary's attempt to avoid the scrutiny of the House. The Government were dragged kicking and screaming into accepting that the scheme should be subject to parliamentary scrutiny by affirmative resolution. When we last debated these issues only the tariff was to be subject to the approval of the House.

4.30 pm

I welcome the fact that we have won from the Government the concession that the scheme itself is to be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure and the scrutiny of the House. That still leaves the victims of violent crime without compensation for loss of income for 28 weeks after the injury. The Minister should recall that, with statutory sick pay at about £52.50 per week, it is hardly an adequate recompense for those who are unable to work because of a serious criminal injury. Many people are not entitled to statutory sick pay, including the self-employed, those on a low income and those on short-term contracts. Some people might still be entitled to incapacity benefit, but that is no more generous than statutory sick pay. Others will get income support, which is even less than SSP.

There is considerable variation. Taking all the factors together, however, it has been calculated that 12 million people—at least half of those in employment—do not receive full pay during the first 28 weeks of sickness and will, therefore, be at risk under the Bill. They will be worse off.

This remains a scheme that cuts the amount of cash available for the victims of violent crime. The Government have admitted that £700 million is being cut from the cash available during the next five years. That amounts to a theft of £700 million by the Government from the victims who have been damaged most by the nastiest and most brutal of crimes. That is a 40 per cent. drop in expenditure for the Government and many victims will suffer as a result. The Government have made victims pay for their failure to stem the rise of violent crime. Instead of cutting violent crime, the Government have cut the help available to the victims.

I perceive from the Minister's response that our amendment would not have succeeded in doing what we had hoped, which was to ensure that the Government could not undermine the operation of the scheme without an affirmative resolution from this House.

Despite the improvements that the legislation makes in the processes and the introduction of a tariff, money for the victims of violent crime will still be cut by £700 million in the next five years. I have some satisfaction, therefore, at our success in persuading the Government to introduce more satisfactory procedures and make the operation of the scheme subject to the parliamentary ombudsman, but I nevertheless regret that the Bill will be detrimental to the victims of crime and the victims of the most violent crimes in particular. That should be at the forefront of our minds as we reach this final stage in the Bill's passage through the Houses of Parliament.

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 9 to 13 agreed to.

Statutory Instruments, &c.

INSURANCE

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.),

That the draft Insurance Brokers (Registration) Act 1977 (Amendment) Order 1995, which was laid before this House on 16th October, be approved.—*[Mr. Knapman.]*

Question agreed to.

INTERNATIONAL IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.),

That the draft Vienna Document 1994 (Privileges and Immunities) Order 1995, which was laid before this House on 16th October, be approved.—*[Mr. Knapman.]*

Question agreed to.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.),

That the draft Financial Provisions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, which was laid before this House on 17th October, be approved.—*[Mr. Knapman.]*

Question agreed to.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(9) (European Standing Committees),

REFORM OF THE RICE REGIME

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 9532/95, and 9379/95, relating to the reform of the rice regime; and supports the Government's efforts to ensure that the proposals when adopted will encourage the competitiveness of rice growing and milling in the European Union after the Uruguay Round, that high quality supplies will reach consumers at reasonable prices and that the regime will be capable of effective enforcement.—*[Mr. Knapman.]*

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(9) (European Standing Committees),

SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAMME 1995-97 AND PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 6827/95, the Commission's Medium Term Social Action Programme 1995-97; endorses the Government's view that European Community social policy should focus on helping to tackle unemployment, creating the conditions which encourage the creation of new jobs, and on improving the competitiveness of Community businesses, and should avoid further unnecessary legislation; takes note of European Community Document No. 5663/95, relating to the Employment Conclusions of the Essen European Council; and welcomes the fact that the Heads of Government of the European Community have recognised at successive European Councils the importance of tackling the high levels of structural unemployment in the Community.—*[Mr. Knapman.]*

Question agreed to.

Select Committees

[Relevant document: The Fourth Special Report of the Employment Committee, Session 1994-95, on the proposed changes to Standing Order No. 130 (H.C. 826).]

4.32 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Tony Newton): I beg to move,

That Standing Order No. 130 (Select committees related to government departments) be amended—

(1) with effect from the beginning of the next Session—

(a) by inserting the following item after item 10 in the Table in paragraph (2):

> "Public Service/Office of Public Service (but excluding the drafting of bills by the Parliamentary Counsel Office)/11/3";

(b) in item 14 in the said Table, after the word 'Industry' in column 2, by inserting the words '(but excluding the Office of Science and Technology)';

(c) in item 16 in the said Table, by leaving out the words "and Civil Service" in column 1 and, in column 2, the words from "Treasury" in line 65 to "Board" in line 69; and

(d) in paragraph (3) by leaving out the words 'and Civil Service'; and

(2) with effect from Friday 1st March—

(a) by leaving out items 3 and 4 in the Table in paragraph (2) and inserting the following item:

> "Education and Employment/Department for Education and Employment/13/4"; and

(b) in paragraph (3) by inserting at the beginning the words "The Education and Employment Committee,".

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Janet Fookes): I have to announce that Madam Speaker has selected amendment (c), which should be moved at the conclusion of the debate.

Mr. Newton: In moving this motion, I initiate another exciting House of Commons occasion, although I hope not as exciting as the one in which we all took part yesterday.

The motion seeks to adjust the Select Committee structure of the House to match the changes in the machinery of government which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced in July. I was anxious to get these matters resolved quickly because, as the House appreciates, I very much value the work of Select Committees and I wanted to make sure that we had a clear new structure in place before the start of the new Session.

What I propose follows the principle, which is now well established, of one Committee for each major Department, which the House last reaffirmed in June 1992 when it agreed to discontinue the Energy Committee and to set up a new Select Committee to monitor the Department of National Heritage and the Office of Science and Technology.

It might help the House if I digress briefly to make it clear that there has never been any intention on the part of the Government of doing away, as some feared, with the Science and Technology Committee. The Office of Science and Technology still exists in the same form as before the reorganisation; all that has happened to it is that it has migrated from one parent Department to another. The Science and Technology Committee will continue to oversee its activities at its new location.

I propose that the changes that I am putting forward to the Select Committee structure should be brought into effect in two stages. The first instalment, which is to take effect next week with the new Session, recognises the expanded role of the Office of Public Service under my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The OPS is now responsible not only for the civil service and the citizens charter but for competitiveness and the deregulation initiative. Those important areas of policy should now, we propose, be scrutinised by a new Public Service Committee, which is established by virtue of paragraph (1)(a) of the motion.

Other Committees, not least the Treasury and Civil Service Committee and the Trade and Industry Committee, obviously have an interest in the competitiveness agenda, but I am sure that the well-tried machinery of the Liaison Committee, so ably presided over by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Sir T. Higgins), will prevent any overlapping of Committee activity. I should emphasise that the role of the Deregulation Committee, which we established under the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994, in scrutinising individual deregulation orders as they come forward is not affected by this proposal.

As a consequence of that change, paragraph (l)(c) of the motion renames the Treasury and Civil Service Committee more simply and precisely as the Treasury Committee and amends its remit so as to remove the references to the responsibilities taken over by the new Public Service Committee. Under paragraph (l)(d), the Treasury Committee will keep the power to appoint a Sub-Committee, but clearly any such Sub-Committee could no longer deal with civil service issues.

Paragraph (l)(b) makes it clear that the remit of the Trade and Industry Committee does not include the Office of Science and Technology, which, as I have said, will continue to be monitored by the Science and Technology Committee.

The second instalment of the changes I propose is to come into operation on 1 March 1996. We propose in paragraph (2)(a) to take account of the disappearance of a separate Employment Department by establishing a new Committee with 13 members, to monitor the full range of functions of the new Department for Education and Employment, which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister created to reduce the divisions between academic and vocational education and to strengthen further the links between employers and the educational world of schools, colleges and universities.

Under paragraph (2)(b) of the motion, the new Education and Employment Committee will have the power to appoint a Sub-Committee if it so wishes. The creation of that new Committee, in line with what I must describe as the House's settled policy of matching Committees to Departments, necessarily means that the existing separate Committees on education and on employment need to be wound up, but I propose that that should not happen for nearly four months. The intention is to allow the existing Committees a reasonable period in which to complete the work that they have already started, which I hope they will be able to do. The Employment Committee has expressed concern about the prospects for the unfinished inquiries that it has under way at the moment. The proposal that the Committee should continue until 1 March 1996 seeks to respond to that concern.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): Will the Leader of the House give way?

Mr. Newton: I will give way, but I had understood that the hon. and learned Gentleman intended to make a speech. If an intervention can substitute for a speech, I would wish to co-operate with him.

Mr. Janner: That is not a basis on which I would wish to ask the Minister any question that I have.

Mr. Newton: I thought that my hopes might have been raised too high.

Mr. Janner: Yes, by at least half an hour.

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to the hon. and learned Gentleman for his usual helpfulness and courtesy. I appreciate the fact that he and his colleagues would have liked the period to be even longer, but I hope—although with little expectation in the light of our exchange, which was intended to be friendly—that they will regard this proposal as a reasonable compromise.

This motion deals with a number of issues, but I think that the only contentious point is over employment. When my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced the changes in departmental responsibilities, some concern was expressed that the new arrangements might make it more difficult for the House to deal with employment issues. On Select Committee scrutiny, I hope that the proposals that I have brought before the House today, relating to the four-month period, the size of the Committee and its power to appoint a Sub-Committee, will have gone some way towards allaying those anxieties. As I said, the present Employment Committee will have nearly four months in which to complete the inquiries that it has in hand.

All in all, the motion represents a sensible and balanced solution to the problems that we face in relation to existing Committees, while sticking to what is widely supported: the settled policy of matching Select Committees to Departments.

4.45 pm

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): I am sorry to dash the hopes of the Leader of the House, but it is the view of nine of the 11 members of the Select Committee on Employment that the so-called "compromise" offered by the Government will not enable the Committee to do its work within the time set; nor will it allow the House to monitor properly the work that was previously within the ambit of the Department of Employment.

My amendment (c) is supported by the hon. Members for Norfolk, North (Sir R. Howell), for Taunton (Mr. Nicholson), for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) and for Meriden (Mr. Mills) and by my hon. Friends the Members for Manchester, Blackley (Mr. Eastham), for Wallasey (Ms Eagle) and for Dudley, West (Mr. Pearson). It will not have escaped the attention of the Leader of the House that it has all-party support.

I am sorry that the Government have seen fit to try to make the Employment Committee vanish at the last breath of this Session. They have no doubt done so in the expectant hope that the payroll vote will be rolled out if necessary in order to put forward a proposition that is

[Mr. Greville Janner]

neither in the interests of Parliament nor in accordance with good sense, and does not satisfy the House that the employment work will be done.

The Leader of the House should be careful when I speak because, on the last occasion, in line with my work as a magician, I suggested to the hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth) that the sooner he joined the Labour party and left the Conservative party, the better. I said that we would welcome him at any moment. To my absolute delight, a week later he crossed the Floor of the House. When that happens in response to one of my speeches, the Leader of the House might at least bend slightly in our direction and try to enable us to complete the work as he has suggested.

First, I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will follow the views expressed in the fourth special report, which I shall read to him as unfortunately he did not see fit to mention it. If that is not possible, he should at least ensure that we are not forced to give up our work until the report commissioned by the Central Statistical Office to study options for the monthly publication of International Labour Office unemployment figures is before the House.

I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to the proposed changes to Standing Order No. 30, the fourth special report of the Employment Committee, which was agreed by nine of the 11 members. Paragraph 3 reads as follows:

> "We believe that the merging of the Education and Employment Committees will seriously diminish the ability of the House to monitor employment issues. We adduce the following reasons.
>
> A committee which is responsible for both the employment and education briefs will not have the time to consider in detail the issues which they raise.
>
> Both Committees have built up a background of knowledge and expertise in their respective areas which will be lost if they are merged into one committee"—

the report says "of only 11 members", but we now all know that it is to be of only 13 members, whereas the combined strength of the two Committees would have been 22 members.

I have consulted members of the Education Committee and found that they share the unhappiness and sense of regret at the Government's position which is felt by the vast majority of members of the Employment Committee.

The Leader of the House referred to a clear structure. I refer him to the original report that led to the setting up of Select Committees, which had in mind flexibility so that the work of the House could be done properly. It is one of the joys of our constitution, both written and unwritten, that there should be flexibility. Unfortunately, we have not yet seen it from the Government on this issue.

I remind the House that the report of the Select Committee on Procedure, which introduced the new Select Committee system in 1978-79, pressed firmly for a more systematic means of scrutinising the public service, which is what we are about. It concluded that

> "the committee structure should in future be based primarily on the subject areas within the responsibility of individual government departments, or groups of departments".

I stress the word "primarily". None of us would dispute the fact that that is the normal system, but we have fled from normality with the Government's abnormal abolition of the Department of Employment and the spreading of its work, not between two Departments, which is the usual—*[Interruption.]* I was hoping that a tiny corner of the mind of the Leader of the House might even be open to argument.

Mr. Newton: I apologise for the discourtesy of my feeling the need to have a word with one of my Front-Bench colleagues.

I hope that I have shown, over quite a long period, that I always try to look constructively at points that are made. However, I must say at this stage that I have already done so, to the degree that this is a substantially different proposal from the one that I first floated in several respects, on which I touched in my speech.

Mr. Janner: I accept that, and I thank the right hon. Gentleman, who is always courteous even when he is wrong.

I shall continue reading the very important paragraph from the report, which states:

> "We"—

the Select Committee on Procedure—

> "therefore accept that this principle must be tempered by some element of flexibility in the boundaries between committees and by adequate provision for cooperation between them."

I wonder whether the Leader of the House realises what has happened to the work that was with the Department of Employment. The training and enterprise councils have gone into the Department for Education, and we are busy, as a Committee, working on a report on the TECs, on which we have spent a great deal of time.

Into the Treasury, of all places, has gone the work of the Central Statistical Office, which includes the setting up of a task force led by an external consultant, a Mr. David Steel—no relation to anyone in the House, I understand—which is due to produce its report by the end of January 1996. I shall return to that subject.

So we have the TECs with the Department for Education; we have the CSO with the Treasury. Strangely enough, workfare, to which I shall return—this is a subject which is vastly important to the Committee and on which we have done a huge amount of work—is with the Department of Employment. Then we have all the issues concerning wages and trade unions, which have gone to the Department of Trade and Industry. *[Interruption.]* I am so sorry to interrupt—

The Treasurer of Her Majesty's Household (Mr. Greg Knight): Get on with it.

Mr. Janner: Yes; I will get on with it. I will tell hon. Members exactly what I think. I think that this is a deliberate move by the Government, as part of their policy to remove the Department of Employment and the spotlight on unemployment and on the work that is being done on workfare. They are transferring different aspects of work, one by one, into a long series of Departments, so as to spread them out.

Health and safety go to one place and TECs go to another; all the different aspects of our work have been spread about. It is all part of a confidence trick by the Government, in an attempt to remove the attention of the public from the reality of the existing and unacceptable unemployment.

I will get on with it by congratulating the hon. Member for Norfolk, North, whose work on workfare has been prodigious and without whom our Committee would not have undertaken it. That work has led us not only to interview witnesses in this country but to interview them in the United States. The Government have said that they intend to rely on the experience of the United States when proposing ideas about workfare.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Norfolk, North because it is as a result of his persistence that at least someone is listening. I hope that we shall hear from him, because the main reason why, if the Committee is to go, it should not go until we know what is happening, is that otherwise it will not be possible to complete the type of report on workfare that the House deserves.

I will get on with it by saying to the right hon. Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) that he should be more temperate in his language when he is trying to get rid of a Committee whose members have worked happily and in great harmony together for a long time, who have done a superb job in a series of investigations and reports and who want to complete their work properly in a way that is in accordance with the traditions of the House.

We are considering three reports. One report is about TECs. It is possible for us to complete that. It will not be as full as we would want, but it can be done. Secondly, we have a report about employment statistics. That, standing on its own, is of great importance, whatever view—jaundiced or affectionate—anyone may take of the disgraceful way in which the Government publish their employment statistics. I am not surprised that the Government do not want the report, but the Committee wants it. It wants it in its own right and also because it forms the basis of the report that we shall produce on workfare.

One right hon. Gentleman has said, "Well, what does it matter? You can bring your report out on workfare even if you do not know the statistics." That is exactly the sort of rubbish which I will get on with, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer is unlikely to take any interest in a report on workfare based on statistics when other statistics are likely to appear at any minute at the Government's own request.

The question that I was going to ask the Leader of the House, which he stifled at its birth but which he may wish to revive when he replies, is simply as follows. Will he please guarantee that the Committee will have the report of Mr. David Steel before it for a reasonable time before it must pack in, before the Government get rid of it and before the Government get on with their task of getting rid of unemployment by putting it into the Education Select Committee and into a Sub-Committee? Everyone knows that a parliamentary Sub-Committee is a cul-de-sac into which ideas are lured, there to be quietly strangled to death.

We do not want a Sub-Committee; we want the Employment Select Committee to be allowed to continue its work until the end of the current Session.

Sir Terence Higgins (Worthing): The end of the Session is tomorrow, as I understand it.

Mr. Janner: The end of the Session is tomorrow, which is precisely why the debate is tonight—so that there will not be enough hon. Members in the House to vote on it, so that the payroll vote may steamroller any effort that we make. The right hon. Gentleman is absolutely right and I thank him so much for drawing attention to my error.

We want the Committee to continue its work until the end of the Parliament. If it cannot be to the end of the Parliament, at least let it be until such time as we can bring out our report, not only on the statistics but on the effect that that has on the workfare report.

Every member of the Committee—with the possible exception of two Conservative Members, neither of whom is present—agrees that the level of unemployment, even though, happily, it is lower than it was, is unacceptable. Members of the Committee also agree that the idea that people should be paid for not working when they wish to work, and that they should not pay taxes when they would much prefer to be working and earning and paying taxes, when they are doing nothing with their time but rotting in unemployment—which is a hateful disgrace in modern society—is unacceptable.

We are considering ways in which that can be made better. We cannot guarantee that we shall all agree with the hon. Member for Norfolk, North, but at least let us consider the ideas properly. *[Interruption.]* The Leader of the House is being passed a billet-doux.

If the Leader of the House is determined to limit his flexibility, in what he chooses to call a compromise, to 1 March 1996, will he at least give us the absolute guarantee that the Committee will have that report before it? I would respectfully suggest that he should look again and consider whether the rush is unseemly.

The right hon. Gentleman has said that there are no real precedents for the change. With respect, I disagree. He referred to the Science and Technology Select Committee, which he described as in migration from one Department to another. I know that we are at the time of autumn mists and that birds migrate, but that Committee has not been migrated.

The Science and Technology Committee considers the work of the Office of Science and Technology. Until July, it came under the Cabinet Office, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was the responsible Minister. Now it comes under the Department of Trade and Industry. The Government do not intend to abolish the Science and Technology Committee, which, if each Committee is meant to monitor a Department, they should; they will keep it going. It is not subsumed by the Trade and Industry Select Committee, as it would be if there were logic in the right hon. Gentleman's intention to get rid of the Employment Select Committee in that way.

Nor would this be the first time that there had been a delay in removing a Committee. On one occasion, changes to the Standing Orders of the House were delayed after a change in the departmental structure of government. The Department of Health and Social Services was split in summer 1988 and the Select Committee on Social Services was not split into two separate Committees until October 1990. It is a matter of the extent to which the Government permit the work of the House, and especially the work of the Departments and the work done by the Departments, to be carried out properly.

The principle that I mentioned, of "one Department, one Committee", has already been tempered by flexibility, but it must be tempered by more flexibility. It would make much more sense to allow the Select Committee on

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Education to continue its work until the end of the Parliament. The Government should allow the Select Committee on Employment to continue its work until the end of the Parliament, when the Committee and some of its members would, regrettably, depart. But until then, they could do the job required of them by Parliament through the sensible monitoring system that exists.

The hon. Member for Norfolk, North will speak for himself. We on the Committee are determined to try, within the time limits that we are given by the House, to carry out our work in a way that brings credit to the House. We cannot properly monitor the work of the Department of Employment, as it was, if we are to have only four months to do so and no power to start any new reports. We shall have to wind up what we are doing and continue our work as a Select Committee—but we are at the tail end of the job.

It is the submission of all but two members of the Employment Select Committee, which I am privileged to chair, that the new arrangements are a mistake. That mistake will prevent the Committee from doing its job properly and has occurred owing to the inflexible approach adopted. The mistake could be avoided very simply—Parliament cannot continue much longer. I ask the Leader of the House, even at this late stage, to think again and see whether flexibility can be extended in a way that does credit to the House.

5.3 pm

Mr. Iain Mills (Meriden): I agree with my colleague, the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner), who chairs the Committee: we need more time. I shall not speak for long as we have only a short time for the debate.

We have achieved inward investment from Toyota, Honda and others. The Committee has not achieved that on its own, but it has used its influence to ensure that those companies have invested here. It is a great shame that the Committee is to be abolished. The Select Committee on Education cannot replicate the work of the Select Committee on Employment. I feel passionately that the Select Committee on Education cannot replicate the job creation aspects of the Employment Select Committee.

All I ask is that we should have a few more months—there is nothing else that we can ask for. We cannot ask for the Employment Select Committee to be recreated, but our achievements should be placed on record. I hope that *Hansard* will tonight record the inward investment achievements and the help and encouragement that the Employment Select Committee has given to various firms to locate in this country. We should have a little longer to conclude our arrangements.

5.5 pm

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West): I support my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) and my other colleagues who are members of the Committee. Clearly, we are not likely to succeed in changing the view of the Leader of the House tonight to the extent that he will allow us to continue to the end of the Parliament. But if he expects us to lie down, roll over and die, he has made a grave mistake.

I am sorry that the debate had to take place at the fag end of the parliamentary Session, which has meant that not many hon. Members are here to make the comments that they would want to make on the way in which the Government have sought to forget about employment by burying it within the Department for Education and Employment. The Government have attempted to suggest that their responsibility for getting people into work is based solely on training. A quick résumé of the Government's work on training and their success in getting people into employment would soon dispel any belief that the Government have made a serious attempt to use training as a basis on which to reduce unemployment. I am sure that the Leader of the House could not name a successful Government scheme today to convince members of the Employment Select Committee, whether Government or Opposition Members, that the Government's policy has worked.

Our investigation of the various training initiatives introduced by the Government under the guise of getting people back to work reveals an abysmal success rate. The work that we are currently undertaking with the training and enterprise councils has demonstrated how the TEC system has failed. The previous Secretary of State for Employment travelled to Boston, studied the private industry councils and thought that they were a good way of directly involving business people. He brought the policy back to this country; it was introduced in England and Wales as TEC and in Scotland as local enterprise companies. The policy was supposed to be the driving force to tackle unemployment, but the TECs' and LECs' record on getting people back to work is abysmal.

During our present inquiry into the work of TECs, we recently interviewed TEC personnel. Some TECs no longer exist because of the way in which they were run. They could not run themselves properly, but they were supposed to reduce the levels of long-term unemployed. The Government's record on training is abysmal. The Leader of the House must work harder if he wants to convince the Select Committee on Employment that, by abolishing the Department of Employment and placing the emphasis on training, the Government can tackle the present unemployment problem.

As my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West said, the Leader of the House will also have to consider the fact that, in the past, when a Department has disappeared, the Committee monitoring it has not necessarily disappeared. My hon. and learned Friend mentioned the Select Committee on Science and Technology and I should be interested to hear what the Leader of the House has to say in response to his comments.

It beggars belief that the Leader of the House and the Government thought that the Select Committee on Employment would simply lie down and die, and become a Sub-Committee of the newly formed Committee. Such a proposal does not tackle the serious problem of unemployment. People who are at present unemployed want to make a contribution. They currently believe that they cannot make a contribution, either on their own behalf or on behalf of their families. They are regularly attacked by Conservative Members as people who do not want to work or make a contribution, but want to live off the state.

The Government have decided that the best way to end unemployment is to abolish the Department that deals with it, thereby confusing people and trying to convince them that unemployment is no longer the Government's responsibility. That method will not work; it certainly will not work with us this afternoon. It is unlikely that we shall be able to change the mind of the Leader of the House, but we shall certainly make an effort to do so. We certainly shall not let the debate finish this afternoon until we have heard one or two better reasons.

I accept what the Leader of the House has said about the compromises that he believes himself to have made, although I shall not comment on whether they have been made through the usual channels or on whether they are acceptable. However, we require more persuasive, reasonable and sensible arguments from the right hon. Gentleman if we are to accept the need to do away with a Select Committee that has sole responsibility for considering employment and ensuring that the Government's attention is focused on it.

5.9 pm

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): I apologise to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House for missing his opening remarks. I was at a meeting.

I rise to speak only because, having heard two speeches, I well understand the disappointment of members of a Select Committee—and its Chairman, who has done his best to monitor the action of the Department involved—when the Department ceases to exist. I do not wish to become involved in an argument about whether there should be a Department of Employment or a Department for Education and Employment, although that strikes me as being part of the purpose of the debate; I heard what the hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross) had to say about such matters as training, but it is clear to me that training will have to be dealt with by the new Department. My hon. Friend the Member for Meriden (Mr. Mills) mentioned investment, which will have to be dealt with by the Department of Trade and Industry.

As Chairman of the Procedure Committee, I have fought long and hard for each Department to retain its Select Committee, and for the Committees to monitor the work of their Departments. I have proved that over the years with the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs and the Select Committee on Northern Ireland—we had to fight for a long time to obtain that. When the Department of Health and Social Security was split into two Departments, I ensured that separate Committees were set up to monitor the two aspects of its work.

If I use that argument, however, I cannot continue to argue that there should be a Select Committee when there is no Minister or Department for it to monitor. I am slightly surprised that the Department of Employment has not been cut off completely and all its work transferred, but I am pleased that the Government have been flexible enough to try to ensure that the Employment Committee's work will not be wasted. A date has been given for the completion of that work. It is true that no new work will be started, but the new work must be done by a Committee that will monitor a Minister. The idea of starting new work when there is no Minister to monitor strikes me as very strange, even if it involves examining only what has happened in the past. The only person who can respond to the Committee's report—and the reports that are published after, or up to, the end of March—will be the new Secretary of State for Education and Employment. The idea that we can retain a Committee that is monitoring a Minister who does not exist is very odd.

Mr. Janner: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his many courtesies over the years, and not least for what he has said today. Surely he accepts, however, that the Minister who responds to the report will be the Minister in charge of the Department that is now dealing with the matter concerned. If the report is on employment statistics, for instance, it will be dealt with by the Treasury; if it is on training and enterprise councils or workfare, it will be dealt with by the Department for Education and Employment. There may not be a Minister representing a Department that has been abolished, but Ministers will reply to reports on matters that are within the ambit of their responsibilities.

Sir Peter Emery: The hon. and learned Gentleman may or may not be correct. I assume that all the reports from the existing Select Committee on Employment will be dealt with by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment at first, although it is for her to decide whether to refer them elsewhere.

In any event, I cannot—on behalf of the Procedure Committee—say that it is in the interests of the House to set the precedent that Select Committees can continue to monitor when there is no one to monitor. I must support my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House: I believe that he is taking the right step, and is being generous in setting the end of March as the time by which members of the Committee can complete their work.

5.15 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Let me make three brief points. I listened carefully to the eloquent speech of the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner), the Chairman of the Employment Select Committee; it was what we have come to expect of such a distinguished parliamentarian. I would hate him to think that the House does not appreciate the work that the Committee has done so far—work which has been informative and of high quality, and which has held the Department firmly to account. The House is in the Committee's debt, and I should not like any member of the Committee to think otherwise. It provides an example of what can be done by a Select Committee.

Having said that, however, I think that what is being done is logical. My party has always perceived the elegant synergy between the Department for Education and training and employment, and I was quite happy when the Government made their decision earlier this year. It has left some rough edges, of course, and it will take some time for the House to get used to the idea of the new demarcation and allocation of responsibilities—some of which were not handled very deftly; I would have put some of the bits and pieces in different Departments. It will also take us some time to get out of the habit of referring directly to the Department of Employment.

Although I support the motion, I feel that the eloquent pleas made by Committee members for time to enable them to complete their reports are entirely proper. I hope that the House will do nothing to disturb that work, enabling it to be completed in good time.

Finally, I should like an assurance from the Leader of the House about the position of minority parties in Select Committees. I do not believe that there is a place for such parties on either the Employment Committee or the

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Education Committee at present. I should hate to think that, if we adopted the habit of folding Sub-Committees into departmental Committees, that would prejudice the precious few places that minority parties currently have.

There is an argument—although this is not the time to advance it—for providing a place on all departmental Committees for parties such as mine, and for nationalist parties such as the Ulster Unionist party in its various complexions. We often feel that we are under-represented. I know that it is preferable to have small executive Committees to do the work, and by and large they do it very well, but I fear that setting up Committees with Sub-Committees may freeze out the possibility of securing an appropriate number of places for minority parties.

Provided that the Leader of the House can reassure me that he will be diligent in protecting the rights and interests of minority parties—and given the thanks that are due to the Committee for the work that it has done to date—I believe that the motion should be supported.

5.19 pm

Sir Ralph Howell (Norfolk, North): I am glad that the Government have gone as far as they have in letting the Select Committee on Employment continue until the end of February, but I hope that they will listen to this debate and go further, because they are making a serious mistake. Unemployment is the biggest problem that confronts the advanced world and merely trying to hide it in another Department will not solve the problem. That will not help the Government. I ask them to take this matter seriously.

To try to mix education and unemployment in a Committee will not work as the people who are interested in education and the people who are likely to be interested in unemployment are as different as chalk and cheese. To try to put them into one Committee is not acceptable and that will prove to be so.

I congratulate the Government on doing away with the Department of Employment. I thank the Chairman of the Select Committee on Employment for his kind remarks about myself and the right to work/workfare inquiry that I initiated. He is wrong in worrying too much about the old Department of Employment. I found that it was inward looking and, over many years, nothing but obstructive, so I have no problem with its disappearance.

It seems obvious, however, that in the Department for Education and Employment, there must be two separate Departments. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Employment is perfectly capable of looking after those two sectors, but she could very well report to two separate Select Committees. I hope that serious consideration will be given to that matter.

To confine those of us on the Select Committee on Employment to a shorter period will not enable us to get to the bottom of what we need to do.

Mr. David Nicholson (Taunton): Whether the old Department for Education and the old Department of Employment will satisfactorily gel together remains to be seen, but my hon. Friend is right in saying, as paragraph 3 of the Employment Select Committee special report points out, that there is considerable doubt that the Select Committee on Education and the Select Committee on Employment will gel together, especially in the last year of a Parliament. If that were being done at the beginning of a Parliament, I would understand it, but to do it at the fag end of a Parliament, when it has months to run, is eccentric.

Sir Ralph Howell: I am grateful for that intervention. It reminds me of Question Time today. It is crazy to have education questions and employment questions all muddled up on the Order Paper. They should be in two separate halves, so that we can examine those issues properly and sensibly.

I am especially concerned in relation to the statistical evidence and the report that we are compiling. We need that report as soon as possible, but I doubt that we shall get it before the end of January. We shall then require a lot of time to consider it and the Government will need to consider the statistics much more closely than they have in the past. Again, the Government are doing themselves no service in trying to fob off the unemployment problem as if, because it is falling a little, all is well. All is not well.

A total of 2.25 million people are doing nothing. Even on Government figures, that is costing £11.4 billion, which is a total waste as society gets nothing in return. Those figures, however, do not stand up to examination. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said in October 1992, when she was Secretary of State for Employment only, that the cost of an unemployed person was £9,000 a year. In today's terms, the cost must be at least £10,000 a year. With 2.3 million people unemployed, that works out at £23 billion, so it is no good the Treasury telling us that unemployment is costing only £11.4 billion.

In 1979, 612,000 people were claiming invalidity benefit; that has risen to the huge figure of 1.8 million—1.25 million more people. If one adds the number claiming invalidity benefit in 1979 to the number claiming unemployment benefit at that time, it comes to 1.7 million; the figure now is 4.2 million. We need to know how well we are doing and to get to the bottom of the matter. The Government are intent on cutting public expenditure. That is the only sector where public expenditure could be cut, because there is that enormous figure of waste. I do not know whether the Government figure of only £11.4 billion is right or whether the correct figure is £23 billion or £27 billion, as Labour said in 1992, but I am confident that that is a big sector of waste and one that must be dealt with.

It will be impossible to persuade the mixed Committee, sub-committees or whatever one wishes to introduce, to be as effective as one Committee looking after one subject. This is an important subject. It will remain so and it is no good the Government trying to sweep it under the carpet.

5.26 pm

Sir Terence Higgins (Worthing): The first part of the motions relates to the creation of the Public Service Committee and the abolition, effectively, of the Select Committee on Treasury and Civil Service. I am second to none in believing that the changes that we undertook nearly 15 years ago in the Select Committee system have been the biggest improvement in increasing ministerial accountability to the House, probably even this century. This matter is therefore of great importance and it is right that we should debate it this afternoon. Having said that, I believe that the strength of those reforms lay in the fact that the Select Committee system became departmentally related. If one were to divert from that, the system would be greatly weakened.

Over the years—and I have had a lot to do with this matter in the intervening period—there has been considerable concern when the departmental structure has changed and when the Select Committees have had to be adjusted to meet that, but I have no doubt that that has been essential and, generally speaking, it has been done almost immediately or as quickly as possible. There was only one exception—and that was not a happy one—involving the Select Committee on Social Security,

On the proposed structure, we can take a lesson from the experience of the Treasury and Civil Service Committee, which has a Sub-Committee that deals largely with civil service issues. I have been well aware of the passion—I think that that is a fair description—felt by the Chairman of the Select Committee on Employment, the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner), my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North (Sir R. Howell) and others on that point, and, as Chairman of the Liaison Committee, I have listened as carefully as possible to the various points that have been put to me.

The initial view was that the change should happen immediately and that that should be that, but I was influenced by the arguments advanced, as was my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, and two important changes have been made, one of which gives the new Select Committee on Education and Employment the power to set up a formal Sub-Committee, which is a considerable power. Only the Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Treasury and Civil Service Select Committees have such a power, so that is an innovation.

Over my 12 years' experience on the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, the Sub-Committee dealing with civil service matters was not particularly subsidiary. It is true that at the end of the day, the main Committee stamps the decisions that have been taken, but it has proved an effective method of working. The work carried out by that Sub-Committee has been of great importance. It has produced major changes in proposals for the civil service and so on. There is no reason why that should not be the case for the new Committee.

There is a problem about manning the Sub-Committee. That is why the Leader of the House's proposal to increase the membership of the Committee is so important. No doubt, to some extent there will be some continuity of membership with the two previous Committees.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House has suggested that the change should not be carried out immediately, as is the case with the Public Service Committee, but that it should be carried out by March next year. I hope that that enables the Committee to complete its work, particularly the proposals on workfare, which it might be true to say have been the life work of my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North. He has done a tremendous job and is now in sight of a major step forward. It may be that the Committee's report will have considerable influence. I am anxious that that should be completed.

In recent weeks, my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and I have sat through 39 sittings of the Nolan committee, so we are seriously biased about this matter. We might feel that the Employment Committee could fit in some extra sittings. I would have thought that 39 sittings between now and the end of February would be roughly equivalent to what we did. The hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West and my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North could probably fit that in.

I hope that this is a reasonable compromise and that it will enable the Committee to complete its work. Members of the new Committee will adopt a new guise, but some aspects of the Committee's work are certainly linked. For example, training and education have a close relationship.

If we were to perpetuate the existence of the Employment Committee, as the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West has suggested, there would be a split into various separate Departments—Education and Employment, Environment, Treasury and Trade and Industry. It would be a mess. Nobody would know which Secretary of State would be called before the Committee next. If the Committee is clearly the Education and Employment Committee, that is the Secretary of State whom the Committee is responsible for monitoring. If we are not to fragment the entire Committee system, that is the only sensible way forward. I hope that, on reflection, hon. Members and Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen will go along with it.

I pay sincere tribute to the substantial and important work carried out over a considerable time by the Select Committee on Employment. Sad though it is, I hope that, on balance, this is the right way forward.

5.33 pm

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): This is an important debate and, as has been said by the Chairman of the Procedure Committee and the Chairman of the Liaison Committee, it is more than just a technical adjustment of our Standing Orders. It is an opportunity to praise the work of hon. Members who serve on Select Committees. Those Committees are sometimes the unsung part of Parliament. They are not usually on television and are not part of the party political battle or the cockpit of policy debate in the Chamber. Nevertheless, the Committees form a vital part of the work of the House.

The tragedy is that, until the implementation of the improvements brought about by the changes for the next Session, the House has never really taken seriously or devoted enough time to the work and the reports of the Committees. It is good that, following the resolutions passed last week as a result of the Jopling proposals, there will be an opportunity in the next Session to debate some of the Select Committee reports on the Floor of the House on at least three Wednesday mornings. The sooner my colleagues from both sides of the House who sit on the Employment Select Committee proceed with the three important reports on which they are working, the sooner they will be available to the Liaison Committee for selection for debate on the Floor of the House. That is important.

This is a sensible compromise. I accept the thrust of the Leader of the House's remarks. I share the disquiet of the Chairman of the Employment Committee, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner), because we are mindful of the fact that employment matters do not disappear into a black hole. That point has been made by hon. Members on both sides of the House, but the Opposition are particularly mindful of it. The activities of the Department are being split up and it is not always easy to target what the Government

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are doing to solve unemployment. Are we intent on eradicating mass unemployment? That is a serious issue which needs to be faced. It will come home to haunt the Government in due course.

The Employment Committee has about three and a half months left to complete its work. The Chairman of the Liaison Committee, the right hon. Member for Worthing (Sir T. Higgins), mentioned the work of the Nolan committee. I am not sure whether the Employment Committee has the power to sit in a recess, but the Christmas recess will fall within those three and a half months. The Committee needs an opportunity to complete its work on the reports on training and enterprise councils, workfare and employment statistics. That work must be finished by 1 March, not the end of March as was mentioned by the Chairman of the Procedure Committee.

Fifteen or 16 years ago we voted on setting up the departmental Select Committees. I do not know how many hon. Members voted against setting up those Committees, but I was one of them. As I have said before, I did that because I did not believe that they would produce reports that were good enough and I did not believe that they would have sufficient teeth. On balance, experience has proved me wrong. They have provided hon. Members with a good oversight of the work of Departments which was not available to them before. The Committees are able to target a Department. If I had my way—some of my hon. Friends agree with me—I would target much more closely the work of a Department by raising other matters that fall well outside this debate.

The Committees deal with the structure of government and it is important that the House should take cognisance of the machinery of government. It is a little like the Opposition Front Bench. Over the past few years the Opposition have experimented by appointing shadow spokesmen on certain issues without a Minister for them to shadow. On balance, that is not a satisfactory arrangement for our Front Bench. With a change of Government we would form the machinery of government. The departmental Select Committees should reflect the work of the Departments. That is the only sensible way to operate.

It is important to set up a Committee to shadow the work of the Deputy Prime Minister and his colleagues. It is clear that an empire is being built in Whitehall and that it will have to be accountable to the House. Tempers might become a little short because there were many questions that the Deputy Prime Minister was unable to answer in the House. When he is before a Select Committee he will not be able to dodge them in the same way as he has in recent weeks. It is important that that Committee should begin its work early in the new Session.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) made a plea on behalf of the minor parties. He and I are in favour of strict proportionality in many matters. If there were to be a representative from a minor party on every Select Committee, the minor parties would be over-represented and I could not approve of that. The hon. Gentleman knows how the calculation is carried out. In the totality of Select Committee places, the minor parties receive their representation according to the proportions of the House. I understand that that means that many major Select Committees do not have minor party input and I understand the frustration that that causes.

I want to raise a not unimportant matter. Last week we passed new Standing Orders relating to the Jopling changes. Yesterday we passed new Standing Orders relating to the Nolan changes. Today, we are passing new Standing Orders relating to what I call the reshuffle changes. Therefore, I expect a very early reprint of Standing Orders, by the start of the new Session, because we already have at least two supplements, not counting the changes that I have just listed. There is no question that HMSO does wonders; the way that it produces our parliamentary papers is an incredible operation. The Standing Orders should be brought up to date before the beginning of the new Session.

I understand the concerns of hon. Members on both sides of the House who have worked hard on the Employment Select Committee. I wish them well in the work that they still have to do in finishing the three vital reports. However, the sooner the reports are available, the sooner we can put pressure on the Liaison Committee to look at them in a bid for proper debate on the Floor of the House. It is certainly a neglected area of our constitution.

5.41 pm

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to all hon. Members who have spoken in the debate. If I was mildly irritated by anything, it was one or two remarks suggesting that I was trying to smuggle something through in some curious way. As I said in my speech, there has been widespread pressure to sort out the Select Committees for the new Departments and the others that I am proposing before the start of the next Session, so if I had not taken this initiative people would have asked why I was dragging my feet and not getting on with the job.

I feel bound to observe—I hope in a friendly fashion—that the notion that this early hour on a Tuesday in early November, widely advertised in a business statement two weeks ago as a day on which Parliament would be sitting to do business, is somehow an unreasonable time to debate a matter in which hon. Members are interested strikes even me, an enthusiast for the Jopling changes, as going a bit too far. However, I shall say no more about that.

The hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross), in his characteristically moderate way—and I mean that, even though he used a slightly overheated phrase—said that the Committee would not lie down and die. I never expected that it would, especially in view of the nature of some of its members. I am sure that, not unreasonably, they will continue to make their points.

I say to my hon. Friends the Members for Meriden (Mr. Mills) and for Norfolk, North (Sir R. Howell), as well as other hon. Members on both sides of the House, that I am glad that we have given them an opportunity to remind everyone of what the Committee has achieved. It has enabled me to pay tribute to it for the work that it has done. Actually, the loyalty being shown today by its members and the claims that they are making for their reports confirm my view about the merits of Select Committees as a whole and the important contribution they make—even though I am bound to say that my views on how they should be structured have not changed.

I was asked a number of specific points. First, on the point raised by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) about a reprint of Standing Orders, I have been handed a note that I am trying to digest. I understand that a new volume of Standing Orders will be printed for the start of the next Session, with all the Nolan, Jopling and other changes included. I hope that that will help the hon. Gentleman—although it may not be so helpful to the Labour Deputy Chief Whip, the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon), whom I am delighted to see in the Chamber. I noticed earlier that he was clutching a dog-eared copy of the Standing Orders. No doubt he uses them as his bible whenever he wants to stir up trouble and create difficulties—*[Interruption.]* I am being attacked from behind by the Government Deputy Chief Whip, my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight). If ever there was a mafia, the Deputy Chief Whips from the two sides of the House must be its core members.

I was grateful to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) for his remarks about minority parties. The hon. Member for Perry Barr answered on my behalf and made the right two points—that it is a matter for the Committee of Selection and that there is a global way of taking account of the representation of minority parties. If the hon. Gentleman were to make strong representations to the Chairman of the Selection Committee about his wish to serve on the new Employment and Education Committee, I am sure that proper weight would be given to that request within the overall position.

The hon. Member for Perry Barr bounced me with the question whether Select Committees could meet in recesses, to which the answer is yes. An oddity that I have resolved, while setting up the new Standards and Privileges Committee, is the fact that our oldest Committees have not been able to meet during recesses although the new Committees have been able to do so. I have brought the old Committees into line with the new ones.

If it is the ambition of the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner), the hon. Member for Wallasey (Ms Eagle) or any other hon. Member to meet in the recess, 39 meetings between now and the end of February might prove to be a modest target. After all, the Select Committee considering the Nolan report, which I chaired, managed to meet on that number of occasions despite having been able to fit in only three meetings during the summer recess. Therefore, in a remarkably short House sitting time the Committee did a great deal of work. Indeed, in many weeks it sat for two or three hours, three or four days a week. I commend that example to the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West in view of his desire to complete the work that he has undertaken.

The hon. and learned Gentleman asked me to listen. I hope that I have shown that I have done so. Indeed, I have read the report published by his Committee. I have it here—it has a little red sticker on it saying "Immediate". My office was concerned that I should see the report almost hot off the press. I have also read the extensive letter that the hon. and learned Gentleman wrote to my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Sir T. Higgins), the Chairman of the Liaison Committee, on 24 October.

The problem is that, having studied the report and read the letter, I had already heard all the arguments to which he is now asking me to respond and already responded to them in the points I made earlier, for example, a bigger Committee than intended, a considerable extension of time compared with what had been originally proposed and the power to create a Sub-Committee. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing said, the power to appoint a Sub-Committee was rubbished by the hon. and learned Gentleman as a way of burying or losing things. He should tell that to the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice), who chaired the Civil Service Sub-Committee of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, which produced a report that has formed the basis of a new code. It was an effective and important report produced by a Sub-Committee.

At the end of the day, however reasonable I am and however much I would claim to have demonstrated my overwhelming reasonableness by the changes that I have already made, I cannot make any more.

Mr. Janner: I deeply regret what the Leader of the House has said in such good humour. Will he at least answer the question about the Central Statistical Office report that is due at the end of January and give the requested assurance to members of the Committee, so that we can at least have some hope of completing the work on that report well before the Committee is dissolved?

Mr. Newton: The hon. and learned Gentleman mentioned the end of January in his letter—I understand that the likely date is either the end of January or mid-February—and it was one of the matters that I took into account. All in all, it is a reasonable compromise.

There is no doubt that it would be very messy if we did what the hon. and learned Gentleman and some members of his Committee have pressed for. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing said, we should then have a Committee interrelating with four Departments of State and four Departments of State trying to interrelate with a number of Committees. It would not be very long before that produced considerable problems for my right hon. Friend the Chairman of the Liaison Committee as a succession of Committee Chairmen came to tell him that someone was poaching on their territory and that they could not do business like that.

As not only a reasonable man but very much a pragmatic man, I think that what I have proposed is, on balance, the best that I can do.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That Standing Order No. 130 (Select committees related to government departments) be amended—

(1) with effect from the beginning of the next Session—

(a) by inserting the following item after item 10 in the Table in paragraph (2):

> "Public Service/Office of Public Service (but excluding the drafting of bills by the Parliamentary Counsel Office)/11/3";

(b) in item 14 in the said Table, after the word 'Industry' in column 2, by inserting the words '(but excluding the Office of Science and Technology)';

(c) in item 16 in the said Table, by leaving out the words "and Civil Service" in column 1 and, in column 2, the words from "Treasury" in line 65 to "Board" in line 69; and

(d) in paragraph (3) by leaving out the words 'and Civil Service'; and

(2) with effect from Friday 1st March—

(a) by leaving out items 3 and 4 in the Table in paragraph (2) and inserting the following item:

> "Education and Employment/Department for Education and Employment/13/4"; and

(b) in paragraph (3) by inserting at the beginning the words "The Education and Employment Committee,".

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ordered,

That Cheryl Gillan and Mr. William Powell be discharged from the Science and Technology Committee and Mr. Ian Bruce and Mr. Patrick Thompson be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. MacKay, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]*

PETITION

Naval Personnel

5.50 pm

Mr. David Jamieson (Plymouth, Devonport): I wish to present a petition on behalf of former naval personnel who were exposed to asbestos in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s but who cannot claim compensation because of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947. Many of these naval personnel are now suffering from terminal illness.

The petition reads:

> To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.
>
> The Humble Petition of the people of Plymouth and Devon Sheweth that naval veterans of the armed services are seeking redress for the serious illness caused by exposure to asbestos on the warships on which they served.
>
> Wherefore your Humble Petitioners pray that your honourable House will urgently investigate the situation of affected servicemen and take steps to ensure that they are adequately cared for.
>
> And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

The petition was collected by the Plymouth *Evening Herald* which, as you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, is an excellent newspaper. It is signed by Bill Luck, a constituent of mine who is suffering from the effects of asbestos, and by Alan Cooper and Sharon Wright from the *Evening Herald* who have done so much to bring the matter to the public's attention in our area. It is also signed by 13,000 other people in the Plymouth area.

To lie upon the Table.

East Sussex (Government Funding)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. McLoughlin.]*

5.52 pm

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): Not only was it a reasonable hour to have the previous debate, as my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House pointed out, but it is a reasonable hour for this debate.

This is the final substantive debate of the parliamentary year, and it is only correct that a debate that covers a frightfully important subject affecting East Sussex, which can be said to be the font of parliamentary democracy in that Parliament was first set up after the battle of Lewes, should be the one with which to end the parliamentary year. I am speaking on behalf of all my right hon. and hon. Friends from East Sussex and with whom I have discussed the subject of this debate. Some of them may contribute later.

As a final word of introduction, I should like to say what a great pleasure it is that the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, Central (Sir P. Beresford), is to respond to the debate. He must know more about local government than almost anyone else in the House. The debate is, of course, on various aspects of local government funding. As we have time on our side for once, I hope to cover a broad spectrum of subjects of which I have given my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary notice.

I deal first with the overall level of rate support grant for East Sussex. On the basis of the Chancellor's Budget statement last year, East Sussex county council is projecting an allowable increase of no more than 0.5 per cent. in 1996-97 and 1997-98. Followed through, that would mean a gap in resources of something like £16 million per annum, which means an 8 per cent. or £32 million reduction over the next two years.

It is open to question whether that projection by the Chancellor, which of course applies to overall Government funding for all Government expenditure, will be applied to the rate support grant in East Sussex or, indeed, anywhere else. Were it to apply, the county council has pointed out that it would lead to substantial reductions in the budgets for which it is responsible.

The county council has not attempted to announce its priorities or to give any guidance at all in the consideration of the budget for next year. It has, however, spread reductions pro rata across the board. In so doing, it has not acted as responsibly as it could have done and has certainly given no leadership in terms of consideration of what the reductions might be. For the interest of the House, I shall cite one or two examples.

The county council has suggested a reduction of £9.5 million in its education budget, a matter with which I shall deal later. It has suggested a reduction of £1.5 million for roads and transportation, a reduction of £300,000 for libraries and the arts and a £750,000 reduction for the fire service—although it would probably not be allowed to make such a cut as it would be contrary to Home Office requirements, which might reassure people living in the county. The council has proposed a cut of £3 million in its social services budget. Incidentally, that is a most peculiar cut, as the council has a £4 million surplus in its social services budget at this very moment.

I fear that the council is once again stirring up great concern among many people about what it might have to do were something or other to happen elsewhere.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith (Wealden): My hon. Friend mentioned that the council was stirring up feelings. I can assure him that I have received some 500 letters from parents, many of whom who are shocked and appalled by the conclusions to which they have been driven by that report. Some believe that the county council will be compelled to introduce monumental cuts which will savage the educational system in East Sussex.

Mr. Rathbone: My hon. Friend is absolutely right to draw attention to that fact. I shall deal with so-called education cuts in a moment.

The county council claims that its administrative costs are among the lowest in the country and that steps have already been taken to reduce expenses by cutting down on top management posts. I am not in a position to assess the validity of such claims, but, in view of his deep knowledge of local government, perhaps my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary is.

The district auditor has accepted that any reductions in expenditure will be difficult to achieve. He pointed out that net expenditure on services is already well below the county median per head of population and that East Sussex ranks 28th out of the 39 English county areas. He also said that the county is in a sound financial state. In spite of the auditor's report, there are some questionable aspects of policy and expenditure. I shall cite three by way of illustration, although they are in no way exclusive.

In education, for example, £1.2 million of savings have been identified and are being achieved through the improved administration of school meals. I understand that only £500,000 has so far been allowed in this year's budget. That of itself allows considerable budget leeway, which is pretty important, as I shall remind the House when I speak specifically about education. It also raises the question, however, of whether similar administrative savings can be made elsewhere in education and, indeed, in other departments.

In social services, even though the county threatens the closure of homes and day centres, there is an apparent surplus of £4 million—unspent—in this year's social services budget. If that is the case, or, indeed, if it is anywhere near the truth, it is near criminal that the county council is stirring up so many worries in people's minds about the cuts in social service expenditure—which it has done.

Mrs. Jacqui Lait (Hastings and Rye): Is my hon. Friend aware that, in each of its 700 beds, social services pays itself £100 a week per person more than it is prepared to pay the private sector? It could, in fact, save itself another £4 million if it were to pay itself the same rate as it is prepared to pay the independent sector.

Mr. Rathbone: My hon. Friend is exactly right. To the best of my knowledge, the cost of keeping somebody in a county council rest home is in the region of £295 a week, whereas the cost to the county council of a person being in an independently run rest home is about £195 per week. If one extrapolates, the figure comes to about £4 million—an extremely large amount of money, particularly in the light of the county's enormous cost-cutting suggestions.

[Mr. Rathbone]

Having said all that, I know that there are matters of genuine concern. One is the cost of local government reorganisation. In that, East Sussex is unique in England, since in Brighton and Hove a joint unitary authority is being created out of two boroughs. I do not believe that there is any other instance of that anywhere in the country. That makes the matter very much more complicated than elsewhere, and considerable extra costs in preparing for that reorganisation are already being incurred.

From all accounts, there is a great spirit of co-operation between Brighton, Hove and East Sussex, and all the work together is going well; but, as far as I know, there is no additional Government allowance to cover the added cost to East Sussex, which is of genuine concern to the county.

A second matter of genuine concern is related to the technical question of the area cost adjustment. As the House will know, Ministers are inspecting the application of the area cost adjustment—the way in which local authorities in the south-east of England benefit from additional Government funding to meet the higher cost of providing services in that area. That comes to a substantial amount of money overall: £28 million a year, which is equivalent to about £100 on the average council tax bill.

I understand that, as that process is being reviewed in the coming year, there is a real risk that some of that money, if not all, will be withdrawn from the south-east of England and redistributed to other parts of England, which would leave the county in an extremely difficult budgetary situation unless an extra grant were made available to make up for it.

The third aspect of genuine concern—my concern may not carry all hon. Members—is the effect of capping. In an area where the vast majority of households pay council tax, local government can be held, and be seen to be held, responsible and answerable for its spending plans. With the reduction of the rates support grant as a proportion of the county council's total expenditure, that answerability is of course even further enhanced.

At the moment, for every £1 million that the council decides to spend over the rates support grant, approximately £3.75 is added to band D council tax bills. To put it another way, every additional 1 per cent. of expenditure increases council tax bills by 3.5 per cent. That of itself should act as a good political brake on a council's level of spending. It is far better than imposing a cap, which, quite honestly, allows local government to blame national Government for not being able to do the things that it feels it wants to do, or that it feels people want to have done for them in the local area.

Mr. Nigel Waterson (Eastbourne): Does my hon. Friend agree that it is quite remarkable that, despite all the scaremongering at local level in East Sussex, which he has been explaining with great accuracy, and even though this Adjournment debate has started quite early in the parliamentary day, not a single representative of the Liberal Democrats is in the Chamber?

Mr. Rathbone: That is a good point, although one must point out that there are no Liberal Democrat Members of Parliament in East Sussex. Long may that continue! I shall return to that point in another context.

It seems that capping has two disadvantages—for an area such as East Sussex at least. It psychologically encourages councils to spend up to that limit, which is exactly what happened when the Liberal Democrats took control of East Sussex county council just three years ago. In the first year after they took over, they decided, contrary to all Conservative advice, to spend right up to their limit, and in the process take advantage of the cumulated balances that the Conservative administration had built up; indeed, they are still taking advantage of those balances.

The other great disadvantage, which runs across the whole country, is that capping tends to be applied equally across all counties, irrespective of expenditure needs. In East Sussex this year that has led to an inability—so the county claims—to spend the extra 3.1 per cent. grant on education which was made because of soaring school rolls. The money—believe it or not—was used to reduce council tax.

That cannot be what was in Ministers' minds when capping of East Sussex expenditure was introduced. I sincerely hope that the ministerial review of capping will conclude that capping for counties such as East Sussex should be removed. Failing that—I hope that that will not fail—I hope that there will be some way in which to ring-fence the funding for education so that it gets used for the purposes to which it is being applied, rather than, as has happened this year, for the reduction of council tax, however welcome that may be.

That leads me to the question of education funding, to which some of my hon. Friends have already referred. It is much in the news and in the minds of people in East Sussex because the county council has set up the Education Committee Strategic Forum which produced a so-called consultation report on so-called education cuts, which has caused desperate worries among parents, teachers and school governors everywhere. Those worries are deeply felt and they have been reflected in conversations, in meetings and in my mailbags and those of all my right hon. and hon. Friends who represent parts of East Sussex.

Terms such as "cash crisis" abound. They are based only on the quite correct commitment made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to contain overall Government expenditure in this and future years. I say "quite correct" because that is the smack of firm, competent and considerably responsible Government. Will my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary confirm whether there has ever been any similarity between such national expenditure targets and expenditure by local authorities generally, or by local authorities on education specifically? My belief is that there is no parallel between the two. Such parallels would certainly be peculiar in the light of the very specific reassurances by my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Employment and, indeed, by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister about the importance of expenditure on education and the priority that should be given to it.

I fear that the truth is that East Sussex county council has been indulging in completely reprehensible political scaremongering rather than responsible contingency planning, as it claims. For that reason, I have asked for the report to be withdrawn and the consultation scaremongering to be brought to an end. I have had no response and I fear that I probably shall not receive one.

Council leaders and council officials claim that the consultation is an entirely non-political activity and that the concerns are well founded. That claim is made especially about the founding of what has come to be called the East Sussex schools campaign, which is based on the consultation process. The campaign contains within it a belief and a restatement over and again that East Sussex is being compelled to cut £24 million from the school budget when there is no such compulsion and there cannot be as the cuts do not exist. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary can confirm that.

The East Sussex schools campaign refers to real doubt about future nursery education, when the county council arbitrarily and without any debate refused to consider joining the Government's nursery school voucher scheme, which was designed not only to maintain nursery education but to expand it.

The campaign also refers to the activities of schools and the marvellous job that is done within schools. The campaign has organised a meeting in the House of Commons in 10 days' time under the spurious title of "Excellence At Risk". The meeting has not been discussed with, and sponsorship has not been requested from, any of the East Sussex Members of Parliament, all of whom have a genuine concern to improve educational standards and educational funding in East Sussex. The meeting is under the sponsorship of the hon. Members for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie), for Bath (Mr. Foster) and for North Cornwall (Mr. Tyler), all of whom are Liberal Democrats who are far removed geographically from East Sussex—they could hardly be further removed. Is it not peculiar, therefore, that the claim is still made that the meeting is all about a non-party political consultation process? I fear that that is bunkum.

This well-orchestrated, politically inspired campaign, which is built round scaremongering proposals, is an attempt not only to cause maximum concern, in which respect it has been heart-rendingly successful, but to cover the less than whole-hearted commitment to education excellence of the Liberal Democrat-controlled East Sussex county council.

I call in witness the fact that education expenditure was 6 per cent. lower than the shire county average for the proportion of total expenditure spent on education in 1994, the most recent year for which comparative figures are available. I call in witness a huge balance of £6 million remaining in the education budget at the end of the previous fiscal year which implies less than full or necessary spend on education. I call in witness the complete lack of search for reductions in expenditure elsewhere which would enable the council to spend the considerable extra moneys made available by the Government for this year to cover the cost of rising student numbers—3.1 per cent. in standard spending assessment versus 1.2 per cent. in other areas.

Mrs. Lait: Is my hon. Friend aware that in schools in East Sussex the percentage of the teaching budget that is spent on supply teachers is 10 per cent., whereas in grant-maintained schools it is down to about 2 per cent? If the local authority schools could manage to get the number of supply teachers down to the level in grant-maintained schools, would not the schools have sufficient money not only to provide the education that we all wish to be provided but to end the campaign of cuts?

Mr. Rathbone: It sounds as if my hon. Friend has put her finger precisely on yet another example of administrative and professional costs which could be reduced to increase educational standards.

As with Government funding for health services, social services and practically everything else, there will never be enough money to do everything that everybody wants to do in education. The Government have to be responsible in proposing levels of public expenditure that reflect national economic interests, especially a continuing low rate of inflation. The county council has to be equally responsible in allocating funding between and within the services that it has to provide for the people living in its area. It is worrying, therefore, and much to be regretted that anyone should play politics with our children's education as the East Sussex education authority has been doing.

The House would agree that nothing is more important than a good education service and proper educational standards. The whole thrust of our Government's education policy has been devoted to achieving that. It should not and must not be placed in jeopardy; we are all committed to that.

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): I think that my hon. Friend said that East Sussex county council was talking in terms of having to make a reduction of £24 million. He may be interested to know that West Sussex county council is talking in terms of having to make a cut of £25 million. It is extraordinary that the figures should be so similar; neither is based on anything in the public expenditure White Paper. In addition, West Sussex has enjoyed the highest increase in revenue support grant of any authority in the country.

Mr. Rathbone: I always welcome support from across the border, especially from my right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern). I welcome that support now and I believe that it underlines the absurdity of the awful, gossipy scaremongering in which East Sussex county council has been indulging. I hope that my right hon. Friend and his constituents have not been burdened with the same sort of scaremongering in West Sussex.

I now turn to a longer-term element of funding and planning for East Sussex which is causing considerable concern now—the current review of the East Sussex structure plan. Once again, the county council has produced proposals that cut across all good sense and that would threaten the character of the towns, villages and beautiful countryside of East Sussex. There are proposals for huge numbers of new homes to be built in East Sussex between 2006 and 2011. That seems a long way off, but the proposals are being discussed now and are causing concern now.

There are proposals for 800 new homes on the edge of Polegate, an enormous increase of 25 per cent. to that small town. There are proposals for new settlements—a peculiar new term which has crept into the planning language as if one was part of the wild west of America—somewhere between Polegate and Lewes, and somewhere between Lewes and Wivelsfield. They could amount to 10,000 homes, requiring considerable infrastructure as well as housing. What a horrendous erosion of magnificent countryside that would be. There are proposals to expand Sussex villages, such as Wivelsfield,

[Mr. Rathbone]

Newick, Ringmer and Ditchling, expansion that would put the character of those villages at risk. The developments are close to the south downs, in the beautiful Sussex weald, and are close to areas of outstanding natural beauty which I am sure you know only too well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Over the years, I have been in regular contact with Environment Ministers—including my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary—and their predecessors to plead for a more sophisticated reading of housing needs in the south-east generally and in East Sussex in particular. Special regard must be given to the drastic increase in single-occupancy homes, which can and should be accommodated in cities and towns. I believe that there are 100,000 unoccupied houses in London, and there are at least 5,000 unoccupied houses in Brighton. I hope that the Government's review of requirements will benefit not only those people who come to live in the area but those people who have been established there for many years.

I hope that my hon. Friend will confirm that the present requirements are not tablets handed down by national Government to the county councils to execute. It is my belief that the requirements have been agreed between the Government and those involved with the south-east regional plan, including representatives from all the councils in the south-east. There is continual liaison between the two as the figures become refined. If that is the case, it is ridiculous for local politicians to blame the Government for the plans, as the local county council is partly and jointly responsible for them.

Thousands of submissions were made to the county council during the recent consultation process seeking drastic and fundamental reconsideration of the structure plan review. I hope that East Sussex county council will heed those requests and that the Under-Secretary will be able to confirm to the House that the council is responsible for those plans and must react to the public consultation process.

I apologise to the House, as I have gone on at somewhat greater length than was my intention, but all the points that I have raised here this afternoon are close to the hearts of the people who live in East Sussex. They have expressed their worries to me and to my colleagues representing the county. I welcome the opportunity to raise those concerns with my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary.

6.22 pm

Sir Timothy Sainsbury (Hove): I rise to do two things. First, I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) on giving the House the opportunity to discuss an important subject, and on putting the facts and figures of the matter so eloquently before the House. Secondly, I want to support as strongly as I can everything that my hon. Friend said. Perhaps I should take exception to my hon. Friend's remarks about the beautiful countryside of east Sussex as I have an entirely urban constituency, but I share his sentiments.

I support what my hon. Friend said about the area cost adjustment. That is very important, and he is entirely justified in saying that it should be maintained. I agree also with what my hon. Friend said about the cost of reorganisation, and about the rather unusual reorganisation in East Sussex and its implications for the staff involved. I also support what he said about capping. He said that he might not find sympathy for his views from my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench, but he made a valid point about the effect of capping in East Sussex.

Most of all, I support my hon. Friend's attack on the inexcusable scaremongering of the Liberal Democrats—who have been supported by Labour—in the county council. I visited the St. John's day centre in my constituency a couple of weeks ago. Any hon. Member would have been distressed to see the concern which has been caused to the elderly people who use that centre, and the quite unjustified alarm that has been given to them about the future of the centre's funding. My hon. Friend has set out the figures relating to the social services and to the £4 million surplus, and to frighten elderly people who use day centres on those grounds is totally inexcusable.

My hon. Friend rightly said that the worst manifestation of the scaremongering campaign has been seen in the education budget. During the past 15 years, I have witnessed a considerable improvement in the schools in my constituency. In general, we have a high standard and we can be proud of what they achieve and the quality of teaching they provide. It is distressing that head teachers, governors and—most of all—parents in my constituency have been so alarmed by the county council's scaremongering about massive cuts in funding of £24 million, or 10 per cent. The council has also pretended that the cuts will take place in one year, and blames it all on the Government.

The phoneyness and falseness of the campaign has been portrayed in the "East Sussex Education Committee Strategic Forum". The first page of the document is signed by the county education officer, and contains the revealing statement that

> "It is possible that up to 10 per cent. reductions in the budget may be necessary over this time".

The time referred to is the three years between 1996 and 1999. That puts the scaremongering campaign in its proper perspective.

Mr. Waterson: Is my hon. Friend aware that the county treasurer's worst case scenario involves a reduction of only 8 per cent. overall?

Sir Timothy Sainsbury: My hon. Friend powerfully reinforces my point about political scaremongering. The 8 per cent. to which the county treasurer refers would again be spread over three years, and would not be introduced in one year.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: I apologise for interrupting my right hon. Friend to repeat a point which has been made, but it needs to be emphasised. The quotation from the county education officer is couched in moderate language. However, the notice issued by the three Liberal Democrat Members to whom my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) referred—they have not even done us the courtesy of coming to the debate or informing us that they were sponsoring a meeting—draws attention to a meeting at which it was said that East Sussex would be "compelled" to accept £24 million cuts. I received many letters from constituents who attended meetings organised by governors and headmasters of schools and attended by parents and teachers. They wrote to me to say that there would be no alternative but to knuckle under unless we made representations to the Government on the matter.

Sir Timothy Sainsbury: My hon. Friend vividly illustrates the party-political posturing which is causing alarm and concern. Responsible chief officers must stick accurately to the facts, and the county education officer's quote puts matter in perspective. The remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes about the document were entirely justified. The only proper and honourable course for the Liberal Democrat-controlled county council now is to withdraw the document and to apologise to those whom it has alarmed and scared by its campaign.

6.28 pm

Mr. Nigel Waterson (Eastbourne): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate, and I join my right hon. Friend the Member for Hove (Sir T. Sainsbury) in congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) on obtaining it. The debate has been well attended by Conservative Members representing constituencies in East Sussex, and I am pleased to see my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Sir D. Spencer) in the Chamber.

I shall develop some of the themes expressed so well by my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes in his remarks. There is a pattern of politically inspired scaremongering by the Liberal Democrats and their Labour coalition partners in East Sussex. We have seen it occur in debates on libraries, social services, the fire service and education. There has been a series of well-timed announcements of considerable drama about cuts which have to be made—it is said—as a result of the wicked Conservative Government. Perhaps the most dramatic example was in the fire service. Within days or almost hours of announcing a new offshore firefighting facility, the council made another announcement that it was threatened by possible cuts. That is precisely the approach adopted by the current administration in East Sussex which is so destabilising. It is worrying for council tax payers, parents, governors and teachers and it must be destabilising for the staff who have to operate the services when they are subject to political ping-pong all the time.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes talked about social services. There are threats to close homes and day centres, yet there is on any view a projected substantial underspend this year on care in the community. That strikes me as remarkable because when I raise cases on behalf of my constituents the answer that I am given almost without exception is that there is a lack of resources—again, presumably, the Government's fault.

I have mentioned libraries, but let me deal with education. My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes put a powerful case, as did my right hon. Friend the Member for Hove, on education. In my constituency there is a substantial need and demand for pre-school education. I am sure that the same applies to the constituencies of my hon. Friends who are present this evening. I know that because of the activities of IPNA, the independent nursery operators, with which I have worked closely and from the various play groups that I have visited in recent months, many connected with the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

Contrary to its image in some parts of the world, Eastbourne is a town growing younger at a rapid rate. That means that there are many families with young children. We all know—the evidence is striking—that children who have had the benefit of pre-school education in some form tend to do a lot better when they go into formal schooling. Along with my hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye (Mrs. Lait), who is in her place, I was one of the first to write to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education when she made her announcement a few months ago about nursery education. I wrote to say how useful and valuable it would be if East Sussex was one of the authorities involved in the pilot scheme so that parents could be some of the first beneficiaries of the vouchers worth, say, £1,100 a year which would be made available for all four-year-olds so that they could have some form of pre-school education.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes has already said, the suggestion that East Sussex should be part of the pilot scheme has been dismissed out of hand, not by the county council or the local education authority, or even by the East Sussex education committee, but by the chairman of that committee, Councillor Norcross. Barely had the suggestion been made than he issued a statement describing the scheme as a political con which he wanted nothing to do with. Not only have elected members of the authority not had the opportunity even to debate the issue but parents and children in my constituency and across East Sussex have been denied the opportunity of pre-school education.

Mrs. Lait: I know that my hon. Friend has read closely the draft consultation document. Does he agree that it is appalling, given the circumstances with regard to nursery education that he has outlined and the opportunities that would be available to parents to use the nursery vouchers, that one of the options for cuts suggested by the Liberal Democrats is nursery education?

Mr. Waterson: My hon. Friend is right. I shall describe in a moment how I believe that whenever the so-called "cuts" are proposed, they tend to be the ones most likely to upset parents such as the teaching of French and music, special education and nursery schools.

The plain truth is that the East Sussex LEA is sulking because it wanted the Government to give it a big bag of money to run pre-school education the length and breadth of East Sussex. It did not want to see independent nurseries operated, heaven forbid, by the private sector, or even playgroups operated by committed people whether in church halls or more dedicated facilities. They wanted nursery education to be operated as a wholly owned subsidiary of the LEA. That is exactly why it has reacted so precipitately against the Government's trial scheme. When one leaves aside all the political rhetoric that is flying around, what all this means is that a raft of children in my constituency and elsewhere will be denied the opportunity of pre-school education for the one and only time in their lives. That is exactly because of a politically motivated decision by the chairman of the education committee. As I have said, there was no consultation about that decision.

My hon. Friends have referred in some detail to the letters that we have been receiving. As I said when I spoke at the Ratton school awards ceremony in my constituency last Friday, I am not surprised that parents, governors and teachers have written to me in those terms and nor do I blame them. After all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if someone who seemed to know what he was talking about told you

[Mr. Waterson]

that you were going to be hit on the head by a meteor, you would be worried about being hit on the head by a meteor, but that would not mean to say that it was right.

The disgraceful aspect of this episode is that people who know better because they are professionals or the councillors involved in the education part of the authority's work have allowed a document to go out widely in East Sussex which contains some massive and extremely pessimistic assumptions. Even Members of Parliament do not yet know the allocation for education spending for 1996-97. We will not know, and therefore East Sussex cannot know, what the allocation will be until after the Budget. I am pretty sure that education spending will rise. The only question is by how much.

I am sure that most of my constituents agree that the Government should try to control public spending and borrowing. Even the report recognises that

> "Opposition political parties do not suggest that a change of Government would lead to a dramatic change of policy."

I stress again that we cannot yet know the allocation for the coming year. East Sussex county council has at present a total budget of about £420 million. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes that it is difficult to believe that there is no scope for cutting waste and bureaucracy within that figure. We have heard how the LEA has just effected a saving of £1.2 million on school meals alone.

I wish to have assurances from the authors of the document that any increase in spending on education in East Sussex will be passed in full to the schools and not spent on central administration—

Mr. Rathbone: Or on a reduction in the council tax.

Mr. Waterson: Or, as my hon. Friend says, on a reduction in the council tax.

The council's reserves are estimated at some £15 million, whereas the figure recommended by the National Audit Office is only £8 million. It seems to me that judicious use of reserves plus cutting out any waste could produce significant additional funding for the chalkface—the schools themselves. It seems to me that some of the conclusions reached in this curious document about possible cuts are surprising and worrying. I suspect that they are designed to be worrying.

It is an abdication of the local education authority's responsibilities to invite people to tick boxes at the end of the report to show which cuts they prefer. Of course, if one's child is doing rather well at his or her music lessons, one will clearly not tick that box.

The truth is that we elect councillors to do the task of allocating significant resources, difficult though it sometimes is. Only councillors and the officers who advise them have the detailed information necessary to make those choices. One of the features of the Liberal Democrats, even when they temporarily win power in a local authority, is that they continue to behave as though they were in opposition. They do not like making decisions. It is in the nature of running any political organisation that decisions have to be made and it is a sad fact that they tend to upset one group or another. How much easier, even when one is nominally in charge, simply to abdicate that responsibility.

A considerable amount of money and officer time has been spent on producing the document, for no great purpose except to worry parents, governors and teachers. The report accepts that

> "the Education Service in East Sussex is relatively well funded. Pupil/teacher ratios in particular bear favourable comparisons".

Along with my colleagues, I will do all I can to continue to press for sufficient funding to maintain those high standards. I hope that when it is proved that these alarmist conclusions are not accurate, as I believe to be the case, the people of East Sussex will receive an apology from the architects of the document and the campaign behind it. People are playing politics with other people's lives and their aspirations for their children—the one thing about which almost everyone gets very passionate.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you may have seen, as I did recently, that the Liberal Democrats have a new policy for what they call a "virtual Parliament", by which they mean Parliament being organised by video links and the Internet, so that hon. Members would not have to trouble themselves to come to this place, but could operate from their constituencies. That is quite appropriate for the Liberal Democrats because a virtual Parliament would merely confirm that they are virtually never here anyway, and tonight is no exception.

We have heard how the document was produced. It was based on specious assumptions, with strange conclusions, and it has been used as the basis for a campaign directed at parents, teachers and governors and, through them, at myself and fellow Conservative Members, and a campaign to be organised in the House, of which we have had no notice. That gives away the purpose behind the entire operation—to cause political trouble. It is not directed at the welfare of children in East Sussex.

That shows what the campaign is about. I hope that the people of East Sussex will realise how people have been trying to manipulate them and how remarkable it is that, despite the alleged seriousness of the issues, not a single Liberal Democrat is in the Chamber to participate in this debate.

6.43 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sir Paul Beresford): I am particularly grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) for initiating the debate. Looking over my shoulder at one point, I began to wonder whether the East Sussex mafia—I think that almost every Conservative Member representing the county is present—was here as a lynching party. I am relieved that the pressure has landed on East Sussex county council, as it deserved.

This is a good opportunity to discuss some local government measures and local government resources. As hon. Member after hon. Member said, there appears to be a campaign. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern), who was described as an hon. Friend from across the border, pointed out, that county council is not the only one in the campaign, but it is interesting that the more virulent and unpleasant campaign seems to have come from the Liberal Democrats, with the Labour party not far behind.

Before coming to the House, I always saw such campaigns as "bleeding stumps" campaigns. At the last minute, when it is too late for people to react, the word "cuts" comes out—it is never savings, always cuts. The alarmists use the opportunity to go for the most valuable and treasured service—the one that will hurt the most. They then threaten to cut it off and wave the bleeding stump around, hence the name of the syndrome. I am afraid that East Sussex is not the only authority to do so. Many others are doing the same—I could mention West Sussex, Nottinghamshire and a number of others.

There is a straight campaign, but this time it may have been carried too far. That certainly seems to be the case in East Sussex, as I have never seen so many cross Conservative Members of Parliament utilising the opportunity of a lengthened Adjournment debate. The vehemence was such that I feared that it would last until 10 o'clock.

As my hon. Friends are aware, local government spending for 1996-97 will be announced as part of the Budget statement on 28 November. As a result, they will appreciate that I am not in a position to answer some of the questions on the proposed settlement.

While we are talking about the figures and the fact that the council has utilised last year's and extrapolated from them, let me say that I find it interesting that, when local authorities look for increases they talk of percentages, but when they are talking of cuts they use figures. Of course, figures are more dramatic in the minds of the people whom they are trying to frighten.

I am aware that the total amounts involved in the local government settlement for 1995-96 were not as much as local authorities wished. I do not think that they ever have been. Total standard spending rose by 2.2 per cent., however, which was a fair settlement. I believe, particularly because of my background, that local authorities have sufficient resources to carry out their functions. It is too easy for an authority to pick a wish list, add new demands, add it all up—the taxpayer picks up the bill—and, if it is not arrived at, say that it is the result of cuts.

There ought to be a change. We must recognise the importance to the economy of the way in which local authorities spend their finances. About 25 per cent. of Government expenditure is local government expenditure. It is just as important for local government to squeeze effectiveness out of every drop of other people's money spent as it is for central Government. We need local authorities to look to that. They must realise that they can squeeze full value out of every pound that they spend. They must be more efficient and provide better services. An old local authority motto is, "More services, better services, but for less cost." It can be done.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes and others highlighted issues relating to East Sussex and areas of savings. It is a lesson to councillors that, if Members of Parliament without the expertise, the figures and the official advice that they would receive if they were councillors, can find the savings, it ill behoves the local authority not to do the same by utilising the expertise at its disposal.

Each local authority has its own problems and, equally, should sort out its own local solutions. The Government's responsibility is for the overall level of resources available to local government and for the fluidity of the means of resource distribution among authorities.

Every year, we have to set the demands of local authorities in the context of what the country can afford as a whole and that is right. Local government spending accounts for a quarter of all public spending and no Government, including—in the dim and distant past—the last Labour Government, could afford to ignore it. No Government will in the future.

Public spending decisions are made in the context of a medium-term financial strategy to promote sustained economic growth and thus ensure higher living standards. The best way to protect local government services is to ensure that the national economy is strong and inflation under control. To that end, we must continue to seek better use of existing public expenditure and to keep control of public sector bills. Both local and central Government have essential parts to play in bringing about those benefits.

I have no doubt—this has been illustrated tonight—that there is still scope for increased efficiency in East Sussex and in every other local authority despite the claim made by some, or many, that the potential for more effective working has been exhausted. If successful private business can use every opportunity to find a better way of doing things at better value, and bearing in mind the fact that nothing stays the same in business—after all, the provision of public services is a business—such opportunities should be taken by local authorities.

The local authority associations acknowledge that significant efficiency gains are there for the taking. In effect, we need less whingeing and more action. I was interested in the comment of my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes about administration and East Sussex's claim that it is among the best local authorities. Anyone who examined the figures would question that.

For example, consider the number of central full-time administrators per thousand of population: in Essex, it is 12.1; in Hampshire, 12.5; in Kent, 13.1; in Surrey, 11.6; and in West Sussex, 13.2, giving an average of 12.5. West Sussex, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham noted, has the highest figure among that small contingent of councils. However, East Sussex outdoes it with a figure of 14.4. That could mean that some considerable savings are available.

Sir Andrew Bowden (Brighton, Kemptown): I apologise for not being here earlier in the debate.

I suspect that East Sussex county council is trying to put up a smokescreen to conceal its inefficiency, given the excessive number of administrators in relation to the county's population. What makes me angry is that the way in which it has presented information has frightened parents and teachers and misled even governing bodies.

I received a copy of a letter that was sent to the Prime Minister by the chairman of a governing body which said specifically, without qualification, that, as a result of Government action, £26 million would be cut from the education budget in the next financial year. There was no qualification at all. I can only say that the chairman of that governing body—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Geoffrey Lofthouse): Order. I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman was late and wants to contribute, but his intervention is turning into a speech.

Sir Andrew Bowden: May I ask a question?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I call the Minister.

Sir Paul Beresford: My hon. Friend is right. He has put down, as a physician would say, the diagnostic pointers to what I call the "bleeding stumps" syndrome. That is exactly what we are talking about.

[Sir Paul Beresford]

I shall give one or two other examples. Standard spending assessment per head for this financial year is in the region of £570. East Sussex ranks slightly above the middle figure for all the counties. If other counties can provide the same service, or better, for less, perhaps East Sussex should take a hint. On the SSA for education, East Sussex is the second highest out of 38 counties. West Sussex, since my hon. right Friend the Member for Horsham is here, is 11th. The complaints and the whingeing do not carry the weight that they ought to.

Much has been made of area cost adjustment. This is analysed each year using the data available from the previous year. The data are distributed to the local authority associations and this year went out in August. East Sussex should be aware, unless communications have completely broken down, that the data show a shift of 0.5 per cent. Yes, that is negative, but it is 0.5 per cent. and not quite what the bleeding stumps syndrome diagnosis would suggest.

Education funding has been raised as a matter of special concern, mainly because parents feel vulnerable. Local education authorities have faced some tight decisions in setting their budgets this year, but I do not believe or accept that they need to do anything that would lead to a drop in standards. In fact, with a little imagination, they could improve them, especially when we remember that schools, as well as local authorities, have a variety of means with which to make efficiency gains and to improve standards without incurring extra costs. My hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye (Mrs. Lait) gave an example—and that was from somebody who is not at the chalk face and who does not have the figures available. If they are easily available for her to give to the House, I am quite sure that the local authority could do that, and more.

As has been mentioned, the Prime Minister has said that education will be given priority as the economy delivers further growth. Successive settlements have taken into account factors such as the increase in pupils, and future settlements will continue to do so.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes questioned ring fencing. I do not agree with him. The vast majority of government funding for local authority spending on education is provided by way of an un-ring-fenced grant, if hon. Members will excuse the awkward phrase. I believe that that should remain so because local authorities are best placed to decide their spending priorities in the light of local needs and the available resources. The Government cannot dictate such minutiae, and as an ex-local government member, I think that it is vital that local authorities have that opportunity but that they are then held responsible by the public for those decisions rather than shirking them with the sort of campaign that East Sussex is pursuing.

It is important for local democracy that there is a choice available but it is also important for local accountability. Local authorities must be answerable to their electorate, and I hope that in six months, or in a year's time, we may be able to review what has been said by East Sussex and question its decisions and alarmist statements. I hope that parents and governors will also do that and reflect on what has been said and on what has happened and what could have happened, especially if all the local education funding was not allocated to the schools.

Mention was made of nurseries and vouchers and the rather dog-in-the-manger attitude taken by East Sussex. I remember, before the days of vouchers, as someone who was involved in a unitary authority, being interested in the opportunity that was offered. That authority, with no positive shift in Government spending, was able to use the availability of nurseries and nursery education in such a way that it was able to offer every three and four-year-old child nursery education free, without nursery vouchers. In addition, it encouraged private sector nurseries and nursery education and a top-and-tailing, or latchkey, system. If that was possible in the difficult parts of central London in which many of us have worked as local authority members, I should have thought that it would be simple for a local authority such as East Sussex to do the same. The opportunity of vouchers is a challenge for local authorities to meet, if they are capable of outdoing the private sector.

Once the total resources available for local government have been decided, they will be distributed according to need. Each year, the standard spending assessment methodology is discussed in detail and at length with representatives of local government, and each year it is updated and improved. It is an open and fair system. The difficulty that I have with it is that it began as a simple system and the refinements seem to make it worse day by day.

One element of the distribution formula that always gives rise to arguments is the area cost adjustment. No one disputes the fact that some adjustment to take account of higher costs in some parts of the country is needed, but those who get it say that they are not getting enough and those who do not, say that those getting it are getting too much. The Government cannot win.

Both my Department and the local authority associations carried out work on the area cost adjustment this year. The Department commissioned research intended to see whether the zones used for the area cost adjustment could be defined more satisfactorily, particularly by reference to travel-to-work areas. The associations carried out further analysis of those higher costs in London and the south-east. They also sought to define alternative ways of determining the area cost adjustment.

Despite that work, we have had to conclude that, so far, we have nothing that is sufficiently well founded to provide a basis for the area cost adjustment which we could be confident represented an improvement. We accept, however, that the present methodology causes considerable dissatisfaction outside the south-east. We need to continue to investigate potential improvements.

The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Urban Regeneration met leaders of the local authority associations on 16 October to discuss concerns about the effects if changes were made to the area cost adjustment. During the meeting, he proposed to the local authority associations that we set up an independent review of the area cost adjustment. We would ask it to seek a basis for the area cost adjustment that is conceptually sound, achieves the widest possible acceptance among local authorities in all parts of the country, and is practical to apply—there is nothing like hoping.

We have suggested to the associations that the review be steered by a group of three, chaired by a leading academic economist. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh, no!"] I note the cynicism. The other members would be a nominee of the local authority associations and a nominee of the Department. We would expect the review to require research to be commissioned, the cost of which would be met by the Department. We would ask for the review to be completed by June 1996, so that its findings could be taken into account when determining the standard spending assessments for the following year.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes mentioned capping. That subject comes up for discussion every year. Hon. Members will understand that capping has been successful in ensuring that all authorities play their part in the restraint of public expenditure, and it has protected council tax payers from high bills. As hon. Members will know from some of the conferences—one in particular—there are two sides to the argument. The Secretary of State and I are well aware of the debate, but the abolition of capping could lead to increases in council taxes and hence to higher public expenditure. Moreover, such increases feed through to Government spending on benefits. Such a policy would therefore conflict with our stated aim to reduce the share of the nation's wealth that is taken by the public sector.

Nevertheless, this year, as every year, we are considering our approach to capping as part of the next local government finance settlement. The Secretary of State will announce his intentions for capping at the same time as his proposals for the 1996-97 settlement. As in previous years, he will be happy to meet authorities to allow them to make representations, once that announcement has been made.

It has been mentioned that East Sussex is spending at its capping limit. It is inherent in the rationale behind capping that, for local authorities budgeting above their SSA, increases in SSA do not necessarily feed through into increases in the cap limit. That is to ensure that, over time, such authorities bring their budgets into closer alignment with their SSAs. As I have said, I am not in a position at this stage to signal any proposals for capping. I am afraid that my hon. Friend will have to wait for the announcement, but he will have expected that.

My hon. Friend also mentioned housing requirements. I understand that the county council's suggestion that continuing housing requirements in the county might be met by completely new settlements has aroused strong feelings—to put it mildly. This option is considered in its draft—I emphasise the word, "draft"—proposals for housing and employment on which it has recently consulted the public as part of the structure plan review. That document makes it clear that no decisions have been taken on the draft proposals, and that the views of the local people, especially, I hope, of local Members of Parliament, are important to the council in deciding where new developments might be accommodated in the country.

I hope that local people will take the opportunity to make their views known to the county council so that those can be taken into account in developing the new draft plan. There will be a further opportunity to make representations in the new year, and an examination in public may be held on selected issues before an independent panel, which would report to the county council and may recommend changes. If the council makes changes, it must advertise them and provide another opportunity for objections and representations to be made. In that way, the development plan system allows for appropriate consideration of development needs and can meet those in a way that is sensitive to other key planning objectives of conserving the countryside and the built heritage.

This has been an interesting debate. I hope that Liberal Democrat and Labour councillors in East Sussex take note of the points that have been made and recognise that they are scaremongering. A final example of that was the prospect of Brighton and Hove unitary authority not gaining finances that would be available to other shadow authorities. That is not so. It will be treated no differently from other shadow authorities. I know from my experience of the delightful disappearance of the Greater London council, followed by that of the Inner London education authority, and of the development of unitary authorities within London, that the opportunities for efficiency savings to produce better services for less for the public in general were massive in unitary authority areas. I hope that, especially in the case of Brighton and Hove, where two authorities are linked and then become a unitary authority, the opportunity for even greater savings are recognised and achieved.

The Liberal Democrats distribute at irregular intervals a leaflet called "Focus". I hope that they recognise that, in any good business, as one sets one's budget at the beginning of the financial year, one focuses on the anticipated shifts in expenditure throughout that financial year through to the next. To leave it to this stage to look for savings might mean that cuts must be imposed. That is the fault of members of the local authority. Looking over my shoulder, I anticipate that Conservative Members of Parliament will drum that message home vehemently and try to spell out to parents that the "bleeding stump" syndrome does not exist if the local authority is efficient.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eight minutes past Seven o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 8 November 1995

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MADAM SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners:

The House went;—and, having returned:

Royal Assent

10.10 am

Madam Speaker: I have to acquaint the House that the House has been to the House of Peers where a Commission under the Great Seal was read, authorising the Royal Assent to the following Acts:

Atomic Energy Authority Act 1995
Civil Evidence Act 1995
Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995
Criminal Procedure (Consequential Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1995
Law Reform (Succession) Act 1995
Private International Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1995
Proceeds of Crime (Scotland) Act 1995
Statute Law (Repeals) Act 1995
Gas Act 1995
Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995
Northern Ireland (Remission of Sentences) Act 1995
Charities (Amendment) Act 1995
Town and Country Planning (Cost of Inquiries etc.) Act 1995
Disability Discrimination Act 1995
Medical (Professional Performance) Act 1995
Criminal Injuries Compensation Act 1995
Mental Health (Patients in the Community) Act 1995
Loch Leven and Lochaber Water Power Order Confirmation Act 1995
Accommodation Level Crossings Act 1995
Queen Mary and Westfield College Act 1995
London Local Authorities Act 1995

Prorogation

Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech

Madam Speaker: I have further to acquaint the House that the Lord High Chancellor, one of the Lord Commissioners, delivered Her Majesty's Speech to both Houses of Parliament, in pursuance of Her Majesty's Command. For greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy and also directed that the terms of the speech be printed in the Votes and Proceedings. Copies are being made available in the Vote Office.

The Gracious Speech was as follows:

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

The Duke of Edinburgh and I were pleased to receive the State Visits of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait in May and His Excellency the President of Finland in October. We also remember with great pleasure our State Visit to South Africa in March. We are enjoying our visit to New Zealand, where we shall be present at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting.

The Duke of Edinburgh and I were pleased to receive Heads of State and Government, or their representatives, from fifty-six countries, to commemorate Victory in Europe Day in May. We were also pleased to see many veterans, and representatives from countries whose forces served under the Crown during the Second World War, in London in August to attend the ceremonies to commemorate the fiftieth anniversaries of the end of the Second World War.

We were pleased to attend the ceremony marking the Fiftieth Anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter in London in June.

My Government continued to make provision for the defence of the United Kingdom and our allies and for the promotion of international peace and stability. They were among the leading participants in United Nations peace-keeping operations. They contributed to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and to the development of effective and reliable European defence arrangements which complement those of NATO. They welcomed the success of the Partnership for Peace between the countries of NATO and other countries of Europe; the commitment by NATO and Russia to build a co-operative relationship; and the decision to extend indefinitely the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

My Government continued to be at the forefront of attempts to find a lasting solution to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. In response to a worsening of the conflict there, they substantially increased the British contribution to United Nations operations and provided humanitarian aid on a significant scale to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population. In Africa, my Government helped the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity in their work to prevent and resolve conflicts.

My Government have continued to act vigorously against terrorism, drugs and organised crime, both in the United Kingdom and overseas.

In the European Union, my Government welcomed the accession of Sweden, Finland and Austria. They worked to promote a closer relationship between the European Union and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, *with a view to the enlargement of the Union. They continued to help the former communist states of Europe and Asia to establish democratic market economies: bilaterally, using the Know How Fund, and together with our European Union Partners.*

My Government contributed to the European Union's efforts to combat unemployment and promote growth. They secured agreement to liberalise telecommunications by 1998. They worked to promote effective action against fraud and to achieve higher standards of farm animal welfare throughout the European Union. They participated in meetings of the Study Group which is preparing for the 1996 Inter-Governmental Conference. They welcomed the Commission's first annual report on subsidiarity.

Reducing poverty in the poorest countries remained a priority. To this end, my Government continued a substantial overseas aid programme and took a leading role in securing more generous terms for bilateral debt relief for the poorest, most indebted countries.

At the Summit of the seven leading industrialised nations in Halifax in June, my Government contributed to far-reaching proposals on the reform of the international financial institutions and the United Nations. They worked at home and with our European Union partners to implement the outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

In the interests of the people of Hong Kong, my Government worked to achieve a smooth transfer of sovereignty to China in 1997. My Government in Bermuda consulted the people of Bermuda about the future constitutional arrangements for the Territory and its relationship with the United Kingdom. My Government gave assistance to the Cayman Islands to alleviate the problems caused by the arrival of a large number of migrants from Cuba in 1994.

In Northern Ireland my Government have continued to promote peace and political stability and to encourage progress towards a political settlement. They held substantive talks with the Northern Ireland parties and other exploratory talks. They published a document describing a framework for a political accommodation in respect of Northern Ireland. Legislation has been passed to enable certain prisoners to be released on licence at the half-way point of their sentence. My Government have sought to improve social and economic conditions through inward investment and other means.

Members of the House of Commons

I thank you for the provision you have made for the honour and dignity of the Crown and for the public service.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government have pursued firm financial policies which have allowed recovery to broaden and strengthen, while maintaining low inflation. Measures have been taken to ensure that the public sector borrowing requirement is brought back towards balance over the medium term.

My Government showed their commitment to improving the nation's competitiveness through the White Paper "Competitiveness: Forging Ahead." Legislation has been passed to promote increased competition in the supply of gas to customers, and to reform the agricultural tenancy laws in England and Wales, so that more agricultural land is made available for rent. The first proposals were made for use of the new deregulation order-making power.

An Act has been passed to create a Jobseeker's Allowance, reforming benefits for unemployed people and giving them better help into work.

The Sunday licensing hours have been revised.

My Government continued to pursue a programme of privatisation with the successful sale of the coal mining activities of British Coal. They published a White Paper on the future prospects for nuclear power in the United Kingdom and began work to transfer parts of the industry to the private sector.

An Act has been passed which takes forward my Government's commitment to sustainable development and the protection of the environment.

The criminal justice system has been improved through legislation to establish a Criminal Cases Review Commission for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and to provide statutory authority for a compensation scheme for victims of violent crime. Legislation has also been enacted to reform the Scottish criminal justice system and the law relating to children and their families in Scotland.

Legislation has been passed to combat discrimination against disabled people; to improve child support; to equalise the State Pension age between men and women; and to improve security, equality and choice in non-state pensions.

Health services have been strengthened. An Act has been passed to make further improvements to the management of the National Health Service. There has also been legislation to provide for people with a severe mental disorder discharged from hospital to be cared for under supervision, and to increase the powers of the General Medical Council to deal with doctors whose professional performance is seriously deficient.

Further successful use has been made of new procedures for enacting uncontroversial measures of law reform.

Other important measures have been enacted.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may attend you.

Thereafter a Commission for proroguing the Parliament was read, after which the Lord Chancellor said:

"My Lords and Members of the House of Commons: by virtue of Her Majesty's Commission which has now been read, we do, in Her Majesty's name, and in obedience to Her Majesty's Commands prorogue this Parliament to Wednesday the fifteenth day of this instant November, to be then here holden and this Parliament is accordingly prorogued to Wednesday the fifteenth day of this instant November."

End of the Third Session (opened on 16 November 1994) of the Fifty-First Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in the Forty-Third Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 30 October 1995

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Dementia Relief Trust

Ms Short: To ask the Chairman of the Administration Committee if he has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the Dementia Relief Trust to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.. [40713]

Mr. Michael J. Martin: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Administration Committee, arrangements have been made for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from Monday 6 November to Friday 10 November 1995.

TREASURY

Direct and Indirect Taxation

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will update his answer of 19 December to the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith), *Official Report,* columns *944-50,* providing a table giving estimates for the burden of direct and indirect taxes in 1996–97 based on the 1995–96 indexed tax and national insurance regime. [39098]

Mr. Jack: The burden of direct and indirect taxes in 1996–97 will depend on the level of income and on spending patterns. Figures showing the impact of tax on specimen households will be available after the Budget in the usual way, based on revenue forecasts and economic assumptions published in the "Financial Statement and Budget Report". It would be misleading to provide figures on the basis of speculative assumptions.

National Lottery

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the tax revenue arising from the sale of national lottery tickets for each of the last 12 months. [39743]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The sale of national lottery tickets began in November 1994. The receipts of lottery duty for each month since are:

	£ 000's
December 1994	11,629
January 1995	32,755
February 1995	29,979
March 1995	29,542
April 1995	32,860
May 1995	64,191
June 1995	52,756
July 1995	50,962
August 1995	60,433
September 1995	45,611

Steam Rollers

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to remove vehicle excise duty from steam rollers, preserved working models; and if he will make a statement. [38116]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: It would not be appropriate to comment on detailed tax issues in the run-up to the Budget.

Mr. Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total estimate revenue which will be raised by the imposition of vehicle excise duty on steam rollers, preserved working models, and the proportion of this sum expressed as a percentage of the overall revenue raised by vehicle excise duty. [38117]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: These vehicles will pay less than £30,000 in total in vehicle excise duty, representing around 0.01 per cent. of total VED receipts. Steam rollers pay the lowest rate of duty of any of the HGV tax classes, which represents a substantial saving over full rates of duty.

Personal Pension Schemes

Mr. Denham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the reduction in employer contributions to public sector superannuation schemes as a result of members opting out to join personal pension schemes. [38266]

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 25 October 1995]:* No separate assessment has been made of employer contributions as a result of members opting out. Actuaries perform regular valuations on public service schemes. If they advise that employers' contribution rates needs adjusting to take account of the number of opted-out members, and any other factors, appropriate action to adjust the rate would be taken.

Departments with superannuation votes bid for the sum of money that they estimate they need to cover the cost of pensions. This takes into account the level of employer contributions which are appropriated in aid against expenditure. If there are significant numbers opting out then, other things being equal, there will be an increase in the vote.

LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list the names and salaries of the inspectors of magistrates courts, and give their place of residence; and if he will make a statement. [39231]

Mr. John M. Taylor: Inspectors are currently paid on a civil service grade 7 salary range of £26,535 to £41,092 in London and £25,392 to £39,324 outside London. Progression through the range is subject to satisfactory performance.

Senior inspectors' salaries range between £35,113 and £38,211. They are also eligible for performance-related non-pensionable cash bonuses of up to a maximum of

15 per cent. of annual salary, subject to an overall maximum of 50 per cent. for the four-year period covered by their contracts.

All senior inspectors and inspectors are on four-year fixed-term appointments with the possibility of extension.

The names and places of residence are as follows:

Northern Team

Mr. Colin Monson (Senior Inspector)—North Yorkshire
Mrs. Sally Radford—North Yorkshire
Mr. Steve Jacobs—North Humberside
Mrs. Rachael Jenkinson—Derbyshire

Western Team

Miss Julia Eeles (Senior Inspector)—Gloucester
Mr. Malcolm Dodds—Avon
Mrs. Janet Macpherson—Avon
Mrs. Margaret Sleight—Avon

Eastern Team

Ms Sue Steel (Senior Inspector)—London
Mr. Michael Hughes—Hampshire
Mrs. Margaret Scorer—London
Ms Louise Goodfellow—London

Central and Southern Team

Mr. Duncan Gear (Senior Inspector)—Bedfordshire
Mr. Robert Spencer—North Humberside
Ms Susan Mew—Somerset

Mr. Jones: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department which petty sessional divisions in Wales, within magistrates courts committees, have benches of *(a)* under 10 and *(b)* under 20 and if he will make a statement. [39228]

Mr. Taylor: The number of petty sessional divisions in Wales with a bench strength of *(a)* under 10 and under 20, on the latest information available, is as follows:

Magistrates courts committees may at any time submit to the Lord Chancellor, under section 23 of the Justices of the Peace Act 1979, proposals for reorganising the petty sessional divisions within their area or the Lord Chancellor may call for a review.

(a) Benches with under 10 justices

	Number
Gogledd Preseli	9
Machynlleth	7
North Meirionnydd	9
Ystradgynlais	9

(b) Benches with under 20 justices

	Number
Berwyn	15
Brecon	18
Carmarthen North	10
Ceredigion Ganol	14
De Ceredigion	12
Gogledd Ceredigion	19
Upper Rhymney Valley	13
Pwlheli/Porthmadog	17
Radnor and Brecknock	18
South Anglesey	18
South Meirionydd	19

Mr. Jones: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department which magistrates courts areas in Wales have been inspected by Her Majesty's inspectorate; and if he will make a statement. [39226]

Mr. Taylor: The magistrates courts committee areas in Dyfed and Powys have already been inspected, in the 1995–96 inspection programme. The inspection reports will be published by the end of December 1995 and March 1996 respectively, with versions in Welsh.

Mr. Jones: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what extra resources he will provide to make magistrates court premises more welcoming, including the installation of vending machines; and if he will make a statement. [39230]

Mr. Taylor: The provision of refreshments and other facilities for court users is a matter to be determined locally by the magistrates courts committee. Each committee decides, in conjunction with the local authority, how its revenue budget is to be used in any year. Approval for capital projects is subject to the availability of funding and other priorities.

Mr. Jones: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how many inspectors of magistrates courts are resident in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [39232]

Mr. Taylor: There are no inspectors of magistrates courts resident in Wales at present.

Mr. Jones: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how many inspectors will inspect in Wales, in which HM inspectorate team they will inspect; and if he will make a statement. [39227]

Mr. Taylor: Each inspection of a Welsh magistrates courts committee will be carried out by the Western inspectorate team—consisting of a senior inspector and three inspectors. They will be joined on each inspection by an associate inspector, a staff member from a magistrates courts committee outside the Western team inspection area.

Mr. Jones: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will make a statement concerning his policy on smoking in magistrates courts. [39229]

Mr. Taylor: Where, if anywhere, smoking is permitted in a magistrates court is a matter of local policy to be determined by the magistrates courts committee.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what is the current breakdown by party political affiliation of members of the Doncaster bench. [38998]

Mr. Taylor: The current breakdown by party political affiliation of members of the Doncaster bench on the latest information available is as follows:

Conservative: 92

Labour: 50

Lib/Dem: 25

Independent/Not Known: 11

Mr. Jones: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how many additional inspectors of magistrates courts he plans to employ, and if he will make a statement. [39233]

Mr. Taylor: There are no plans at present to increase the number of inspectors beyond the current complement of one chief inspector, four senior inspectors and 12 inspectors.

Maxwell Brothers Trial

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if the pay telephone available at the Maxwell brothers trial is now available for normal calls in addition to calls to the emergency services; and if he will make a statement. [39079]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The question concerns a specific operational matter on which the chief executive of the Court Service is best placed to provide an answer and I have accordingly asked the chief executive to reply direct.

Letter from M. D. Huebner to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to your question about the availability of the pay-telephone at the Maxwell brothers' trial.

A pay-telephone from which all outgoing calls can be made has been available for public use outside the courtroom since the trial began on 31 May 1995.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list the dates of the equipment failure in respect of the Maxwell brothers trial to date; which of the problems have now been solved; and if he will make a statement. [39105]

Mr. Taylor: The question concerns a specific operational matter on which the chief executive of the Court Service is best placed to provide an answer and I have accordingly asked the chief executive to reply direct.

Letter from M. D. Huebner to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to your question about equipment failure at the Maxwell brothers' trial.

On the first day of the trial, 31 May 1995, there was a problem of interference between the lapel microphones worn by counsel and the instantaneous transcription equipment used by the court reporters. This was resolved within 45 minutes by using fixed desk microphones for counsel. There have been no equipment failures since then.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Ministerial Information Systems

Mr. Allen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what action has been taken to progress MINIS arising from the report of spring 1995; and if he will make a statement. [39613]

Mr. Horam: The multi-departmental scrutiny of Government's management information and planning systems produced its report in May 1995. The report noted many examples of good practice in both the public and private sectors. Its recommendations provided a checklist of best practice for Departments and agencies to use in developing integrated systems to suit their particular needs.

The report has been widely welcomed. Departments and agencies have now produced action plans in response to the scrutiny. These plans are being considered by the Prime Minister's adviser on efficiency. Departments and agencies are already taking steps to ensure that their information and planning systems are up to the level of the best, so aiding the Government's continuing quest for greater efficiency.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to install an electronic/computer diary giving details of media events organised by other Government Departments; what estimate he has made of the cost of obtaining, installing and operating such a diary; and if he will make a statement. [39648]

The Deputy Prime Minister: A dedicated IT-based network linking the offices of Cabinet Ministers will start to become operational next month. Work began on the network in early 1995. By cutting down on paper-based management systems and bringing up-to-date information to all Ministers' offices more quickly, it will improve efficiency and effectiveness both in individual Departments and in the dispatch of collective ministerial business. The forward diary of policy announcements will be only one of the uses to which the new infrastructure is put. The total start-up cost, including hardware and software development, is likely to be in the order of £150,000. Annual running costs are likely to be about £10,000.

Engagements

Mr. Hain: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, pursuant to his answer of 18 October 1995, *Official Report*, column *279*, (1) on which days he was in the office in August; [38757]

(2) if he will list the others referred to; [38743]

(3) if he will list those occasions on which his attendance was required outside London. [38758]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to the reply that I gave the hon. Member on 18 October.

Office Refurbishment

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what has been the cost to date of refurbishing his Department's offices. [39016]

The Deputy Prime Minister: In the current financial year expenditure on refurbishment of the Cabinet Office building at 70 Whitehall is estimated at £1,445,000 excluding VAT. Most of this expenditure results from a major programme to replace old wiring in part of the building, which was becoming dangerous. Recent changes in ministerial accommodation did not result in additional expenditure on refurbishment.

Public Appointments, South Yorkshire

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will list the public appointments for which his Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating in each case the duration of the appointment, the date when a new appointment is due, and the salary; [39432]

(2) if he will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which his office makes appointments in the county of South Yorkshire, with the total annual budget for each body and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years. [39462]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 26 October 1995, *Official Report,* column *749.*

Employee Fraud

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what was the total number of cases of all forms of fraud committed by employees of his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies for each year from 1991–92 to 1994–95; and for each of these years, what was the total monetary sum (1) misappropriated in such frauds and (2) subsequently recovered. [39124]

The Deputy Prime Minister: There were no known frauds committed by employees of the Cabinet Office during this period. The information in respect of those agencies and non-departmental bodies for which the Deputy Prime Minister has responsibility is as follows:

Year	*Number of cases*	*Total misappropriated £*	*Total recovered £*
Agencies			
1993–94	1	200	200
1994–95	1	558	558
Non-departmental public bodies			
1991–92	1	100	100

Executive Agencies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of central Government has been in the hands of executive agencies in each year since 1979. [39840]

The Deputy Prime Minister: Executive agencies are set up under the next steps programme which began in 1988. Prior to that, no such agencies existed. The figures show the percentage of home civil servants working in next steps agencies or on next steps lines at 1 April of each year. The first next steps agency in Northern Ireland was launched in 1990, and figures for the Northern Ireland civil service are shown separately.

Proportion of home civil servants working on next steps lines at 1 April each year

	Percentage
1989	1
1990	11
1991	40
1992	51
1993	60
1994	63
1995	67

Proportion of civil servants in Northern Ireland working on next steps lines at 1 April each year.

	Percentage
1989	none
1990	6
1991	7
1992	26
1993	30
1994	31
1995	41

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list those agencies which do not have *(a)* a Fraser figure and *(b)* a ministerial advisory board. [39833]

The Deputy Prime Minister: The following agencies do not have a Fraser figure—so-called by reference to the report by Sir Angus Fraser to the Prime Minister in 1991, "Making the Most of Next Steps: The Management of Ministers' Departments and their Executive Agencies":

Army Base Repair Organisation
Army Base Storage and Distribution Agency
Army Technical Support Agency
Central Office of Information
Central Statistical Office
Chessington Computer Centre
Civil Service College
Defence Accounts Agency
Defence Analytical Services Agency
Defence Animal Centre
Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency
Defence Postal and Courier Services
Defence Transport and Movements Executive
Disposal Sales Agency
Duke of York's Royal Military School
Employment Service
Government Property Lawyers
HM Land Registry
HM Prison Service
HMSO
Hydrographic Office
Industrial Research and Technology Unit
Logistic Information Systems Agency
Meteorological Office
Military Survey
Naval Aircraft Repair Organisation
Naval Recruiting and Training Agency
Ordnance Survey
Paymaster
Queen Victoria School
RAF Maintenance Group Defence Agency
RAF Signals Engineering Establishment
RAF Training Group Defence Agency
Recruitment and Assessment Agency
Royal Mint
Service Children's Schools (North West Europe)
Social Security Benefits Agency

Social Security Child Support Agency
Social Security Contributions Agency
Social Security Information Technology Services Agency
Social Security Resettlement Agency
Social Security War Pensions Agency
Training and Employment Agency (Northern Ireland)

There is no ministerial advisory board in respect of the following agencies:

Army Base Repair Organisation
Army Base Storage and Distribution Agency
Army Technical and Support Agency
Building Research Establishment
Central Office of Information
Central Statistical Office
Civil Service College
Compensation Agency
Court Service
Defence Accounts Agency
Defence Analytical Services Agency
Defence Animal Centre
Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency
Defence Postal and Courier Services
Defence Transport and Movements Executive
Disposals Sales Agency
Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency
Duke of York's Military School
Employment Service
Government Property Lawyers
Historic Scotland
HM Land Registry
HM Prison Service
HMSO
Hydrographic Office
Industrial Research and Technology Unit
Logistic Information Systems Agency
Military Survey
Naval Aircraft Repair Organisation
Naval Recruiting and Training Agency
Northern Ireland Child Support Agency
Northern Ireland Prison Service
Occupational Health and Safety Agency
Ordnance Survey
Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland
Paymaster
Planning Inspectorate
Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
Public Trust Office
Queen Victoria School
Radiocommunications Agency
RAF Maintenance Group Defence Agency
RAF Signals Engineering Establishment
RAF Training Group Defence Agency
Rate Collection Agency
Recruitment and Assessment Agency
Registers of Scotland
Royal Mint
Scottish Agricultural Science Agency
Scottish Court Service
Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency
Scottish Office Pensions Agency
Scottish Prison Service
Scottish Record Office
Service Children's Schools (North West Europe)
Social Security Agency (Northern Ireland)
Social Security Benefits Agency
Social Security Child Support Agency
Social Security Contributions Agency
Social Security Information Technology Services Agency
Social Security Resettlement Agency
Social Security War Pensions Agency
Student Awards Agency for Scotland
Teachers' Pensions Agency
The Buying Agency
Training and Employment Agency (Northern Ireland)
Valuation and Lands Agency
Valuation Office
Wilton Park

Former Ministers (Appointments)

Mr. Derek Foster: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if Her Majesty's Government have reached a conclusion on the text of the guidelines on business appointments of former Ministers. [40210]

Mr. Freeman: I have today placed in the Libraries of both Houses guidelines on the acceptance of appointments outside Government by former Ministers of the Crown. The guidelines will come into effect from the start of the next Session of Parliament.

Civil Service Code

Mr. Derek Foster: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if Her Majesty's Government have reached a conclusion on the text of the proposed civil service code. [40209]

Mr. Freeman: The period of further consultation on the draft civil service code, published in "The Government's Response to the First Report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life", Cm 2931, has ended. Subject to the required Order in Council the Government now propose to bring the new code into operation from the start of 1996, and will finalise the necessary amendments to the civil service management code and arrangements for implementation in consultation with the Council of Civil Service Unions. The intended final text of the code is as follows:

1. The constitutional and practical role of the Civil Service is, with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity, to assist the duly constituted Government, of whatever political complexion, in formulating policies of the Government, carrying out decisions of the Government and in administering public services for which the Government is responsible.
2. Civil servants are servants of the Crown. Constitutionally, the Crown acts on the advice of Ministers and, subject to the provisions of this Code, civil servants owe their loyalty to the duly constituted Government.
3. This Code should be seen in the context of the duties and responsibilities of Ministers set out in Questions of Procedure for Ministers which include:

   —accountability to Parliament;

   —the duty to give Parliament and the public as full information as possible about the policies, decisions and actions of the Government, and not to deceive or knowingly mislead Parliament and the public;

   —the duty not to use public resources for party political purposes, to uphold the political impartiality of the Civil Service, and not to ask civil servants to act in any way which would conflict with the Civil Service Code;

   —the duty to give fair consideration and due weight to informed and impartial advice from civil servants, as well as to other considerations and advice, in reaching decisions; and

   —the duty to comply with the law, including international law and treaty obligations, and to uphold the administration of justice;

   together with the duty to familiarise themselves with the contents of this Code.
4. Civil servants should serve the duly constituted Government in accordance with the principles set out in this Code and recognising:

—the accountability of civil servants to the Minister or, as the case may be, the office holder in charge of their department;

the duty of all public officers to discharge public functions reasonably and according to the law;

the duty to comply with the law, including international law and treaty obligations, and to uphold the administration of justice; and

ethical standards governing particular professions.

5. Civil servants should conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty. They should give honest and impartial advice to Ministers, without fear or favour, and make all information relevant to a decision available to Ministers. They should not deceive or knowingly mislead Ministers, Parliament or the public.

6. Civil servants should endeavour to deal with the affairs of the public sympathetically, efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration.

7. Civil servants should endeavour to ensure the proper, effective and efficient use of public money.

8. Civil servants should not misuse their official position or information acquired in the course of their official duties to further their private interests or those of others. They should not receive benefits of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgment or integrity.

9. Civil servants should conduct themselves in such a way as to deserve and retain the confidence of Ministers and to be able to establish the same relationship with those whom they may be required to serve in some future Administration. They should comply with restrictions on their political activities. The conduct of civil servants should be such that Ministers and potential future Ministers can be sure that confidence can be freely given, and that the Civil Service will conscientiously fulfil its duties and obligations to, and impartially assist, advise and carry out the policies of the duly constituted Government.

10. Civil servants should not without authority disclose official information which has been communicated in confidence within Government, or received in confidence from others. Nothing in the Code should be taken as overriding existing statutory or common law obligations to keep confidential, or to disclose, certain information. They should not seek to frustrate or influence the policies, decisions or actions of Government by the unauthorised, improper or premature disclosure outside the Government of any information to which they have had access as civil servants.

11. Where a civil servant believes he or she is being required to act in a way which:

is illegal, improper, or unethical;

is in breach of constitutional convention or a professional code;

may involve possible maladministration; or

is otherwise inconsistent with this Code;

he or she should report the matter in accordance with procedures laid down in departmental guidance or rules of conduct. A civil servant should also report to the appropriate authorities evidence of criminal or unlawful activity by others and may also report in accordance with departmental procedures if he or she becomes aware of other breaches of this Code or is required to act in a way which, for him or her, raises a fundamental issue of conscience.

12. Where a civil servant has reported a matter covered in paragraph 11 in accordance with procedures laid down in departmental guidance or rules of conduct and believes that the response does not represent a reasonable response to the grounds of his or her concern, he or she may report the matter in writing to the Civil Service Commissioners.

13. Civil servants should not seek to frustrate the policies, decisions or actions of Government by declining to take, or abstaining from, action which flows from ministerial decisions. Where a matter cannot be resolved by the procedures set out in paragraphs 11 and 12 above, on a basis which the civil servant concerned is able to accept, he or she should either carry out his or her instructions, or resign from the Civil Service. Civil servants should continue to observe their duties of confidentiality after they have left Crown employment.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Child Care Disregard

Mr. Chisholm: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many families in Scotland have benefited from the child care disregard of up to £40 a week since October 1994; and what is the average financial gain per family. [39928]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: From 1 October 1994 to 30 June 1995, 5,000 families in Scotland claimed for help with their child care charges. Of these, 2,000 claims were disallowed, 1,000 families had their child care charges allowed but received no extra benefit because they were already in receipt of their maximum family credit and 2,000 families received higher family credit awards as a result of the help with child care charges with an average gain of £12.67 family credit per week.

Source:

One in 20 sample of family credit awards made between 1 October 1994 and June 1995.

Information Technology

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what research has been carried out by the Social Security Information Technology Services Agency into computer systems for the Child Support Agency; and what is the estimated cost of this research. [39931]

Mr. Burt: ITSA has supported the Child Support Agency for some years in the provision of its IT services. This has required a considerable amount of detailed analysis into the CSA's requirements and the most appropriate technical solutions. In addition, there have been a number of short reviews carried out including a recent examination of child support systems within the USA. The cost of these activities cannot be separated from overall support costs, but the amount spent on the review has been very small.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps his Department has taken to monitor the operational effectiveness of the computer system supplied by the company EDS to the state of Florida Child Support Agency before awarding EDS the computer system contract for the UK Child Support Agency. [39932]

Mr. Burt: As part of the normal tender evaluation process and prior to completion of contract negotiations, officials from DSS visited Florida in early 1992 to discuss with them the EDS system. At that time the system was not fully implemented, but it was demonstrated and no operational problems came to light.

Maintenance Payments

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many parents with dependent children claiming income support were receiving maintenance in each year since 1989; and in the case of Child Support Agency assessments, how many of these were minimum assessments of £2.30 or less. [37589]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell *[holding answer 24 October 1995]:* The numbers of income support recipients with dependants receiving maintenance were:

Year	*Cases*
1989	174,000
1990	171,000
1991	194,000
1992	210,000
1993	196,000
1994	114,000

The figure for 1994 covers only cases in which maintenance is paid directly between the two parties. Figures are not yet available for maintenance collected by the Department.

Number of cases with maintenance of £2.30 or less

Year	*Cases*
1989	7,000
1990	5,000
1991	8,000
1992	7,000
1993	4,000
1994	4,000

It is not possible to break this down to show amounts due solely to Child Support Agency assessments. Again, the figure for 1994 covers only cases where maintenance is paid directly between the parties.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Public Appointments, South Yorkshire

Mr. Redmond: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which his Department makes appointments in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating the total annual budget and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years. [39440]

Mr. Lang: The DTI is not responsible for any non-departmental public bodies in the county of South Yorkshire.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list the public appointments for which his Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating in each case the duration of the appointment, the date when a new appointment is due, and the salary. [39472]

Mr. Lang: Information on lay appointments to the industrial tribunals is not available for South Yorkshire as appointments are made on a regional rather than a county basis. Appointments are made triennially from 25 October for an initial period of three years and are renewable up to age 70. Lay members are not paid a salary but receive a fee of £119 for a whole day's sitting plus travelling and subsistence allowances, where applicable.

The DTI makes no other public appointments in the county of South Yorkshire.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39557]

Mr. Lang: Estimated outturn for 1994–95 and plans for 1995–96 for civil service manpower and pay bill are set out in my Department's annual report, Cm 2804, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House. A breakdown by grade could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many times in the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39863]

Mr. Lang: The heads of agencies have meetings with their responsible Ministers to discuss the work of their agencies as appropriate. I would expect to meet them when particular issues arise and in any event to discuss their corporate plans as part of the DTI MINIS management process. I have not met any heads of agencies since my arrival in July.

Regional Assistance, Doncaster

Mr. Redmond: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what plans he has to change the present strategy of regional assistance as it affects the Doncaster area. [39449]

Mr. Page: None. When the DTI's assisted areas map was announced in 1993 Ministers made it clear that it would last for at least three years. There are currently no plans to revise the map.

Liquidation Sales

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what steps he is taking to strengthen consumer protection legislation as it relates to liquidation sales and similar sales. [38894]

Mr. Lang: The Government have no plans to change consumer protection law as it relates to liquidation and similar sales.

Oil and Gas Division

Mr. Salmond: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many people are employed with the Department of Trade and Industry's oil and gas division in Scotland on *(a)* a full-time and *(b)* a part-time basis. [39666]

Mr. Eggar *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* My Department's oil and gas division employs 41 full-time staff and one part-time in Scotland.

My Department's offshore supplies office also employs 67 full-time and two part-time staff in Glasgow and eight full-time staff in Aberdeen.

PRIME MINISTER

President of Iran

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister on what dates in the last two years he received letters from the President of Iran; and on what dates he replied to them. [40277]

The Prime Minister: I received a letter dated 30 May 1995 from President Rafsanjani. The letter did not require a reply.

Policy Unit (Costs)

Dr. Wright: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the cost of the No. 10 policy unit for each year since 1980–81 in *(a)* cash prices and *(b)* 1994–95 prices. [38824]

The Prime Minister: The cost of the policy unit was not accounted for separately before 1987–88. Expenditure from 1987–88 is listed in cash prices and 1994–95 prices.

£000's

Year	*Expenditure Cash*	*1994–95 prices*
1987–88	476	680
1988–89	535	716
1989–90	521	652
1990–91	537	622
1991–92	577	629
1992–93	622	652
1993–94	659	671
1994–95	644	644

Departmental Staff

Dr. Wright: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the number of staff in his office at the beginning of each financial year from 1990 to 1995, expressed as *(a)* full-time equivalents, *(b)* head count of numbers of staff employed and *(c)* identify separately the number of staff in office service support grades either as full-time equivalents or as head count for the same years. [38822]

The Prime Minister: The information is as follows:

	Total[1] (full-time equivalents)	*Total (head count)*	*Office service support grades (head count)*
1 April 1990	95	102	26
1 April 1991	97	102	26
1 April 1992	95	102	26
1 April 1993	100	107	26
1 April 1994	100	107	26
1 April 1995	100	107	26

[1] The figures for full-time equivalent staff in post have been rounded to the nearest whole number. The figures for 1990 and 1991 include office services support grades working in No. 10 who were formally transferred to the No. 10 complement on 1 April 1992.

Breast Cancer Campaign

Ms Corston: To ask the Prime Minister when he will be in a position to report the precise number of postcards he has received in support of the national postcard campaign for breast cancer. [40389]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) on 16 October, *Official Report*, column *23*.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Aid Statistics

34. **Sir Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the total of overseas aid, excluding EU aid, to be made by his Department in the current financial year; and what were the comparable totals five and 10 years ago. [37869]

Mr. Hanley: In 1995–96 the total planned ODA aid budget excluding EC aid is £1,502 million. In 1990–91 it stood at £1,378 million and in 1987–88 at £1,094 million.

China

35. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the value of multilateral aid projects to China to which Britain contributes; and what is that cost to Britain of such multilateral aid. [37870]

Mr. Hanley: In 1994, the World bank, Asian development bank, and the United Nations aid agencies committed the equivalent of around £2.9 billion to China. An overall estimate of the cost to the UK cannot readily be calculated. In addition, the EC committed the equivalent of some £27 million in 1994, of which the expected British share will be £4.5 million.

Aid Budget (Discussions)

36. **Mr. Hanson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with aid agencies regarding the 1996–97 overseas aid budget. [37871]

Mr. Hanley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not had any recent formal discussions with aid agencies, but my right hon. and noble Friend Baroness Chalker has regular meetings with non-governmental organisations, to which she attaches high priority and at which all aspects of ODA policies are discussed.

Hurricane Damage, Caribbean

Sir Michael Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received regarding recent hurricane damage in the Caribbean; what has been Her Majesty's Government's response. [37899]

Mr. Hanley: We have received requests for relief assistance from the Governments of Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda and the Commonwealth of Dominica.

The following commitments have been made:

Country	*Purpose*	*Amount committed £*
Regional	Mobilisation of Caribbean disaster relief unit assessment mission	16,155
Anguilla	Purchase of relief supplies	143,000

Country	Purpose	Amount committed £
Anguilla	Subsistence costs of Royal Marines	10,000
Anguilla	Anguilla disaster relief fund	100,000
Antigua	Restoration of power supplies (Northern Ireland Electricity)	381,200
Barbuda	Roofing repairs to hospital	5,000
Dominica	Purchase/delivery of basic foodstuffs	250,000
Total		905,355

In addition, soon after Hurricane Luis passed directly over Anguilla, the West Indies guardship, HMS Southampton, arrived to co-ordinate damage assessment and repairs. She was accompanied by her support ship RFA Oakleaf. Within 24 hours of HMS Southampton's arrival, the assessment was completed and repairs were under way. Work parties from the two ships were bolstered by the arrival of a party of Royal Marines, whose duties included support to the Royal Anguilla police force.

British forces were also able to make a major contribution in Antigua, where a party of Royal Marines was instrumental in reopening the airport and repairing Halberton hospital as well as undertaking a host of other tasks.

Regarding longer-term rehabilitation, we have invited Anguilla to submit proposals and are currently considering the needs of the affected independent states.

Angola

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what aid is currently being granted to *(a)* Angola and *(b)* children in Angola; and if he will make a statement. [38645]

Mr. Hanley: We are currently providing bilateral emergency aid through non-governmental organisations and UN agencies for seeds and tools, primary health, humanitarian de-mining, food supply and distribution, demobilisation and logistic support—in addition to our share of EC assistance for similar activities. Children are among the most vulnerable groups in Angola who benefit under many of these interventions. Our longer-term development aid is focused on English language training and a fund to support NGO long-term rehabilitation projects.

Amazonia

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what safeguards exist within the G7 pilot programme to conserve the Brazilian rain forest to protect the interests of indigenous people in Amazonia. [38544]

Mr. Hanley: The programme includes a project to regularise indigenous lands in Amazonia and to protect indigenous populations and areas. The interests of indigenous people are further safeguarded by a separate requirement within the programme that they participate in the zoning of the region.

Illegal Drug Production

Dr. Goodson-Wickes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent progress he has to report on programmes to eradicate the production of illegal drugs. [37864]

Mr. Hanley: ODA's current largest involvement in such programmes is in Pakistan where there has recently been encouraging progress. ODA approved a further £3.6 million in January this year for phase 2 of the United Nations drugs control programme alternative development project in the Dir district to cover the period 1995 to 1998. Opportunities to identify similar activities in other developing countries remain under constant review.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Postal and Proxy Votes

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what procedures will be put in place prior to the general election to ensure that those entitled to postal and proxy votes are made aware of their rights as soon as possible by means of public advertising; and if he will make a statement. [39159]

Mr. Ancram: The nature and extent of advertising or publicity specifically in Northern Ireland has yet to be decided.

Housing Executive Grants Offices

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the budgetary allocation to Housing Executive grants offices; and if he will make a statement on the measures he will take to deal with the financial deficit faced by such offices and delays in processing applications for home improvement grants. [38810]

Mr. Moss: None. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is responsible for the allocation of its financial resources among its regional and district offices. I have, however, increased the overall resources available to the Housing Executive by £18 million during the 1995–96 financial year, bringing the total to £544 million. The chief executive of the Housing Executive has informed me that, in response to the very high demand for grant aid, an additional £8 million has been directed to support the grants budget, bringing the total to £42 million. Due to this continued demand the Housing Executive has prioritised the issue of grant approvals with precedence being given to applications relating to disabled facilities grants, repairs grants, minor works assistance for the elderly and replacement grants which have an element of adaption for the disabled.

Sheep and Suckler Cow Quota

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the application forms for sheep and suckler cow quota in respect of the 1995 national reserve will be made available; and what is the reason for delay. [38808]

Mr. Ancram: Application forms for sheep and suckler cow quota in respect of the 1995 reserves are expected to be available before the end of 1995.

The opening of these reserves has been delayed because, together with the UK Agriculture Departments, we have been putting into place arrangements to deal with the outcome of a judicial review which found that the administration of part of the 1993 reserve process in the UK has been unlawful. This judgment had repercussions on the supply of quota for subsequent reserve years and it was essential to consider these implications in advance of opening the 1995 reserves.

Prisoners

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to bring legislation to the House restoring 50 per cent. remission to prison sentences served in Northern Ireland prisons; and if he will make a statement. [40448]

Sir John Wheeler: The legislation was introduced to the House on 26 October.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in which prisons there are prisoners restricted to closed visits; and what are the numbers of prisoners involved. [39417]

Sir John Wheeler: Responsibility for the subject in question has been delegated to the Northern Ireland Prison Service under its chief executive, Mr. Alan Shannon. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from A. D. Shannon to Mr. Seamus Mallon, dated 30 October 1995:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question relating to closed visits in Northern Ireland prisons and the number of prisoners involved.

Within the Northern Ireland Prison Service there is provision to restrict a prisoner to closed visits where there is no contact between the visitor and the prisoner, usually in order to prevent the passage of contraband. Such restrictions are applied from time to time on the authority of the Governor. As of 25 October 1995 no prisoner is subject to such a restriction.

I hope this information is helpful.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many category A prisoners are currently in the prison system in Northern Ireland; and how many are in each sub-category; [38845]

(2) what arrangements are made for prisoners who are restricted to closed visits to have *(a)* visits from their legal advisers and *(b)* consular visits. [38842]

Sir John Wheeler: Responsibility for the subject has been delegated to the Northern Ireland Prison Service under its chief executive, Mr. Alan Shannon. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from A. D. Shannon to Mr. Seamus Mallon, dated 30 October 1995:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has asked me to reply to two Parliamentary Questions which you have tabled, one relating to visiting arrangements for legal advisers for prisoners restricted to closed visits, and the other in relation to numbers of Category A prisoners in NI prisons.

Visiting Arrangements

In Northern Ireland prisoners who are restricted to closed visits with ordinary visitors or relatives are allowed to receive visits from their legal advisers and consular officials in rooms designated for that purpose. Such rooms do not incorporate glass partitions or other restrictions between prisoners and families.

Number of Prisons in Category A

In the Northern Ireland Prison Service the terms used in determining the security category of a prisoner differ from the terms used in the Prison Service in England and Wales. I have set out below the broad equivalent categories in each service.

Northern Ireland	*England*
Top Risk	Exceptionally High Risk Category A
High Risk	High Risk Category A/Standard Category A
Medium Risk	Category B
Low Risk	Category C

Using Northern Ireland terms the answer to your second question is that on 23 October 1995 one Top Risk and 356 High Risk Prisoners were held in Northern Ireland Prisons.

I hope this information is helpful.

Youth Organisations

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the criteria laid down by the Youth Council of Northern Ireland for grant assistance to (i) uniformed youth organisations; and (ii) other youth organisations. [38846]

Mr. Ancram: Youth organisations are considered for funding if they

(a) have a governing body responsible for all assets and liabilities;

(b) are registered as a charity or corporated;

(c) have a published memorandum/articles of association which reflect the objectives of the Northern Ireland Youth Service;

(d) are voluntary, ie not operating for commercial gain; and

(e) publish audited accounts.

There is no differentiation in criteria for assistance to uniformed and non-uniformed organisations.

The Youth Council is currently reviewing its criteria for funding with the aim of applying new arrangements from April 1997.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what account is taken of the multiple membership of some uniformed youth organisations, by some individuals, when calculating the level of grant aid available from the Youth Council for Northern Ireland; and what impact this has had on organisations that do not include members of other uniformed organisations. [38839]

Mr. Ancram: Membership is not a criterion for deciding the levels of funding allocated to youth organisations. The Youth Council for Northern Ireland allocates core funding for HQ administrative costs rather than programme activities.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans has he to increase the funding available to youth organisations in Northern Ireland. [38838]

Mr. Ancram: About 5 million ecu will be made available to the youth sector under the European Union special initiative for peace and reconciliation.

The Government will provide additional funds to meet up to 25 per cent. of the total cost of projects funded under this initiative.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of funding provided to uniformed youth organisations by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland is awarded to organisations perceived to be (i) Catholic, (ii) Protestant, and (iii) non-denominational. [38837]

Mr. Ancram: All uniformed organisations are open to membership by young people from all sections of the community. However, a number of organisations are based in particular churches. In these cases, the organisations may be perceived as being associated with a specific denomination.

	Percentage
Catholic	23.5
Protestant	37.5
Non-denominational	39.0

Cable Television

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what environmental protection measures have specifically been included in contracts awarded to CableTel for cabling in Northern Ireland as a result of experience in England. [38809]

Mr. Ian Taylor: I have been asked to reply.

Cable franchisees require licensing under both broadcasting and telecommunications legislation. Although CableTel was awarded the Northern Ireland franchise earlier this year, and on 2 October was licensed under the Broadcasting Act 1990, it has yet to be granted a Telecommunications Act licence to enable it to install and run its systems in the street and on private land within the franchise area. During statutory public consultation on the granting of CableTel's licence there will be an opportunity for representations to be made about the inclusion of licence conditions relating to environmental protection.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. Welsh: To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what area, in hectares and percentage terms, of environmentally sensitive areas in England is made up of productive, or potentially productive, agricultural land. [37131]

Mr. Boswell: Current estimates of productive or potentially productive agricultural land within environmentally sensitive areas in England are:

Environmentally sensitive areas	*Productive or potentially productive area (hectares)*	*Percentage of total area designated*
Stage I ESAs (launched in 1987)		
Broads	24,000	67
Somerset Levels and Moors	25,800	93
Pennine Dales	39,900	86
West Penwith	6,700	93
South Downs	51,700	75
Stage II ESAs (launched in 1988)		
Breckland	51,600	55
North Peak	50,500	92
Clun	17,600	82
Suffolk River Valleys	32,800	75
Test Valley	3,300	69
Stage III ESAs (launched in 1993)		
Avon Valley	3,800	73
Exmoor	67,700	84
Lake District	202,600	83
North Kent Marshes	12,200	83
South Wessex Downs	38,300	83
South West Peak	29,500	87
Stage IV ESAs (launched in 1994)		
Cotswold Hills	66,100	78
Dartmoor	84,500	84
Blackdown Hills	32,000	81
Essex Coast	21,300	79
Shropshire Hills	34,900	91
Upper Thames Tributaries	23,200	84
Total	920,000	80

The area given in the first column exclude woodland, urban areas—(e.g., built-up land, recreational/amenity land), mineral workings, roads, water (e.g. rivers and lakes), non-farmed land (e.g reedbed, swamp/marginal vegetation and saltmarsh) and unvegetated land (cliff/foreshore, mudflats and bare rock).

Intervention Beef

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current level of stock in beef, in tonnes, held in intervention in the United Kingdom; and if he will give details of the age profile of the stock. [38983]

Mr. Baldry: The level of intervention beef stocks in the United Kingdom on 23 October 1995 was 8,858 tonnes. This figure includes stocks of beef committed under the current processing sale EEC regulation 1181/95.

The age profile of these stocks is:

1990: 378.0 tonnes

1991: 2230.5 tonnes

1992: 3677.5 tonnes

1993: 2572.0 tonnes

Premium Schemes

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the cost in 1994, in Humberside and the three counties of Yorkshire of payments under *(a)* the sheep annual premium, *(b)* the suckler cow premium, *(c)* the beef special premium and *(d)* the hill livestock compensatory allowances: and what is his estimate of the cost in 1995. [38990]

Mr. Baldry: The cost in 1994 and an estimate of the cost in 1995 for Humberside and the three counties of Yorkshire of the sheep annual premium scheme, the suckler cow premium scheme, the beef special premium scheme and the hill livestock compensatory allowances scheme are as follows:

1984 Scheme payments

£ million

County	*SAPS*	*SCPS*	*BSPS*	*HLCAs*	*Total*
Humberside	1.031	1.074	1.476	0.000	3.581
North Yorkshire	17.172	4.737	6.061	4.107	32.077
South Yorkshire	0.663	0.610	0.687	0.213	2.173
West Yorkshire	1.967	1.215	0.938	0.719	4.839

1995 Scheme estimated payments

£ million

County	*SAPS*[1]	*SCPS*[2]	*BSPS*[3]	*HLCAs*[4]	*Total*
Humberside	1.165	1.407	1.951	0.000	4.523
North Yorkshire	19.405	6.206	8.012	4.107	37.730
South Yorkshire	0.750	0.799	0.909	0.213	2.671
West Yorkshire	2.222	1.592	1.240	0.720	5.774

Notes:

[1] Based on an estimated 13 per cent. increase in premium rate

[2] Based on an estimated 31 per cent. increase in premium rate

[3] Based on an estimated 28 per cent. increase in premium rate where extensification is payable and 35 per cent. where it is not payable

[4] Based on an estimate of a nil increase in allowance rate

EC Grant Schemes

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the cost in 1994, in Humberside and the three counties of Yorkshire, of payments under *(a)* the environmentally sensitive areas scheme, *(b)* the nitrate sensitive areas scheme, *(c)* the farm and conservation grant scheme, *(d)* the pilot beef and sheep extensification schemes, *(e)* the woodland grant scheme, *(f)* the farm woodland premium scheme, *(g)* the orchard grubbing scheme, *(h)* the optional five-year set-aside scheme, *(j)* the habitat scheme, *(j)* the habitat scheme, *(k)* the moorland scheme, *(l)* the countryside access scheme and *(n)* the organic aid scheme; and what is his estimate of the cost in 1995. [38991]

Mr. Boswell: The information is available on a financial year basis as follows:

Level of expenditure

£000's

Scheme	*1994–95 (actual)*	*1995–96 (estimate)*
Environmentally sensitive areas	1,375	1,479
Nitrate sensitive areas	15	650
Farm and conservation grant scheme	2,106	660
Pilot beef and sheep extensification schemes	114	114
Woodland grant scheme	1,064	1,280
Farm woodland premium scheme	[1]n/a	[1]n/a
Orchard grubbing scheme	0	0
Five year set-aside scheme	[1]n/a	[1]n/a
Habitat scheme	0	55
Moorland scheme	0	0
Countryside access scheme	0	2
Organic aid scheme	0	2.5

[1]n/a = Not Available

The information requested is not readily available for these schemes and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Fishing Vessels

Mr. Beith: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will introduce a scheme of grants for work to and equipment for fishing vessels under 12 m in length which is required by the new safety standards. [39815]

Mr. Baldry: The safety code for under 12 m fishing vessels is still being developed by the Department of Transport's Marine Safety Agency in consultation with the fishing industry. The aim is to publish the code in 1996 and for it to come into force in 1997 with requirements for existing vessels being phased in over a two-year period. Once the code is finalised the Government will carefully consider the implications for the current vessel safety grants scheme which applies to vessels of 12 m and over.

Coriander

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many hectares of land during 1995 have been used to grow coriander as an alternative to oilseed rape; what was the figure for 1994; and if he will make a statement. [39537]

Mr. Baldry: This Ministry does not routinely collect data on this crop. Coriander was not grown on set-aside in 1994 or 1995. The crop can be used as a green vegetable or for flavouring and the seeds contain 18 per cent. oil predominantly of oleic and petroselenic fatty acids but germination of the crop can be erratic in the UK.

Intervention Stocks

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total tonnage of disposable stocks of each commodity held in intervention stock in the United Kingdom on 30 June; and what was the figure for that date in *(a)* 1994, *(b)* 1993 and *(c)* 1992. [39535]

Mr. Baldry: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on 23 October 1995, *Official Report,* column *480.*

Oilseed Rape

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many hectares of land during 1995 have been used to grow oilseed rape; and what were the figures for *(a)* 1985, *(b)* 1975 and *(c)* 1965. [39536]

Mr. Baldry: The information requested is as follows:

	[1]*1968*	*1975*	*1985*	[2]*1995*
Area (hectares)	6,486	38,987	295,620	441,620

[1] No census data are available for 1965.

[2] Provisional.

Sources:

Provisional June census results 1995 (United Kingdom) and estimate of oilseeds on set-aside land.

Agricultural Statistics United Kingdom 1985.

Agricultural Statistics England and Wales 1975 and 1968. Figures converted from acres to hectares using 1 hectare = 2.47 acres. No figures collected for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Set-aside Payments

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what were the 20 highest sums paid in set-aside payments in each of the past three years for which payments have been made. [39824]

Mr. Baldry: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 11 July, *Official Report,* column *631.* Set-aside payments for 1995 are still being made and details will not be available until after the close of the payment window on 31 December.

Turtles

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on his guidelines for fishermen on how to deal with *(a)* reptiles and *(b)* endangered species of turtles in the waters around the United Kingdom. [39426]

Mr. Baldry: The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provides protection for marine turtles within UK territorial waters. If any fisherman finds a reptile or a marine turtle in his nets, it should be returned to the sea.

TRANSPORT

MOT Tests

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what new proposals he has to improve the efficiency of MOT tests on cars and lorries. [39820]

Mr. Norris: We are continually looking for ways to improve the efficiency of tests. For example, we believe the introduction of computerisation into the MOT scheme would increase compliance and improve testing standards, so we have recently appointed consultants to advise on the options for doing so. We are also allowing vehicle inspectorate examiners to test HGVs at vehicle operators' premises, provided they are suitably equipped.

Company Cars

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his calculation of the additional accident rates of company cars; and what measure he plans to introduce to reduce the accident totals. [39818]

Mr. Norris: The annual involvement in injury accidents per 10,000 vehicles is given in "Transport Statistics Great Britain 1995", HMSO; for vehicles registered in 1991 to 1993 the accident involvement in 1993 was 128 per 10,000 privately owned cars and 192 per 10,000 company cars.

My Department works with, and grant aids, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, which is a key provider of driver training courses to companies. These have reduced accidents among company car drivers and have proved cost-effective for employers. The Department is conducting research on the effectiveness of driver training and other fleet management safety policies. Many road safety measures, aimed at all drivers, will also cut accidents among company car drivers.

US-UK Air Talks

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current status of the US-UK air talks; and if he will make a statement. [40309]

Mr. Norris: Despite concessions offered by the United Kingdom Government, the US Government formally broke off talks on UK-US air services on 20 October. The talks covered a package of new measures designed to increase opportunities for air travellers, shippers and airlines. We stand ready to resume talks as soon as the US Government are ready to do so.

Bus Companies

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many complaints have been received to date by the Office of Fair Trading on anti-competitive behaviour by bus companies; and how many were made by his Department. [40488]

Mr. Norris: I understand that 610 such complaints have been received by the Office of Fair Trading—none initiated by my Department.

Catalytic Converters

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of cars are fitted with catalytic converters. [39890]

Mr. Norris: The last assessment of the percentage of cars fitted with three-way catalytic converters was given in my reply to the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston (Mr. Miller) on 17 July, *Official Report*, column *877*. The number estimated at that time was equivalent to 21.85 per cent. of the total passenger car fleet which numbered 22.2 million at the end of 1994.

Since all new petrol-engined passenger cars must now be fitted with three-way catalytic converters the percentage will continue to rise.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect on the ozone level of the use of catalytic converters in vehicles. [39891]

Mr. Norris: The third report of the United Kingdom photochemical review oxidants group, which advises the Secretary of State for the Environment, states that the

> "3—way automotive catalyst is the best currently available technology for control of emissions of CO, VOCs and NO, from petrol engine vehicles".

The report discusses in detail the likely effect of this control on levels of ozone in the air. A copy is available in the House of Commons Library.

Benzene

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what impact the use of super-unleaded petrol has had on emissions of benzene. [39893]

Mr. Norris: Current data indicate that, on average, petrol—both leaded and unleaded—in the United Kingdom contains between 2 per cent. and 3 per cent. benzene with no significant trends between the grades.

Low Sulphur Fuel

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to encourage the use of low sulphur fuel by bus operators. [39905]

Mr. Norris: Regulations are already in place—SI 1994 No. 2295—which require low sulphur diesel fuel from 1 October 1996. This new fuel, which will be widely available and not restricted to certain market sectors, will bring benefits, in terms of particulate reduction, across the whole of the diesel fleet.

Devolved Expenditure

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what items of his Department's expenditure have been devolved to local authorities since 1979. [39978]

Mr. Norris: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Tachographs

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his oral answer of 23 October, *Official Report*, column 688, if he will list the inspection rates for tachographs for each of the European Countries referred to. [40009]

Mr. Norris: The European Commission has to report every two years to the Council on implementation of the EU regulation on drivers' hours, based upon information supplied by member states. The last report, covering the years 1986 to 1990, provided insufficient detail to compare individual countries accurately. I am sending the hon. Member an extract from it. However, checks carried out by the Vehicle Inspectorate in the United Kingdom exceed the regulation's requirement for member states to check at least 1 per cent. of days worked by drivers and our police forces carry out additional checks.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has to encourage tamper-proof tachographs. [39981]

Mr. Norris: EU regulations set out the technical specifications for recording equipment in road transport. From 1 January 1996, new vehicles must be fitted with a tachograph which automatically records on the chart any interruption of the power supply and each opening of the tachograph case. In addition, the connecting cable from the transmitter must have improved protection. We have also supported Commission proposals for the introduction of digital recording equipment, and regret that at its meeting in June the Transport Council was unable to agree how best to take these proposals forward.

Car Alarms

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his Department's policy on the use of car alarms and the impact on noise pollution during the night. [39896]

Mr. Norris: Car alarms are a positive deterrent to car crime. I am aware, however, of the concern felt about their potential for noise nuisance and will shortly be consulting on regulations which will reduce the maximum period of audible alarm signal permitted to 30 seconds for new alarms and prohibit the use of audible signals to confirm setting or unsetting of the alarm system. These changes, while not compromising the security value of alarms, should considerably reduce any noise nuisance.

Noise nuisance can also now be tackled in the street by environmental health officers. Powers under the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993, permit EHOs to forcibly enter cars, in certain circumstances, to disable illegally sounding devices which are causing a noise nuisance.

Windscreen Washers

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his Department's policy towards persons cleaning car windscreens at traffic lights; and if he will make a statement. [39897]

Mr. Norris: Road traffic law provides that if a person, without lawful authority or excuse, wilfully obstructs the free passage along a highway, he or she is guilty of an offence. We have no evidence that persons cleaning car windscreens at traffic lights represent a road safety problem.

Vehicle Pollution

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what evidence he has to show whether a minority of cars emit a majority of pollution; and what proposals he has to resolve the problem. [39901]

Mr. Norris: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) on 18 July at column *1016* and 16 October at column *89*.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what impact vehicle pollution has on drivers inside their vehicles; and if he will make a statement. [39906]

Mr. Norris: There is no evidence to suggest that the health of drivers is subject to any greater degree of risk as a result of pollution inside their vehicles than that to which the public at large are exposed.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice his Department offers to motorists buying a new car on the relative health benefits and disbenefits of diesel and petrol cars. [39888]

Mr. Norris: At the moment the Government neither recommend nor discourage the purchase and use of diesel or petrol cars on environmental or health grounds. This policy will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, in the light of medical evidence as to the health effects of these fuels.

HGV Drivers

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department is currently undertaking into the effects of fatigue in heavy goods vehicle drivers. [39982]

Mr. Norris: We are continuing with our research programme into the relative effectiveness of possible countermeasures to tiredness, to ensure that the best advice is available to all drivers on how to minimise the risk of having a sleep-related accident.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues on penalties for employers who bring pressure on heavy goods vehicle drivers to work illegally long hours; and if he will make a statement. [39992]

Mr. Norris: Enforcement authorities can, and do, prosecute employers where it can be proved that they caused or permitted a driver to break the drivers' hours or tachograph rules. These offences carry maximum fines of £2,500—level 4—and £5,000—level 5—respectively. Deliberate falsification of a tachograph chart can result in up to two years' imprisonment.

Such offences are also taken into account by the licensing authorities when reviewing an operator's compliance with the conditions of his licence. Offenders can be called to a public inquiry, and their licences can be curtailed, suspended or revoked.

Local Authority Spending

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the balance of spending on transport between local authorities and central Government. [39979]

Mr. Norris: Figures for central and local Government expenditure on transport are contained in table 1.17 of "Transport Statistics Great Britain 1995," copies of which are in the Library.

Trunk Roads

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he intends to conduct a general review of the trunk roads programme. [39848]

Mr. Watts: The current programme was set out in "Trunk Roads in England—1994 Review". We keep the programme under review and adjust it as circumstances change.

Channel Tunnel Link

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he now expects the high-speed link from the channel tunnel to be completed; and if he will make a statement. [39762]

Mr. Watts: The start of the main construction works will follow the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill gaining Royal Assent and the promoter completing sufficient design and other work to achieve the necessary raising of finance. The Government will place contractual obligations on the private sector promoter as to the timetable for construction of the main works, but as negotiations with the shortlisted bidders are still under way it is too early to say what the timetable might be. Union Railways planned a construction programme of about five and a half years.

Plutonium

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what policy proposals Her Majesty's Government have put to the recent conference held in Vienna to decide on the standards to be adopted for casks used to transport by air consignments of plutonium in mixed oxide form and what response was made by the British delegation to the United States proposals. [39253]

Mr. Norris: The Advisory Committee on the Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials—ACTRAM—concluded that the air transport of certain physical forms of mixed plutonium—uranium oxide constitutes no significant inhalation hazard. At the meeting in Vienna in September the United Kingdom delegation therefore supported the proposal that such material could continue to be transported by air in packages currently approved to International Atomic Energy Agency standards, provided that the material itself meets stringent test requirements which minimise the potential inhalation hazard.

The UK, in common with a large majority of other member state delegations, could not accept the United States proposals.

Humber Bridge

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when legislation will be introduced to enable powers to be given to him to reduce the debt on the Humber bridge; and if he will make a statement. [39886]

Mr. Watts: We remain committed to introducing, at the earliest opportunity, a Bill to deal with the debt.

Eurostar

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers he has to ensure that sufficient space to allow bicycles to be carried is available on Eurostar. [40058]

Mr. Watts: There is no requirement in the current train operator's licence for European Passenger Services and the Secretary of State has no plans to vary this. Eurostar does, however, intend to begin carrying bicycles in a few months' time.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department spends annually on *(a)* road building, *(b)* light rapid transits and *(c)* cycleways. [39771]

Mr. Watts: In 1994–95, the Department provided capital resources of £1.9 billion for constructing trunk roads and supporting the construction of local authority roads, and £60.2 million for light rapid transit schemes.

The majority of the Department's expenditure on cycleways is included in the overall capital settlement for local transport. With the exception of the specific grant the Department is providing this year for the London cycle network, provision for cycleways forms part of local authorities' wider allocation for highways and traffic management schemes. The exact sum spent is at the discretion of the local authorities, and the Department does not collect figures centrally. In addition, many of the Highways Agency's trunk road schemes include measures to improve the safety of cyclists, and the agency is committed to helping provide safe and convenient crossings of trunk roads by the national cycle network.

Open Skies Pact

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the latest effort of the European Union to replace separate national air traffic accords with an open skies pact between the US and Europe. [39760]

Mr. Norris: The European Commission's proposal for a draft negotiating mandate for EU-US negotiations, aimed at liberalising the EC-US market, was put to the Council of Ministers for consideration at its meeting in June 1995.

The Council agreed to postpone discussion of the Commission's proposal and instead requested the Commission to carry out a thorough analysis to show whether a better result for all member states could realistically be produced by negotiations at Community level and to define the common interest. The study is due to be presented at the December Transport Council meeting.

A34

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the European Commission's plan to drop legal action on the A34 Newbury bypass and the M77. [39761]

Mr. Watts: We welcome the Commission's announcement. It confirms the view that the British Government have taken all along.

Toll Roads

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals his Department has for the introduction of toll roads; and if he will make a statement. [39766]

Mr. Watts: Trials of electronic motorway tolling systems will start next year. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South (Mr. MacGregor) announced on 2 December 1993, *Official Report*, columns *646–49*, this assessment of technology will provide the basis on which to decide when to bring forward the legislation necessary for electronic motorway charging. I have no other proposals for the introduction on toll roads.

"Life on the Edge"

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the videotape, "Life on the Edge" on guidance to emergency repair operators on motorways. [39623]

Mr. Watts: The video and the associated code of practice provide advice on good practice in vehicle recovery operations. They are a welcome initiative from the industry and a valuable contribution towards improving safety standards.

Rail Privatisation

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated cost to date of rail privatisation. [37914]

Mr. Watts: Costs incurred to date by the Department, the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising and the Office of the Rail Regulator are as follows. They include running costs and consultancy costs.

£ million

	1991–92	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*[1]
DOT	1.0	6.7	13.5[2]	14.2	8.8
OPRAF	—	—	2.4	16.6	15.4
ORR	—	—	1.4	9.0	4.0
Total	1.0	6.7	17.3	39.8	28.2

Notes:

[1] Estimated costs to 30 September 1995.

[2] Includes £1.5 million contribution by DOT to the costs of setting up Opraf and ORR prior to formal appointments of the franchising director and Rail Regulator.

In addition, British Rail and Railtrack have incurred costs linked to privatisation. These are shown in the following table:

£ million

Year	
BR/Railtrack	
1991–92	—
1992–93	—
1993–94	92.2
1994–95	131.0
1995–96[1]	57.0

Note:

[1] Estimated costs to 30 September 1995.

HEALTH

Prescriptions

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what policy considerations underlie his policy on whether medication for glaucoma sufferers should be dispensed free of charge in the same manner as for diabetes sufferers. [37652]

Mr. Malone: Exemption from prescription charges on medical grounds was first introduced in 1968. The list was agreed with representatives of general medical practitioners who made it clear that they could agree to exemption only for certain readily identifiable conditions which called automatically for life-long medication.

The arrangements were reviewed in 1993 as part of the Government's review for health service spending. We concluded that the present arrangements should stand.

Capital Expenditure

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the total capital expenditure in *(a)* trusts by region and *(b)* health authorities and other bodies in each of the last three years. [37926]

Mr. Sackville: The total capital expenditure for 1991–92, 1992–93 and 1993–94 will placed in the Library.

The audited figures for 1994–95 are not yet available.

The definition of capital has changed during this period, therefore comparisons between years cannot readily be made. For 1993–94 the threshold value for the definition of capital expenditure was increased from £1,000 to £5,000. This technical change to accounting policy reduced capital expenditure as money spent on tangible assets which was formerly classed as capital was in 1993–94 recorded as revenue. In 1993–94 over £100 million was transferred from capital to revenue to take account of the increase to the capital threshold.

Accident and Emergency Department

Ms Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of patients presenting themselves to accident and emergency departments within *(a)* the London area and *(b)* England in 1994 were assessed by a nurse within five minutes of arriving. [38623]

Mr. Malone: In the quarter ended 31 December 1994, 91 per cent. of patients in England were assessed immediately on arrival in accident and emergency departments. The latest information, for the quarter ended 30 June 1995, shows that national performance has risen to 93 per cent. These figures are based on samples.

Information on the performance of individual London trusts in the quarter ended 31 March 1995 is contained in the 1994–95 NHS performance tables, copies of which are available in the Library.

Research

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out into *(a)* cystic fibrosis and *(b)* colonic strictures; and if he will make a statement; [39317]

(2) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out into gastrointestinal transit in the elderly; and if he will make a statement; [39315]

(3) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out into *(a)* heart rate variability in mountaineers and *(b)* autonomic function and altitude; and if he will make a statement; [39311]

(4) what research his Department carried out into the long term safety and efficacy of TCV-116, 4; 8; 12; 16 mg. once daily, in patients with mild to moderate essential hypertension; and if he will make a statement; [39303]

(5) what research his Department has carried out into the evaluation of palliative care services to people with chronic obstructive airways disease; and if he will make a statement; [39056]

(6) what research his Department has carried out into Valaciclovir international Zoster assessment—VIZA; and if he will make a statement; [39307]

(7) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out into the long-term consequences of gastrointestinal infections; and if he will make a statement; [39299]

(8) what proposals his Department has carried out for a multi-centre pilot study to investigate the physical performance of the Allevyn adhesive dressing; and if he will make a statement; [38967]

(9) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out to assess the efficacy of semi-permanent acupuncture needles in the prevention of post-operative nausea and vomiting; and if he will make a statement; [39313]

(10) what research his Department carried out into avoidable, acute admissions; and if he will make a statement; [39305]

(11) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out into diagnostic reasoning in occupational therapy; and if he will make a statement; [39297]

(12) what research his Department has carried out into the maintenance of activity and acceptability of Tianeptine administered in its prolonged release form—1 x 50 mg/day—in the treatment of *(a)* major depressive disorders and *(b)* dysthymia; and if he will make a statement; [39309]

(13) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out to investigate the effects of clinical use on the durability of Versaflex linear compression bandages; and if he will make a statement; [39301]

(14) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out into the prevention hypoxia after hip fractures; and if he will make a statement; [39316]

(15) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out into the personality in juvenile myoclonic epilepsy; and if he will make a statement; [39312]

(16) what research his Department carried out into current local awareness and trends in the treatment of carpal tunnel syndrome; and if he will make a statement; [39304]

(17) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out into the BASO breast study; and if he will make a statement; [39296]

(18) what research his Department has carried out into a randomised, double-blinded, paralleled group, placebo controlled study of topical lithium succinate cream applied either twice or four times daily in the treatment of herpes labalis U2E-93-02-001; and if he will make a statement; [39308]

(19) what research and evaluation his Department has recently carried out into the needs of adolescent offenders with psychological problems and others with similar difficulties; and if he will make a statement; [39300]

(20) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out to see if early changes in *(a)* insulin sensitivity and *(b)* insulin secretion in early diagnosed type II diabetes predict an ultimate treatment outcome; and if he will make a statement; [39314]

(21) what research his Department has carried out into the prevention of relapse/recurrence in depression with Isapirone treatment—Esprit—and if he will make a statement; [39306]

(22) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out into a randomised controlled trial to compare non-pharmacological methods of relieving perineal discomfort following childbirth; and if he will make a statement; [39298]

(23) what research his Department has carried out into BU9209UK/GP97 comparative effects of Bumetanide plus Captoril, and Frusemide plus Captopril in patients with congestive cardiac failure with long-term follow-up for up to two years; and if he will make a statement; [39310]

(24) what research and findings his Department carried out into an open multicentre study with response dependent dose titration and with a final double-blind comparison with placebo, run-out period; and if he will make a statement; [39302]

(25) what research and evaluation his Department has carried out into the use of an analgesic protocol as a means of rationalising the prescribing of analgesics for pain relief; and if he will make a statement. [39318]

Mr. Malone: None. Research commissioned within the Department's policy research programme is set out in "Centrally Commissioned Research Programme" and "Centrally Commissioned Research Programme: Commissions 1994/95", copies of which are available in the Library.

The main agency through which the Government support biomedical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council. The MRC is an independent body receiving its grant in aid from the Office of Science and Technology which is part of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Osteoporosis

Ms Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to help post-menopausal women suffering from osteoporosis. [39606]

Mr. Sackville: The Department of Health published the report of its advisory group on osteoporosis in January 1995. Copies of the report were distributed to all national health service bodies in England and are available in the Library. The Department is presently working to implement its recommendations. This year, the Department has increased its support for the National Osteoporosis Society.

Clinical Waste

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department last made a study of the methods used by Doncaster royal infirmary and Mexborough Montagu hospital of the incineration of clinical waste; and if he will make a statement. [39569]

Mr. Sackville: My Department does not carry out studies of individual trust clinical waste incineration operations. It does take an overview of clinical waste disposal throughout the national health service and has provided comprehensive guidance.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial years 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39502]

Mr. Sackville: The information requested is shown in the tables in the form readily available from the agencies concerned. The costs include all casual staff and employers' superannuation and national insurance contributions.

NHS Estate Agency

Grade	*1994–95 Number*	*1995–96 Number*
UG3	1	1
UG5	4	4
UG6	16	10
UG7	33	29
SPTO	12	11
SEO	3	5
HEO	13	11
HPTO	7	8
EO	14	10
IO	2	2
PTO	1	1
Cost in 1994–95:		£3,616,043
Estimated cost in 1995–96:		£3,360,337

Notes:

1. The forecast for 1995–96 is that the numbers of staff will not significantly differ from the position at 30 September. The estimated overall cost for the year is based on that assumption.

2. The figures include both civil servants as well as staff on three-year contracts. However, they exclude agency secretarial and clerical staff whose numbers were: 34 (1994–95 at a total *additional* cost of £431,607) and, 33 (forecast for 1995–96 at a forecast total *additional* cost of £445,296).

NHS Pensions Agency

Grade	*1994–95 Whole-time equivalent*	*1995–96 Whole-time equivalent*
UG5	1	1
UG6	2.8	2.8
UG7	2.8	2.8
SEO	9.7	9.7
HEO	22.4	22.4
EO	84.0	84.0
Secretaries	2.8	2.8
AO	249.8	249.8
AA	80.9	80.9
Typing Manager	1.0	1.0
Typists	11.5	11.5
Support Manager	1.0	1.0
Support Grade 1	4.7	4.7
Support Grade 2	38.5	38.5
Cost in 1994–95		£7,482,00.
Estimated cost in 1995–96		It is estimated that costs will not vary significantly over 1994–95.

Note:

1. For 1994–95, the figures given represent the average whole-time equivalent of staff in 1994–95.

Medical Devices Agency

Grade	*1994–1995 Whole-time equivalent*	*1995–1996 Whole-time equivalent*
UG4	1.0	1.0
UG5	3.8	3.0
UG6	6.8	6.5
UG7	23.6	20.6
SPTO	39.8	34.8
HPTO	23.7	18.4
HEO	5.8	6.0
PTO	2.3	6.0
EO/AT	16.0	11.0
AO/TEC11	18.3	21.7
AA	5.7	5.6
PES/SPES/TYPIST	8.7	7.7
Cost in 1994–95		£4,959,000
Estimated cost in 1995–96		£4,845,000

Note:

1. The 1994–95 figures given represent the average whole-time equivalent of staff in 1994–95.

Medicines Control Agency

Grade	*1994–95 Number*	*1995–96 Number*
UG3	1	1
UG4	5	3
UG5	27	30
UG6	15	14
UG7	64	61
SEO	12	12
PHO1	9	11
SSO	4	4
HEO	20	18
HPTO	1	1
HSO	16	19
LIB	1	1
PHO2	4	3
EO	45	47
SO	13	19
SPES	6	5
AO	43	43
ASO	6	6
AA	22	20
TYPIST	2	5
TM	1	1
Cost in 1994–95		£11,594,000
Estimated cost in 1995–96		£13,116,000

Note:

1. The 1994–95 figure represent the staff in post at 31 March 1995.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to collate centrally by national health trust the expenses paid annually to chairmen; and if he will make a statement. [39544]

Mr. Malone: No.

Free Treatment

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the methods used for identifying those not entitled to free treatment from the NHS; and what are the means used to ensure that payment is made.

Mr. Sackville: All national service hospitals are required to have procedures in place to identify and charge patients who are not eligible for free NHS treatment.

Doncaster Health Authority

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list the names of the chairman, general manager or chief executive of the Doncaster health authority and its successor bodies and the Doncaster Healthcare NHS trust in each of the years since 1988–89 and the amounts paid to each person in fees, salaries, other remuneration and expenses for each year; [39540]

(2) if he will list the names of members serving on the Doncaster health authority, its successor bodies and the Doncaster Healthcare NHS trust in each of the financial years since 1988–89 and the amounts paid to each person in fees, salaries, other remuneration and expenses for each year. [39539]

Mr. Malone: Those who have served on the board of Doncaster Healthcare NHS trust since it was established on 1 November 1991—operational on 1 April 1992—and on the board of Doncaster health authority since 1988–89, are as follows:

DONCASTER HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST

Chairman:

1 November 1991 until 30 November 1993: Peter Horsburgh

6 December 1993 to date: David Bertram

Non-executive directors:

M. Spencer (from 1 November 1991 until December 1993), C. Fleming, J. Liversedge, J. Lucas, J. Millar, S. Bryant (from 15.08.94).

Chief Executive:

1 November 1991 until January 1995: Michael Bone 16 January 1995 to date: Peter Oldridge (acting chief executive)

DONCASTER HEALTH AUTHORITY

Members:

1988–89: Mr. P. Adey, Dr. A. Berry, Mrs. R. Cottrell, Mr. E. Dickinson, Mr. R. Fawcett, Dr. J. Finbow, Mrs. J. Fish, Mrs. E Harris, Dr. R. Leggett, Mr. J. McHale, Mrs. B. Meeke, Mrs. M. Robinson, Cllr. F. Milnes, Cllr. N. Swan, Cllr. E. Tattersall, Cllr. P. Welsh.

1989–90: Mr. P Adey, Dr. A. Berry, Mrs. R. Cottrell, Mr. E. Dickinson, Mr. R. Fawcett, Dr. J Finbow, Mrs. J Fish, Mrs. E Harris, Dr. R. Leggett, Mr. J. McHale, Mrs. B. Meeke, Mrs. M. Robinson, Cllr. J. Hawley, Cllr. A. Mitchinson, Cllr. E. Tattersall, Cllr. P. Welsh.

October 1989 to September 1990: Mr. P. Adey, Mr. G. Bardhan, Dr. A. Berry, Mrs. R. Cottrell, Mr. E. Dickinson, Mrs. J. Fish, Mrs. E. Harris, Mr. R. Fawcett, Dr. R. Leggett, Mr. D. McFadden, Mrs. B. Meeke, Mrs. M. Robinson, Cllr. J. Hawley, Cllr. A. Mitchinson, Cllr. E. Tattersall, Cllr. P. Welsh.

September 1990 to March 1991: Mr. E. Dickinson, Mrs. E. Harris, Mr. J. Lusby (resigned November 1990), Mr. M Mitchell, (replaced by Mr. T. Sly, November 1990), Mr. J. Staniland.

April 1991 to date: Mr. E. Dickinson (resigned May 1992), Ms V. Ferres, Mrs. E. Harris, Mr. T. Sly, Mr. J. Staniland, Mr. M. Glover (from April 1993, to replace Mr. Dickinson).

Chairman:

1988–89: Malcolm C. Foy replaced by Graham Smith in June 1989.

1 June 1989 until 31 March 1994: Graham Smith.

1 April 1994 to date: Keith Jones.

Chief Executives:

1989–90: John Lusby until November 1990.

July 1991 to date: John Newton.

Chairmen of district health authorities have been entitled to remuneration annually at the following rates:

Date	*Renumeration*
Prior to 1 April 1989	£11,868
Between 1 April 1989 and 31 March 1990	£12,462
Between 1 April 1990 and 31 December 1990	Within the range £13,674 to £17,437
Between 1 January 1991 and 30 November 1991	Within the range £13,812 to £17,610
From 1 December 1991 to date	Within the range of £15,125 to £19,285

Non-executive members of health authorities are remunerated at a flat rate of £5,000 per annum—before 1990 they received no remuneration.

Since December 1991, chairmen of NHS trusts have been remunerated within the range £15,125 to £19,285 per annum. Non-executive directors of trusts are remunerated at a flat rate of £5,000 per annum. Details of expenses paid to NHS board members are not held centrally.

The total remuneration of the chief executives of Doncaster Healthcare NHS trust and Doncaster health authority during the periods in question is as follows:

Health authority

1988–89: £44,105

1989–90: £47,700

1990–91: £53,353

1991–92: £56,438

1992–93: £70,832[1]

1993–94: £73,270

1994–95: £78,244

Trust

1992–93: £47,000

1993–94: £48,000

1994–95: £50,000

[1] A joint chief executive, for Doncaster DHA and Doncaster FHSA, was appointed on 1 July 1991. Prior to that date there was a DHA general manager and an FHSA general manager.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39849]

Mr. Sackville: My right hon. friend the Secretary of State meets the chief executives of my Department's agencies as and when a specific need to do so arises. Since July, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has held one such meeting.

Trent Health Authority

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement concerning the location of the new headquarters of Trent health authority, indicating the cost of relocation and the cost of using existing premises. [39500]

Mr. Malone: Trent regional health authority will be abolished on 31 March 1996. A number of the functions of the RHA will be carried out by the Trent regional office of the NHS executive. The regional office will occupy the headquarters of the former RHA at Fulwood house, Sheffield. Because the space requirements for the regional office's 135 staff will be smaller than for the RHA, negotiations are under way for Sheffield health authority to take over the freehold for the site and to lease part of the site to the regional office.

Pharmacists

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to hold centrally records on the numbers of pharmacists who have been dismissed by his Department as a result of engaging in the practice of fraudulently collecting a prescription fee from a customer and ticking the exempt box on the prescription form; and if he will make a statement. [39509]

Mr. Malone: Pharmacists are not employed by the Department of Health but are under contract to individual family health services authorities. FHSAs are responsible for taking action against any pharmacist found to be engaging in fraudulent activities. Details of such cases are not available centrally.

Since 1 April 1995 all patients presenting prescriptions for dispensing have been asked to sign the declaration on the back of the prescription form indicating the category of exemption claimed or the amount of the charge they have paid.

Public Appointments, South Yorkshire

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which this Department makes appointments in the county of South Yorkshire, with the total annual budget for each body and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years. [39570]

Mr. Sackville: None.

Treatment Costs

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will bring forward measures to make all patients aware of the cost of their individual treatment under the NHS. [39741]

Mr. Malone: The "Code of Practice on Openness in the NHS", issued in April 1995, sets out the information that NHS trusts are required to make available to members of the public. In most cases, this information will enable estimates of treatment costs to be made. There are no plans to advise patients of the cost of their individual treatment. Copies of the code are available in the Library.

Employment of Children

Mr. Couchman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has for changes to the law on children's employment. [40690]

Mr. Bowis: We have today issued a consultation document proposing some changes to the law on children's employment in England and Wales. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland is undertaking a separate but similar exercise in Scotland. Copies of both consultation documents have been placed in the Library.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by *(a)* trust, *(b)* health authority and *(c)* region, the amounts allocated for the administration of the private finance initiative. [40693]

Mr. Sackville: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 2 May, columns *175-76*, for the available information.

Clinical Negligence

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State, pursuant to his answer of 29 March, *Official Report*, columns *683-84*, when the necessary regulations to establish the special health authority to administer the clinical negligence scheme for trusts will be laid before Parliament; and if he will make a statement. [40791]

Mr. Malone: We have today laid before Parliament an order and regulations to set up the special health authority to deal with the establishment and administration of a clinical negligence scheme for trusts under section 21 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990. The authority will be known as the national health service litigation authority.

It is my intention to appoint Sir Bruce Martin QC as the chairman of the authority, and Dr. Oscar Craig and Mr. Ronald Bradshaw as non-executive members.

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the currently available methods for the detection of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in living humans. [38559]

Mr. Sackville: While there are currently no reliable methods for ante-mortem detection of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, in a small proportion of cases, it may be possible to confirm the diagnosis by a brain biopsy while the patient is still living.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance is issued to pathologists and post-mortem technicians when handling cases involving or potentially involving transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. [38548]

Mr. Sackville: The Department of Health issued guidance to national health service post-mortem staff on handling of bodies suspected to have had, or to have been at risk of developing Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease or Gerstmann-Straussler-Scheinker syndrome in April 1994. Further guidance from the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens on precautions for work with human and animal transmissible spongiform encephalopathies was issued in September 1994. Copies of each of these sets of guidance are available in the Library.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the locations where homogenisation and centrifugation of potential transmissible spongiform encephalopathies takes place. [38851]

Mr. Sackville: Homogenisation and centrifugation of potential transmissible spongiform encephalopathies should take place in laboratories with containment level 2 facilities, with additional precautions as specified by the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens in its guidance on precautions for work with human and animal transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. Information about the locations of these laboratories is not available centrally.

Mr. Hinchcliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what guidance is issued to NHS personnel in maternity units in respect of patients who have received human growth hormone; and what procedures are operated for the handling of placenta and membranes; [38852]

(2) what is the procedures for the disposal of human tissue obtained for the purpose of identifying a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy where tests confirm infection; [38553]

(3) how personnel involved in neurosurgical procedures are advised of potential health risks associated with transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. [38554]

Mr. Sackville: The Department of health issued the NHS with guidance on precautions for work with human and animal transmissible spongiform encephalopathies produced by the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens in September 1994. Copies of this guidance are available in the Library.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment the Department has made of the effectiveness of sodium hypochlorite as a sterilising agent for transmissible spongiform encephalopathies; how widespread is its use; and if he will make a statement. [38555]

Mr. Sackville: The Advisory Committee on Dangerous pathogens guidance on precautions for work with human and animal transmissible spongiform encephalopathies assesses sodium hypochlorite to be the disinfectant of choice when autoclaving—the method of choice for decontamination—is not practicable. Information on its use is not available centrally but it is believed to be used widely.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the Department's assessment of the nature of the causative agent for transmissible spongiform encephalopathies in humans. [38556]

Mr. Sackville: There are currently three main hypotheses which identify a prion, virino or virus respectively as the causal agents for transmissible spongiform encephalopathies in humans. Details of these hypotheses are contained in the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee's publication "Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies: A Summary of Present Knowledge and Research", copies of which are available in the Library.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the level of occurrence for *(a)* suspected and *(b)* confirmed Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, within the United Kingdom in the last year for which figures are available. [38557]

Mr. Sackville: 115 suspected cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease were reported to the national CJD surveillance unit in 1994. After further investigation, 59 of these were classified as definite or probable cases, of which 53 were sporadic CJD.

Prostate Cancer

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence he has of increases in prostate cancer after vasectomy; and if he will make a statement. [38549]

Mr. Sackville: Several studies have been undertaken both in this country and internationally into the possible causal links between vasectomy and prostate cancer. The findings of these studies have been inconclusive.

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are his current predictions for the incidence of Alzheimer's disease, within England, for the next 10 years. [38558]

Mr. Bowis: The prevalence of dementia is 5 per cent. for people aged 65 years and over and 20 per cent. for people aged 80 years and over. The increase in the elderly population is likely to result in a rise in the numbers suffering from dementia.

Migration

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people have emigrated from the United Kingdom in the last 10 years; and if he will provide a breakdown by age and nationality. [38207]

(2) how many immigrants have entered the United Kingdom in the last 10 years; and if he will provide a breakdown by age and nationality. [38208]

Mr. Sackville: The information for the years 1983 to 1992 is published in tables 2.1 and 2.9 of "International Migration, 1992". Information for 1993 is published in tables 17 and 19 of "Population Trends", volume 81. Copies of these publications are available in the Library.

These tables do not include people migrating to or from the Irish Republic and it is also highly likely they exclude people admitted as short-term visitors who are subsequently granted an extension of stay for a year or longer, for example as students, on the basis of marriage, or because they applied for asylum. Estimates of net international migration from 1986 to 1993, including such people, are given on page 5 of "Population Trends", volume 81.

Boneloc Cement

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what is his calculation of the total number of patients on whom Boneloc cement was used; and where in the United Kingdom it was used. [39819]

Mr. Sackville: Section 118 of the Medicines Act precludes the disclosure of information which is provided about products in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Hip Replacements

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what proposals he has to reduce the percentage of revision of total hip replacement operations. [39821]

Mr. Sackville: The Department of Health plans to support research and evaluation programmes aimed at improving the safety, performance and life of total hip replacements. These include assessment of the clinical performance of implants by explant studies; the development of techniques to predict long-term clinical outcomes from short-term clinical data; and the development and assessment of new materials and technologies. The Department of Health is also supporting an analysis of the data from a five-year outcome study of total hip replacements in the Trent region.

Herbal Medicines

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will instruct the Office of Fair Trading to investigate misleading advertising of unlicensed herbal medicines. [38663]

Mr. Sackville: The Medicines Control Agency regulates the advertising of medicinal products, both licensed and unlicensed. The Medicines (Advertising) Regulations 1994 prohibit the advertising of a relevant medicinal product in respect of which no product licence is in force. The Department has sufficient powers in existing legislation to monitor the advertising of medicinal products, whether licensed or not.

The Office of Fair Trading is empowered to undertake investigations into complaints against specific advertisements rather than particular sectors of advertising activity.

Spending Statistics

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the latest available figures for *(a)* the district health authorities' spend per capita and *(b)* the family health services authorities' spend per capita for (i) London, (ii) Birmingham, (iii) Manchester, (iv) Liverpool, (v) Leeds and (vi) Newcastle. [40194]

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the per capita spending figure for each *(a)* district health authority, *(b)* family health services authority and *(c)* commissioning agency for 1993–94, 1994–95 and 1995–96. [40282]

Mr. Sackville: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn) on 12 December 1994 at column *465*.

Figures for 1994–95 and 1995–96 are not yet available.

Information is not available centrally for commissioning agencies, as they exist only as a managerial arrangement for some district health authorities and family health services authorities, and are not statutory bodies.

Management Costs

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will itemise by health authority spending per head of weighted population on management costs. [40280]

Mr. Malone: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Members for York (Mr. Bayley) and for Dulwich (Ms Jowell) on 27 October, *Official Report,* column *848.*

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will itemise spending on *(a)* M1 management costs and *(b)* M2 management costs by (i) health authority and (ii) trust for each year for which figures are available, by both amount and percentage of income; [40281]

(2) what measures of management and administrative costs in *(a)* trusts and *(b)* health authorities his Department maintains. [40283]

Mr. Malone: We shall be publishing information shortly on management costs in national health service trusts and on the costs of running health authorities for 1994–95. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 19 October at columns *363–64*, for the details of what information will be provided about trusts' management costs for 1994–95 and what other measures of management costs have been provided previously. The 1994–95 information on the costs of running health authorities will cover all staff and non-staff costs with the exception of costs incurred in direct service provision—for example, health promotion, AIDS co-ordination; inherited costs—for example, premature retirement payments and costs of medical negligence claims—and capital charges on health centres and on surplus property in the process of disposal.

Cancer

Ms Jowell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the incidence of mouth cancer in the United Kingdom for each of the past 10 years. [38099]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* The information for the United Kingdom is shown in the table.

Registration in the United Kingdom on oral cancers ICD9[1] codes 140 (lip), 141 (tongue), 142 (salivary glands), 143 (gum), 144 (floor of mouth), 145 (other and unspecified parts of the mouth) from 1980 to 1989.

Year	*Persons*
1981	2,344
1982	2,345
1983	2,273
1984	2,277
1985	2,201
1986	2,239
1987	2,380
1988	2,618
1989	2,481
1990[2]	2,567

[1] International Classification of Diseases, 9th Revision.

[2] Provisional.

Ms Jowell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many deaths there were from mouth cancer for each of the past 10 years in the United Kingdom. [38100]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* The information for the United Kingdom is shown in the table.

Deaths cause by oral cancers ICD9[1] codes 140 (lip), 141 (tongue), 142 (salivary glands), gum (143), floor of mouth (144), other and unspecified parts of the mouth (145), in the United Kingdom in the years 1983 to 1994

Deaths cause by oral cancers ICD9[1] codes 140 (lip), 141 (tongue), 142 (salivary glands), gum (143), floor of mouth (144), other and unspecified parts of the mouth (145), in the United Kingdom in the years 1983 to 1994

Year	*Persons*
1984	1,152
1985	1,142
1986	1,064
1987	1,130
1988	1,150
1989	1,157
1990	1,121
1991	1,092
1992	1,209
1993	1,100
1994[2]	1,235

[1] International Classification of Diseases, 9th revision

[2] provisional.

Ms Jowell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current incidence of *(a)* mouth cancer and *(b)* testicular cancer. [38101]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* The number of registrations in England and Wales in 1990 (provisional) of mouth cancer (ICD9[1] codes 140 (lip), 141 (tongue), 142 (salivary glands), 143, (gum), 144 (floor of mouth), 145 (other and unspecified parts of the mouth) is 2,154.

The number of registrations in England and Wales in 1990 (provisional) for testicular cancer (ICD9[1] code 186) is 1,322.

[1] International Classification of Diseases, 9th Revision.

NATIONAL HERITAGE

National Lottery Funding, Northamptonshire

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what is, to the latest convenient date, the total sum allocated under the national lottery and total sum allocated to applications in *(a)* Northamptonshire, *(b)* the Corby borough and *(c)* the East Northamptonshire district. [38336]

Mr. Sproat: The total sum allocated under the national lottery, as at 20 October, is £546 million—£546,146,920.04. There have been no awards, to date, for projects based in the Corby borough. A split between projects in the East Northamptonshire district and Northamptonshire are not available. There have been 12 awards to projects based in Northamptonshire with a total grant of £2,375,755.

National Lottery Administration Costs

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what have been the administration costs to date of the (i) Arts Council Lottery Board, (ii) Sports Council Lottery Board, (iii) National Heritage Memorial Fund, (iv) National Lottery Charities Board and (v) Millennium Commission. [38748]

Mr. Sproat: As at 30 September, total administration costs for each of the lottery distributors were as follows:

Distribution body	*£*
The Arts Council of England	2,539,411
The Scottish Arts Council	368,953
The Arts Council of Wales	302,947
The Arts Council of Northern Ireland	110,015
The Sports Council (of England)	2,543,000
The Scottish Sports Council	391,493
The Sports Council of Wales	327,451
The Sports Council of Northern Ireland	304,255
The National Heritage Memorial Fund	2,641,402
The National Lottery Charities Board	4,706,848
The Millennium Commission	3,101,839
Total	17,337,614

The sums include start-up costs.

George III Coronation Bible

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what attempts her Department has made to find a purchaser who will keep in the United Kingdom the bible on which King George III swore his coronation oath in 1761; and if she will make a statement. [39023]

Mr. Sproat: A licence to export the George III coronation bible was applied for in March this year. The granting of the licence was objected to by my Department's expert adviser and the case was referred in the normal way to the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art.

My Department accepted the committee's recommendation that a decision on the export licence application should be deferred for three months to give an opportunity for a purchaser to come forward to offer to buy the bible at or above the fair market price of £350,000. A news release announcing this decision was widely circulated on 19 June 1995.

At the end of the three-month period no offer to purchase had been made, nor were my officials aware of any other interest in purchasing the bible. The export licence was therefore issued and the bible exported in September of this year.

A report on this case is contained in the 1994–95 report of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art which was presented to Parliament on Tuesday 24 October, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Ernest Bevin School, Winsford

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what consideration her Department is giving to listing the school where Ernest Bevin was educated at Winsford, Somerset; and if she will make a statement. [39080]

Mr. Sproat: There is no proposal for the listing of any school in Winsford under consideration within my Department at the present time. However, if the hon. Member could provide photographs and location plan of the school where Ernest Bevin was educated, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will ask her advisers at English Heritage for an assessment of whether it is of special architectural or historic interest. As the hon. Member may be aware, Bevins house, Winsford, the birthplace of Ernest Bevin, is already listed in grade II.

Drugs in Sport

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many persons tested positive in the Sports Council drug testing programme in 1994–95. [39787]

Mr. Sproat: The Sports Council publishes a report on its doping control programme annually containing, among other information, statistics on the number of tests taken and the number of positive reports. In 1994–95, the Sports Council reported that 60 persons tested positive for banned substances and there were seven refusals out of a total of 4,374 tests.

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list those sportspeople who were tested for illegal substances during 1995, indicating those who were drug free and those found to be drug positive. [39797]

Mr. Sproat: This information is not available centrally. The names of those tested, and who subsequently test positive, are reported by the Sports Council's doping control unit to the governing body of the sport under whose authority testing has taken place. It is the responsibility of the individual governing body to decide when and how to release that information. Not all substances prohibited in sport are controlled substances. Sports organisations themselves decide on the parameter for controlling drug misuse in sport.

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how much of the Sports Council funds are allocated to anti-drug information. [39786]

Mr. Sproat: In 1994–95, the Sports Council's doping control unit spent £86,099 on education and information, supplemented by expenditure by the Sports Councils in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

National Stadium

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what is the role of her Department in awarding lottery funds to the proposed national stadium. [39789]

Mr. Sproat: None. It has always been an important point of the national lottery that the distribution of proceeds should be handled at arm's length from the Government. The award of lottery funding for the new national stadium will be a matter for the Sports Council lottery awards panel when the successful bidder has submitted a formal application.

Sports NVQs

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what progress has been made on national vocational qualifications for sport; which are the awarding bodies; and what is the role of the Minister of Sport. [39784]

Mr. Sproat: There are currently 16 NVQs available in sport. The Sports Council is working closely with sports governing bodies on an on-going programme to implement NVQs in sports where they do not already exist. The awarding bodies for NVQs in coaching are: City and Guilds, Royal Society of Arts and the Business and Technology Education Council. The National Council for Vocational Qualifications, along with the Department for Education and Employment, has responsibility for the administration of NVQs, but as Minister for Sport I take a keen interest in the development of NVQs in sport.

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list the NVQs now available for sports; and when she expects NVQs to be available for all sports organisations. [39783]

Mr. Sproat: There are currently 16 NVQs available in the coaching of sport. These are: canoeing, karate, cricket, skiing, badminton, squash, basketball, swimming, exercise and fitness, target shooting, football, table tennis, gymnastics, tennis, hockey and windsurfing. NVQs are also available in sports administration and management. The Sports Council is working closely with sports governing bodies on an on-going programme to implement NVQs in sports where they do not already exist.

Football Dishonesty Inquiry

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what assessment she has made of the inquiry into football financial dishonesty held by the football authorities; what is the role of the Department of National Heritage; and when she expects the report to be passed to her. [39798]

Mr. Sproat: The football governing bodies are independent of Government and the Department of National Heritage therefore has no role in the FA Premier league's commission of inquiry into player transfers. I am satisfied that the commission's first interim report, concerning Mr. George Graham, and the subsequent rule changes and codes of conduct adopted by the Premier league indicate that the football authorities are serious in their commitment to ensure the highest possible standards within the game. I look forward to the commission's subsequent reports when they are ready.

Sports Coaches (Training)

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what is the annual expenditure of the training and promotion of sports coaches by Her Majesty's Government. [39788]

Mr. Sproat: The majority of Government support for sport and active recreation is channelled through the GB Sports Council. The Sports Council's grant to the National Coaching Foundation, which provides services for 70,000 coaches throughout the UK, is £1,550,000 for 1995–96. Additional support for coaches is provided through the council's grants to national governing bodies of sport and through other Sports Council funded sports development projects nationwide. The Government's sportsmatch scheme helps fund a small number of schemes which involve the training and promotion of sports coaches. The sports policy statement "Sport: Raising the Game" also identified a number of ways in which coaching would be extended and improved in schools, through clubs, further and higher education and elite athletes.

Yorkshire Air Museum

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what action her Department is taking to preserve the Yorkshire air museum based at Elvington, North Yorkshire, after the closure of Royal Air Force Elvington, with particular reference to *(a)* the air shows carried out there and *(b)* the allocation recently awarded to the museum from national lottery funds; and if she will make a statement. [39518]

Mr. Sproat: The decision to close RAF Elvington is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. The Yorkshire air museum would be free to make an offer for the site, should it be placed on the open market, and the Yorkshire and Humberside Museum Council would be able to advise the museum on this and other matters. I understand from the national heritage memorial fund that the closure of RAF Elvington would not affect the grant awarded to the museum from the heritage lottery fund.

Public Appointments, South Yorkshire

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage (1) if she will list the public appointments for which her Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating in each case the duration of the appointment, the date when a new appointment is due, and the salary; [39458]

(2) if she will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which her Department makes appointments in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating the total annual budget and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years. [39437]

Mr. Sproat: My Department does not have responsibility for any public appointments or appointments to non-departmental public bodies in the county of South Yorkshire.

Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will make a statement on local and regional access to future digital terrestrial broadcasting. [38540]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* Digital terrestrial broadcasting will provide opportunities for national, regional and local television and radio services. The Government's proposals for digital broadcasting are set out in "Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting", Cm 2946. Those proposals are designed to let viewers and listeners have access as soon as possible to digital terrestrial broadcasting; ensure that there is a wide range of services appealing to a variety of tastes and interests, including regional and local interests; and give broadcasters the opportunity to provide services in a fair and effective competitive market.

Millennium Commission

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what is her current estimate of the total allocation of national lottery proceeds for the Millennium Commission; and if she will give a regional breakdown of the allocations made so far from the Millennium Commission. [38762]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 23 October 1995]:* The Millennium Commission receives a fifth of the allocation for the good causes. As at Friday 20 October, the Millennium Commission's allocation stood at £223.9 million.

The regional breakdown for the 81 Millennium Commission awards to date is as follows:

Region	*Amount £*	*Number of Awards*
London	2,200,000.00	1
North West	3,882,000.00	6
North East	—	0
Yorkshire and Humberside	52,112,000.00	5
Eastern	279,890.00	2
East Midlands	2,286,000.00	4
West Midlands	1,980,000.00	3
South West	500,000.00	1
South East	40,466,000.00	2
Merseyside	1,500,000.00	1
Scotland	6,607,980.00	47
Wales	11,941,000.00	7
Northern Ireland	—	0
UK Wide	51,780,000.00	2
Totals	175,534,870.00	81

ENVIRONMENT

Council House Sales

Mr. Raynsford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council tenants in receipt of income support have been able to purchase their homes under the right to buy in each of the past five years. [39265]

Mr. Curry: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Raynsford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many tenants have completed the purchase of their council homes under the rent-to-mortgage scheme in each month since the introduction of the scheme. [39266]

Mr. Curry: Information on completed sales under rent-to-mortgage since the scheme was introduced in October 1993 is given is the table. The figures are taken from the quarterly housing returns received from local authorities in England.

Year	*Number of sales*
1993	
Q4	—
1994	
Q1	—
Q2	—
Q3	2
Q4	4
1995	
Q1	5
Q2	2

Leasehold Enfranchisement Advisory Service

Mr. Raynsford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about future funding of the leasehold enfranchisement advisory service. [39873]

Mr. Curry: I have nothing to add to the reply given to the hon. Member by my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, West (Mr. Jones) on 24 January 1995, *Official Report*, column *111*.

Nuclear Waste Repository, Cumbria

Dr. John Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution's assessment of the long-term safety of the proposed Nirex repository in Cumbria.

Mr. Gummer: Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution has received no proposal from Nirex under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 for a repository in Cumbria and consequently cannot comment on the long-term safety of any such facility.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his assessment of the likelihood of ground water contamination from any future nuclear waste repository in Cumbria; [39737]

(2) what is his assessment of the likelihood of any radioactive substances from any nuclear waste repository in Cumbria reaching the surface by a colloidal transport process. [39738]

Mr. Gummer: It will be for Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution or, after 1 April 1996 the Environment Agency, to assess the case supporting any future application, under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, for a nuclear waste repository in Cumbria. It would be for the developer to address in such a case any potential groundwater contamination and whether colloids or any other transport processes significantly influenced the risk of radioactive substances reaching the surface.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out the cost of his Department of any investigations that have either been carried out by or commissioned by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution into the proposed Nirex repository site in Cumbria. [39736]

Mr. Gummer: No costs were incurred by the Department for the studies that Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution commissioned relating to Nirex's programme. Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution recovered from Nirex the costs of the work undertaken.

Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution has received no proposal from Nirex under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, for a repository in Cumbria and consequently has not commissioned or carried out investigations relating to such a proposal.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the investigations that have been *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* carried out by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution into the proposed Nirex repository site in Cumbria. [39735]

Mr. Gummer: Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution let two contracts for studies relating to Nirex's programme; a contract with W. S. Atkins for a "Scientific review and assessment of Nirex submissions" and a contract with Intera Information Technologies/R. M. Consultants for a "Post closure radiological safety assessment of Nirex proposals". Reports arising from the latter contract will be placed in the House Library. Reports from the W. S. Atkins contract are still in preparation and a set will be placed in the Library when they are completed.

These studies by HMIP were undertaken to test and develop the Inspectorate's assessment capabilities. The studies were not designed to inform HMIP on the suitability of the site in Cumbria for possible future development of a repository.

HMIP has received no proposal from Nirex, under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, for a repository in Cumbria and consequently has not commissioned or carried out investigations relating to such a proposal.

Public Appointments, South Yorkshire

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which his Department makes appointments in the county if South Yorkshire, indicating the total annual budget and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years; [39421]

(2) if he will list the public appointments for which his Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating in each case the duration of the appointment, the date when a new appointment is due, and the salary. [39450]

Sir Paul Beresford: The only body, based in South Yorkshire, to which the Secretary of State makes public appointments is the Sheffield development corporation. For this body, I have provided three tables, giving the information requested. Table 1 shows the total annual budget broken down into total expenditure and total grant in aid for the four financial years between 1992 and 1996, 1995–96 being an estimate. Table 2 shows the number of appointments and reappointments for the calendar years 1992 to 1995 and table 3 shows the current composition of the SDC board.

Sheffield development corporation Table 1: Total annual budget

Year	*Total expenditure £*	*Total grant in aid £*
1992–93	14,056,000	13,185,000
1993–94	16,003,000	12,000,000
1994–95	16,122,000	9,700,000
1995–96	[1]17,153,000	[1]8,600,000

[1] Estimated.

Table 2: Number of appointments and reappointments

Year	*Number of new appointments*	*Number of re-appointments*
1992	3	4
1993	1	4
1994	1	6
1995	0	3

Table 3: Composition of SDC board as at October 1995

Name	*Salary £*	*Current appointment*	*First appointment*
Chairman: Hugh Sykes	20,525	From 30 June 1993 to 31 March 1997	30 June 1988
Deputy Chairman: Norman Adsetts OBE	9,285	From 30 June 1995 to 31 March 1997	30 June 1988
David Heslop OBE	5,430	From 1 September 1994 to 31 March 1997	30 June 1988
Derek Nice	5,430	From 30 June 1994 to 31 March 1997	30 June 1990
Peter Newman	5,430	From 30 June 1994 to 31 March 1997	30 June 1988
Prof. Gareth Roberts	5,430	From 22 July 1995 to 31 March 1997	22 July 1991
Jenny Bacon	5,430	From 1 December 1994 to 31 March 1997	19 November 1992
Frank Eul	5,430	From 1 December 1994 to 31 March 1997	6 November 1992
Mike Bower	5,430	From 1 December 1994 to 31 March 1997	12 November 1992
Janet Cohen	5,430	From 1 September 1995 to 31 March 1997	1 September 1993
Jan Wilson	5,430	From 20 December 1994 to 31 March 1997	20 December 1994

Leasehold Reform Act Codes of Practice

Mr. Raynsford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to publish the code of management practice provided for under the provisions of part I of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993. [39871]

Mr. Curry: We plan to lay before the House very shortly an order which approves the Association of Retirement Housing Managers code of practice for leasehold sheltered housing. It will be published by and be available from the Association of Retirement Housing Managers, 50 City Way, Rochester, Kent ME1 2AB.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors has submitted two codes for approval and negotiations on the text are nearing completion.

Land Management Agreements, Suffolk

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide a breakdown, by type, of the land management agreements in existence between land owners and English Nature for the current financial year in the county of Suffolk, giving the amount of funding in each category. [40148]

Mr. Gummer: In the current financial year, the following management agreements under sections 15 and 16 of the Countryside Act 1968 are in existence in the county of Suffolk:

Section	*Number*	*Cost*
S15	29	104,030
S16	5	94,818

Social Housing

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will specify and categorise the 70,000 social lettings referred to in the seventh paragraph of the letter of 23 October from his Department to hon. Members on the subject of homelessness legislation. [40279]

Mr. Curry: Details of the 70,000 social lettings expected to be provided through public investment in 1995–96 were given on page 60 of the Government's Housing White Paper "Our Future Homes", published in June. The figures are as follows:

Providing homes for rent	*England output*
The Housing Corporation helps housing associations to build new homes to rent.	27,100
The Housing Corporation also helps associations to buy and rehabilitate existing homes.	8,900
Local authorities fund housing associations to build new homes and buy and rehabilitate existing homes, helped by Government grant.	11,000
A small number of new homes are provided from local authorities' own resources	1,000
Making better use of existing homes	
We release additional existing social lettings through the Cash Incentive Scheme, giving local authority tenants grants to help them to buy their own homes in the private sector.	5,500
We run a similar scheme for housing association tenants, the tenants incentive scheme.	7,200
Supporting low cost home ownership	
We help people on low incomes, who need a home, to buy at low cost, by building homes for shared ownership	4,600
Through the do it yourself shared ownership scheme, we help people on low incomes, who are often living in social housing, buy on the open market.	4,700
Total	70,000

Local Government Finance, East Midlands

Mr. Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the amount of extra grant each county council in the east midlands would receive in 1995–96 if there were no area cost adjustment in the standard spending assessment system. [38919]

Mr. Curry *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* The contribution of the area cost adjustment to authorities' standard spending assessments is some £1.5 billion. It is widely believed, incorrectly, that the abolition of the area cost adjustment would release this amount for addition to the SSAs of authorities throughout England.

If the area cost adjustment were abolished, it would be necessary to revise the analyses on which the SSA formulae are based. Most of the formulae are based on analyses of expenditure from which the element related to higher costs in London and the south-east has been deducted. If there was no area cost adjustment, the analyses would have to be carried out afresh, based on expenditure without any such deduction.

We would wish to discuss with the local authority associations what would then be the most appropriate formulae. But if the formulae were recalculated retaining the existing indicators, those indicators would have different weights from those which applied in 1995–96. The resulting standard spending assessments, for all authorities in England, would then be as shown in the table which I have placed in the Library. The table also shows the differences between the actual SSA and the alternative SSA. These differences are virtually the same as the differences in each authority's revenue support grant.

The Department has prepared a technical note about these calculations for the local authority associations. A copy has been placed in the Library.

Canal Freight

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what new proposals he has to increase the volume of cargo transport by canals. [39661]

Mr. Robert B. Jones *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* The Government continue to encourage the maximum use of inland waterways for freight transport where this is a practical and economic option. However, freight hauliers must have the freedom to choose the mode of transport that best suits their needs. We draw attention, where appropriate, to the potential of water for the carriage of freight, and to the Government grants that are available.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

27. **Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Attorney-General what steps he is taking to improve the relationship between the Crown Prosecution Service and the police. [37857]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service and the police are working closely together on a number of initiatives including reducing the volume of paper in prosecution files, greater use of information technology and co-ordinated training.

28. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the working of the Crown Prosecution Service. [37859]

The Solicitor-General: The primary function of the Crown Prosecution Service is to prosecute firmly but fairly the 1.5 million cases submitted to it each year by the police. The service is working actively with the other agencies in the criminal justice system both to achieve this objective and to improve the way the system treats witnesses and victims.

Mr. Elletson: To ask the Attorney-General what steps he is taking to improve efficiency in the Crown Prosecution Service. [37853]

The Attorney-General: Efficiency in the Crown Prosecution Service continues to improve. My key priorities currently are to improve still further the close liaison between the CPS, the police and the courts.

Scott Inquiry

29. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Attorney-General what recent requests he has received from Lord Justice Scott. [37860]

The Attorney-General: It is the intention of the inquiry that any exchanges with individual witnesses should be confidential. That is to be respected.

Lenient Sentences

30. **Dr. Spink:** To ask the Attorney-General what assessment he has made of the impact to date of his ability to appeal against unduly lenient sentences. [37862]

The Solicitor-General: The power is now accepted as an important and necessary addition to the criminal justice system because very occasionally a sentence will be imposed in the Crown court which is unduly lenient, and causes disproportionate damage to public confidence in the judiciary.

Dr. Goodson-Wickes: To ask the Attorney-General what recent use he has made of his powers to initiate appeals against lenient sentences.

The Attorney-General: Since January 1995, 60 offenders have had their sentence referred to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient. One case has since been withdrawn. To date, 20 cases have been determined by the Court of Appeal, all of which have resulted in increased sentences.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

European Court

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consultations he has had with the United Kingdom's EU partners about a common approach to revising procedures following the European Court of Human Rights verdict on the killing of IRA terrorists in Gibraltar; what plans he has to propose an amendment to article 2.2 of the European convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in relation to the phrase

"the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary"

to take account of the verdict; and if he will make a statement. [38019]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The Government are deeply concerned by the conclusion reached by the European Court of Human Rights in the Gibraltar case and are considering the implications of the court's judgment. When we have come to conclusions, we shall make our views known within the Council of Europe as the European Court of Human Rights is an institution of the Council of Europe and not of the European Union. Consultation with others is an option that we may wish to pursue.

As regards article 2 of the European convention on human rights, the court did not find a violation in relation to compatibility of the national law on the use of lethal force with article 2 standards.

The court unanimously rejected most the applicants' claims. It refused to award compensation—on the grounds that those killed were terrorists planning to plant a bomb. The sole point on which the court found against the United Kingdom was over the control and organisation of the operation. The majority of 10 judges thereby overturned the opinion of the European Commission of Human Rights which, after conducting its own fact-finding exercise, found in September last year that the Government had not violated the European convention on human rights. The judges also contradicted the conclusion on the lengthy 1988 inquest which, after interviewing 79 witnesses, decided that what had happened was lawful.

The judgment of the majority, based on no new evidence and defying common sense, has done nothing for the standing of the court in the United Kingdom.

The dissenting minority of nine, which included some of the most senior judges on the court including its President, disagreed entirely with the majority's findings on the one contentious issue. These they demolished point by point in a lengthy and well-argued joint dissenting opinion.

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which cases at *(a)* the European Commission and *(b)* the Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg costs have been awarded against the United Kingdom Government and how much was paid in each instance; if he will indicate the cases where costs have not been awarded despite a finding against the United Kingdom; and if he will specify the subject matter of each case. [39915]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: In the past two years the Government have been ordered by the European Court of Human Rights to pay costs to successful applicants in the following cases:

	£
Darnell	3,207
Boner and Maxwell	5,560
Welch	15,010
Tolstoy	91,516
McCann, Farrell and Savage	33,804

The amounts awarded have been paid, save for the recent case of McCann. In one case, McMichael, the successful applicants were not awarded costs because they claimed none.

I shall write to the hon. and learned Member detailing the costs awarded by the court in judgments given between 1975 and 1993.

I shall also write separately detailing costs awarded by the Committee of Ministers over the last two years in United Kingdom cases not referred to the court by the commission. To go back further would involve disproportionate costs.

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government intend to pay the costs awarded against them by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of the deaths of Farrell, Savage and McCann in Gibraltar. [39916]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The matter of the payment of costs will be considered in the normal way.

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the numbers of cases at the European Court of Human Rights, by signatory state, which those states have lost; and if he will indicate for each such state the date from which its citizens were enabled to bring cases individually. [39917]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The following is the information requested, correct as at 6 October 1995.

ECHR: comparative table of violations

State party	*Cases where at least one violation found (At 6 October 1995)*	*Date of acceptance of article 25*
Austria	28	3 September 1958
Belgium	20	5 July 1955
Bulgaria	0	7 September 1992
Cyprus	1	1 January 1989
Czech Republic	0	—
Denmark	2	13 April 1953
Finland	2	10 May 1990
France	33	2 October 1981
Germany	12	5 July 1955
Greece	7	20 November 1985
Hungary	0	5 November 1992
Iceland	2	29 March 1955
Ireland	6	25 February 1953
Italy	84	1 August 1973
Liechtenstein	0	8 September 1982
Luxembourg	1	28 April 1958
Malta	1	1 May 1987
Netherlands	23	28 June 1960
Norway	1	10 December 1955
Poland	0	1 May 1993
Portugal	6	9 November 1978
Romania	0	20 June 1994
San Marino	0	22 March 1989
Slovakia	0	—
Slovenia	0	20 June 1994
Spain	7	1 July 1981
Sweden	21	4 February 1952
Switzerland	14	28 November 1974
Turkey	2	28 January 1987
United Kingdom	37	14 January 1966

No case for the member states parties has yet reached the court.

Bosnia

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps her Majesty's Government have taken to secure full implementation of UN Security Council resolution 752 and withdrawal of regular Croation forces from Bosnian territory. [40015]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Since that resolution in 1991, the United Kingdom has deployed up to 9,000 troops in Bosnia, contributed more than £275.5 million in humanitarian aid and played a leading role in trying to reach a comprehensive settlement to the conflict there.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many refugees have been driven out of Krajina by the Croatian army; and what assistance Her Majesty's Government and the international community are giving to them. [40017]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that approximately 11,000 refugees moved from sector west into northern Bosnia following the Croation military offensive in May. In August, approximately 200,000 Croation Serbs fled from sectors north and south and some 25,000 Bosnian Muslims left the Bihac pocket for Croatia. We have contributed more than £2 million in grants through non-governmental organisations—Oxfam, Save the Children and the British Red Cross—to meet emergency needs of these refugees, as part of comprehensive assistance programme co-ordinated by UNHCR.

NATO (Expansion)

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards expansion of NATO to the Visegrad countries. [39996]

Mr. David Davis: The NATO summit in January 1994 confirmed that the alliance expected and would welcome expansion of its membership to include democratic states to its east, as part of an evolutionary process, and taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe. In December 1994, NATO Foreign Ministers set in hand work on a study into the practicalities and principles of enlargement. This study has now been completed and was presented to all partners in Brussels on 28 September. Copies of the study have been placed in the Library of the House.

The alliance is agreed that it would be premature to discuss at this stage which countries might be invited to join.

Pakistan

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Britain's relations with Pakistan. [40000]

Mr. Hanley: We have good and active relations with Pakistan. We look forward to deepening and extending our political, commercial and cultural links.

Nuclear-free Zones

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards nuclear-free zones in *(a)* the Pacific and *(b)* central and eastern Europe. [39998]

Mr. David Davis: On 20 October we announced jointly with the US and France that we would sign the protocols to the south Pacific nuclear-free zone treaty in the first half of 1996. We believe that internationally recognised nuclear weapon free zones, based on arrangements freely arrived at by all the states in a given region, can help prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. However, proposals for such zones have to take into account prevailing circumstances in the area concerned.

Stranded Holidaymakers, Turkey

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance was offered by the British embassy in Ankara to the passengers on the Airtours flight from Belfast to Dalaman on 9 September, following the collapse of Villmar Holidays; and if he will make a statement. [39923]

Mr. Hanley: Consular staff in London, Ankara and Marmaris worked closely with the Civil Aviation Authority and Villmar Travel's agents in Turkey, Gentur, to help the stranded passengers. Whilst Gentur assumed primary responsibility, consular staff intervened to persuade local hotels to accept the CAA's guarantee of payment.

UNESCO

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans Her Majesty's Government have to renew British membership of UNESCO. [39967]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: We are keeping this issue under review.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Britain's relationship to UNESCO. [39966]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: We operate an observer section to UNESCO based in the Embassy in Paris which monitors developments within the organisation. This includes coverage, with the assistance of officials in London, of the twice yearly executive board sessions and the biennial general conference.

We retain membership of certain UNESCO programmes—World Heritage Committee; Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission; and the Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much it would cost for the United Kingdom to rejoin UNESCO this year; and what percentage of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Overseas Development Administration budget that represents. [39968]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Annual assessed contribution would be approximately £11 million. This represents 0.31 per cent. of the total FCO-ODA 1995–96 budget.

In addition, there would be staffing costs which have yet to be quantified.

Croatia

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government support Croatian membership of the EU. [40013]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Croatia has not applied for accession to the EU. Any application would need to be considered against the background at that time of Croatia's democratic stability and respect for human and civil rights, as well as her relations with other countries in the region.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his assessment of the current level of human rights abuse in Croatia. [40016]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: We continue to receive reports of human rights abuses in Croatia, including killing of civilians. We condemn these atrocities. With our EU partners, we will ensure that such reports are made available to the international tribunal on former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Government of Croatia in respect of human rights abuse and ethnic cleansing in Krajina. [40012]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: We have condemned the human rights abuses in Krajina and called for the Serb refugees to be allowed to return to their homes if they so wish. Along with our EU partners we have repeatedly warned Croatia that its future relations with the EU are dependent on its respect for human rights and minorities.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on United Kingdom relations with Croatia. [40014]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The United Kingdom has a resident ambassador in Zagreb. We established diplomatic relations with Croatia in January 1992.

Bangladesh

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Britain's relations with Bangladesh. [40001]

Mr. Hanley: We have good and active relations with Bangladesh. We look forward to expanding our political, commercial and cultural links.

India

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Britain's relations with India. [39999]

Mr. Hanley: We have good and active relations with India. We look forward to expanding our political, commercial and cultural links.

Know-how Fund

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what were the amounts spent annually since 1989 on the British know-how fund; and if he will list the countries where it has been spent indicating the amount spent per country. [40086]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The amounts spent annually since 1989 on the British know-how fund are, in million pounds sterling:

1989–90: 63.888[1]
1990–91: 13.676
1991–92: 33.395
1992–93: 44.866
1993–94: 57.750
1994–95: 77.286

[1] Including 62 million from the Polish zloty stabilisation fund.

Expenditure breakdown by country is as follows, in million pounds sterling:

	1989–90	*1990–91*	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*
Albania	—	—	—	0.030	0.361	0.723
Armenia	—	—	—	0.014	0.025	0.079

	1989–90	1990–91	1991–92	1992–93	1993–94	1994–95
Azerbaijan	—	—	—	0.081	0.122	0.441
Belarus	—	—	—	0.026	0.086	0.616
Bulgaria	—	—	1.034	1.954	1.857	2.179
Czech Republic	—	—	—	—	2.768	2.544
Former Czechoslovakia	—	1.954	6.594	7.238	—	—
Estonia	—	—	0.008	0.359	0.310	0.691
Georgia	—	—	—	0.026	0.071	0.496
Hungary	0.004	1.487	6.198	5.794	6.281	4.599
Kazakhstan	—	—	0.005	0.093	1.012	1.909
Kyrgyzstan	—	—	—	—	0.093	0.436
Latvia	—	—	—	0.326	0.259	0.915
Lithuania	—	—	0.006	0.404	1.058	0.900
Macedonia	—	—	—	—	0.174	2.251[2]
Moldova	—	—	—	—	0.040	0.124
Pan Baltic	—	—	0.036	0.360	0.627	0.603
Poland	63.884[1]	10.067	10.154	10.586	11.878	10.973
Romania	—	—	0.926	3.090	3.741	4.829
Russia	—	—	6.453	9.024	18.051	30.088
Slovak Republic	—	—	—	—	2.569	2.405
Slovenia	—	—	—	0.045	0.492	0.935
Tajikistan	—	—	—	—	—	0.081
Turkmenistan	—	—	—	—	0.001	0.038
Ukraine	—	—	0.001	2.879	3.265	5.330
Uzbekistan	—	—	—	0.190	0.266	0.302
Regional projects	—	0.168	1.998	2.346	2.343	2.799

[1] Including 62 million Polish zloty stabilisation fund

[2] Including 2.0 million economic support

On January 1 1993 the former Czechoslovakia divided into the Czech and Slovak Republics. From then on assistance to these two countries is shown separately. Those joint programmes which began before this date are still recorded under former Czechoslovakia.

Irish Territorial Claims

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government have raised the matter of the claim on the territory of the United Kingdom by the Irish Republic with international or regional bodies of which both countries are members. [39918]

Mr. Rifkind: No. Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom is not disputed in any international organisation of which the UK and the Republic of Ireland are both members. No purpose would therefore be served in raising the matter in any of these bodies.

Kashmir

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards relations between India and Pakistan in respect of their dispute over Kashmir. [40011]

Mr. Hanley: We have consistently encouraged the Indian and Pakistani Governments to resolve their dispute over Kashmir through bilateral negotiation.

Brazil (Makuxi Indians)

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Brazilian Government concerning the treatment of the Makuxi people by the Roraima state authorities. [38542]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The Government of Brazil are aware of our concern that the rights of the Makuxi and the other indigenous people of Brazil should be observed and protected. Our embassy in Brasilia keeps in regular touch with the Brazilian authorities and monitors the situation closely.

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he intends to meet representatives of the Makuxi Indians of Brazil when they visit London later this month. [38543]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Representatives of the Makuxi Indians will meet officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 1 November.

Former Communist Countries (Elections)

Mr. Elletson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about assistance provided by his Department to ensure free and fair elections in former communist countries. [37866]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: We have provided a wide range of assistance to former communist countries, including advice on the drafting of constitutions and electoral laws, advice to a range of political parties on campaigning and party management, assisting the development of free and fair media as well as supporting the preparations for elections and election monitoring.

Visas

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will set out for each of the last five calendar years *(a)* the number of cases in which Ministers have reversed the decision of an entry clearance officer and *(b)* the country in which the entry clearance application was lodged. [40193]

Mr. Hanley: The information requested is not available for the years 1991 to 1993 as files are kept for only two years when a visa has been granted. For the years 1994 to 1995 the information is not available except at disproportionate cost.

Arms Exports

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the relationship between his Department and BMARC between 1980 and 1992. [40103]

Mr. David Davis: Research undertaken in the context of the Trade and Industry Select Committee inquiry has revealed no evidence of any contact between BMARC and my Department between 1985–91. However, during the latter period my Department routinely saw export licence applications covering defence sales submitted by BMARC to the Department of Trade and Industry. Information is not readily available for the period prior to 1985. I will write to the hon. Member.

Intergovernmental Conference

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the 23 and 24 October meeting of the study group preparing for the intergovernmental conference. [40395]

Mr. David Davis: I attended the 10th meeting of the study group, which took place in Brussels on 23 and 24 October, as the Foreign Secretary's representative. The meeting revisited a number of subjects which had come up in earlier discussions.

With regard to the European Court of Justice, I presented some British ideas for improving the operation of the court, and for helping to overcome problems which arise, especially where judgments may have disproportionate financial implications. Other members of the group had not yet examined our ideas in detail, but undertook to do so on the basis of a short paper which I had circulated to the group, and which has been placed in the Library of the House.

The meeting considered a paper by the Council legal service on options for simplifying the treaties. I applauded the intention to increase transparency and public comprehension, but doubted whether it would be possible to simplify the structure or wording of the treaties very much without changing their effect. I agreed, nevertheless, that it should be possible to eliminate obsolete articles.

There was a brief discussion on the role of national parliaments. I again commended ideas in the European Legislation Committee's 24th report on the IGC, which had been circulated in the group. In particular, I supported the recommendation to introduce a formal treaty obligation that national Parliaments should have adequate time to scrutinise draft proposals before these are considered by the Council.

In a discussion of other Community institutions, I said that all of them needed to be reviewed in the light of experience of Maastricht, and in the expectation of further enlargements. In particular, I raise the question as to whether the Economic and Social Committee was still fulfilling the purpose for which it was intended now that the Commission was systematically engaging in direct consultation with interested parties through Green and White Papers, and following the creation of the Committee of the Regions.

There was a brief discussion of ways in which fundamental rights are protected in the different member states, on the basis of a council legal service paper which has been placed in the Library of the House, together with other Council legal service papers on national parliaments, Council working methods and treaty simplification.

Iran

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to improve relations with Iran following the public statements by the President and other members of the Iranian Government that they would play no part in any attempts on the life of Salman Rushdie. [40278]

Mr. Hanley: The Government of Iran have not yet given satisfactory assurances of Mr. Rushdie's safety. I urge them to do so.

Diplomatic Wing Cash Limits

Mr. Charles Wardle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what changes he proposes to make in his Department's diplomatic wing cash limits for 1995–96. [40634]

Mr. Hanley: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the following changes will be made:

> The cash limit for class II, vote 2—other external relations—will be increased by £80,001,000 from £211,632,000 to £291,633,000. The increase is in respect of contributions by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for international peacekeeping. The increase will be charged to the reserve and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the agenda of the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting includes *(a)* reform of UN institutions, *(b)* good governance and *(c)* steps to reduce international debt. [40026]

Mr. Hanley: The Commonwealth Secretary-General, after consulting Heads of Commonwealth Governments earlier in the year, has proposed that each of these subjects be discussed at the Heads of Government meeting in New Zealand in November.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prisoners

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in which prisons there are prisoners restricted to closed visits; and how many prisoners are involved. [38840]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Seamus Mallon, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about prisons in which there are prisoners restricted to closed visits; and how many prisoners are involved.

On 26 October this year, there were fifteen prisoners in England and Wales subject to closed visits. Eight were at Belmarsh prison and seven were at Whitemoor.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements are made for prisoners who are restricted to closed visits to have *(a)* visits from their legal advisers and *(b)* consular visits. [38843]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Seamus Mallon, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the arrangements made for persons who are restricted to closed visits to have (a) visits from their legal advisors and (b) consular visits.

A policy of closed visits was introduced for category A exceptional risk prisoners on 20 June this year. The aim of the policy was to ensure the most secure conditions possible for the highest risk prisoners. Only the elimination of all contact between prisoner and visitor was regarded as ensuring this security. The position of legal advisors and consular officials was carefully considered before deciding that the policy should also be applied to them to avoid the possibility that they might become potential targets for intimidation, threats or taken hostage in order to coerce them into assisting escape attempts.

Visits for legal advisors and consular officials take place out of hearing, but in sight of, prison staff. Where it is necessary to pass documents from the visitor to the prisoner the documents can be placed in an envelope which is then passed through an X-ray machine. In the most *exceptional* circumstances, for example when there is a need to discuss matters with a large number of prisoners at the same time, an Operational Director may authorise an open visit.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many category A prisoners are currently in the prison system in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales; and how many are in each sub-category. [38847]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Seamus Mallon dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the number of category A prisoners currently held in prison establishments in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales, and the number in each sub-category.

There are no prison establishments in Wales which hold category A prisoners on a permanent basis. For establishments in England, the information requested is given in the table below:

Number of category A prisoners held in prison establishments in England and the number in each escape risk classification at 23 October 1995

	Number
Exceptional escape risk	15
High escape risk	150
Standard escape risk	[1]645
Total number of category A prisoners	810

[1] Figure includes 19 young offenders.

Probation Services

Mr. Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which ombudsman has jurisdiction to review the administration of probation and after care committees and their related probation services; and if he will make a statement. [39419]

Mr. Kirkhope: None. The operation of probation services is subject to inspection by Her Majesty's inspectorate of probation and to review by the Audit Commission.

Ms Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentages of the current probation service work force are *(a)* over 30 years, *(b)* male *(c)* from an ethnic minority background and *(d)* from a military, police or Prison Service background. [39624]

Mr. Kirkhope: The latest available information is as follows.

At 31 March 1995, 35 per cent. of probation service staff—48 per cent. at probation officer grades—were male.

At 31 March 1994, 6.9 per cent. of probation service staff[1] and the same proportion for probation officer grades were recorded as belonging to ethnic minority groups.

Statistics on the age and employment background of probation service staff are not collected centrally.

[1] Excludes non-probation officer hostels staff and sessional supervisors.

Ms Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when circulars on changes to probation training were issued to chief probation officers and to relevant universities. [39596]

Mr. Kirkhope: Copies of the decision document published on 2 October were sent the same day to each chief probation officer and university providing courses attracting Home Office sponsorship.

Ms Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for future financial arrangements of probation officer qualification training. [39595]

Mr. Kirkhope: As the decision document published on 2 October makes clear, the money now spent on supporting the sponsorship scheme will be devolved to area probation services to fund new training arrangements when the necessary plans and preparations have been satisfactorily made.

General Election Expenditure

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to introduce limits to control the national spending by political parties in general elections. [39825]

Mr. Kirkhope: We have no such plans.

Daylight Saving

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken and what plans he has for the future to press for the introduction of daylight saving time to reduce road casualties. [39822]

Mr. Kirkhope: Our policy on future summer time arrangements remain under review, including whether or not it would be right to move to central European time. The effect of any change on road traffic casualties is one of the many issues for consideration.

Religious Cults

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is Her Majesty's Government's policy with regard to allowing into the United Kingdom foreign nationals who are leaders of religious cults responsible for brainwashing and the breaking up of families. [40417]

Mr. Howard: All applications for entry are considered in accordance with the immigration rules, including the provisions relating to the refusal of entry on the ground that exclusion from the United Kingdom is conducive to the public good.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about Mr. Moon's application for entry into the United Kingdom. [40400]

Mr. Howard: I have directed that Mr. Moon should not be allowed entry to the United Kingdom, on the ground that his exclusion is conducive to the public good.

EU Common Visa List

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department from which date he expects visa requirements for entry into the United Kingdom to be determined by an EU common visa list in accordance with the regulation adopted at the Home Affairs Council meeting on 25 September. [39914]

Mr. Howard: From 3 April 1996. The common visa list is a list of countries to which a visa regime will be applied by all member states. Visas will remain national documents issued according to nationally determined criteria.

South Yorkshire Fire Service

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what amendment is necessary to the Fire Services Act 1947 to enable South Yorkshire fire service to receive funding for a dedicated rescue vehicle; and if he will make a statement. [40002]

Mr. Kirkhope: Under section 1 of the Fire Services Act 1947 a fire authority has a duty to make provision for fire fighting purposes and, in particular, to secure the services of a fire brigade and equipment in order to meet efficiently all normal requirements. Section 3(1)(e) of the Act gives the fire authority discretionary powers to employ its brigade and use its equipment for purposes other than fire fighting. Fire authorities have been able to provide such services from within their existing resources.

Bail Hostels, South Yorkshire

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many bail hostel places currently exist in South Yorkshire for *(a)* men and *(b)* women; and what was the figure for 12 months ago. [39564]

Mr. Kirkhope: There are currently 106 approved hostel places available in South Yorkshire for either men or women, and seven places designated for female residents only. In September 1994, there were 112 places available for either men or women, and five places designated for female residents only.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list by location the number of places available in bail hostels in the county of South Yorkshire, at the latest available date and what were the figures 12 months ago. [39459]

Mr. Kirkhope: In September 1994 and September 1995, the number of places available in each of the South Yorkshire hostels was as follows:

	September 1994	*September 1995*
Norfolk Park (Sheffield)	39	39
Rookwood (Rotherham)	39	39
Town Moor (Doncaster)	39	35

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list by location the occupancy rate for the hostels in the county of South Yorkshire at the latest available date; and what the figures were 12 months ago. [39460]

Mr. Kirkhope: In September 1994 and September 1995, the occupancy rate at each of the South Yorkshire hostels, as a percentage of funded beds, was as follows:

Percentage

	September 1994	*September 1995*
Norfolk Park (Sheffield)	89	87
Rookwood (Rotherham)	88	91
Town Moor (Doncaster)	80	86

Doncaster Prison

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions since 1 September checks have been made on alarm systems and security cameras at Doncaster prison; what are his Department's guidelines; and if he will make a statement. [39546]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking on how many occasions since 1 September checks have been made on alarm systems and security cameras at Doncaster prison; what are his Department's guidelines; and if he will make a statement.

Premier Prison Services, the contractor which operates Doncaster prison, is required by the terms of its contract to ensure that alarm systems and security cameras are regularly checked for effectiveness. Repairs, when required, have to be completed within twelve hours. The on site Prison Service Controller monitors these systems continually to ensure proper operation.

For security reasons it is not usual practice to make public the details of the guidelines.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners at Doncaster prison are currently on rule 43. [39550]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about how many prisoners at Doncaster prison are currently on Rule 43.

On 23 October the following number of prisoners were on Rule 43.

	Adult	*Young Offender*
Segregated under Rule 43/own protection	5	4
Segregated under Rule 43/good order and discipline	18	16

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inmates, of what grade and on what dates have *(a)* escaped or *(b)* attempted to escape from Doncaster prison since it was opened. [39513]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about how many inmates, of what grade and on what dates have escaped or attempted to escape from Doncaster prison since it was opened.

On 10 August 1994 one remand prisoner changed places with his visitor and left the prison through the visitors' entrance. He was recaptured the same evening. There have been no other escapes or attempted escapes from Doncaster since it opened on 20 June 1994.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what is the latest figure of the number of assaults on prisoners at Doncaster prison; [39552]

(2) what is the latest figure of the number of assaults on custody officers at Doncaster prison. [39553]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for these matters has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Questions asking for the latest figures of the number of assaults on prisoners and on custody officers at Doncaster prison.

Figures for 1994 were published in Table 13 of "Statistics or offences against prison discipline and punishments, England and Wales" (Cm.2934) a copy of which is available in the Library of, the House.

The latest available provisional information is for assaults proved at adjudication during January to September 1995 when there were 113 assaults on prisoners and 61 on staff and others.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the incidents at *(a)* Doncaster and *(b)* Ford prisons notified to his Department in the last year, indicating the date, type and outcome of each incident. [39498]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Mr. Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking about incidents at (a) Doncaster and (b) Ford prisons notified in the last year, indicating the date, type and outcome of each incident.

Incidents reported to Prison Service headquarters from 1 January to 30 September 1995 are given in the attached table. These incidents are reported for data collection purposes. There is no central record of the outcome of all the incidents.

Type of incident	*HMP Doncaster*	*HMP Ford*
Absconds	0	11
Assaults	174	1
Attempted escapes	1	0
Concerted indiscipline	4	0
Death of inmate	1	1
Drug finds	197	35
Escapes	0	1
Fires	5	0
Food refusal	4	0
Miscellaneous	10	1
Recapture/surrender	5	15
Self-harm	36	0
Temporary release failure	0	7
Tool loss	3	0
Total	440	72

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those prisoners requiring immediate transfer from Doncaster prison during the last 12 months *(a)* had self-inflicted injuries and *(b)* had injuries received as a result of assault from other prisoners. [39549]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about how many of those prisoners requiring immediate transfer from Doncaster prison during the last 12 months, had self-inflicted injuries, and had injuries received as a result of assault from other prisoners.

Two prisoners have required immediate transfer from Doncaster to outside hospital, between 1 October 1994 and 25 October 1995. One was for reasons of self-harm and one as a result of an assault by another prisoner.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list, by grade, the number of inmates being held in Doncaster prison on the first day of each month for the last 12 months. [39003]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking if he will list, by grade, the number of inmates being held in Doncaster on the first day of each month for the last 12 months.

The information requested is given in the attached table.

Date	*Pop*	*Remand/trials*		*Convicted/unconvicted*		*Sentenced*		*Civils*
		Adult	*YOI*	*Adult*	*YOI*	*Adult*	*YOI*	
November 1994	733	188	176	59	95	132	81	2
December 1994	765	177	208	69	76	145	89	1
January 1995	723	165	209	62	71	132	84	0
February 1995	753	197	195	58	97	148	58	0
March 1995	770	205	195	73	78	134	85	0
April 1995	765	201	188	63	79	152	82	0
May 1995	750	173	174	56	74	165	108	0
June 1995	765	173	174	41	75	186	111	0
July 1995	734	160	146	59	106	166	94	3
August 1995	764	157	178	53	78	196	101	1
September 1995	738	179	184	60	85	157	73	0
October 1995	758	178	173	60	104	176	67	0

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what contact *(a)* the Health and Safety Executive, *(b)* the Environmental Health Office and *(c)* the fire service has had with Doncaster prison since it was opened; how many inspections of the prison have been made by each of these bodies; and what the findings were in each case. [38964]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about contacts between the Health and Safety Executive, the Environmental Health Office, the Fire Service and Doncaster prison.

The Health and Safety Executive examined the alarm systems at Doncaster twice. They considered that the systems were adequate.

The local Environmental Health Officer visited on 3 August His report is still awaited.

Doncaster has been inspected by the Home Office Fire and Safety Section on several occasions.

The local fire brigade has visited Doncaster prison on 13 occasions.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many cases staff shortages at Doncaster prison have been the reason for the non-production of prisoners in court in the past 12 months. [39053]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about cases in which staff shortages at Doncaster prison have been the reasons for the non-production of prisoners in court in the past 12 months.

There have been no cases of non-production in court as a result of staff shortages at Doncaster.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff at Doncaster prison have *(a)* resigned or *(b)* been dismissed since the prison opened. [39002]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about how many staff at Doncaster prison have resigned or have been dismissed since the prison opened.

Doncaster prison opened on 20 June 1994. 629 staff have been recruited in all grades at Doncaster. 127 have since resigned and 12 members of staff have been dismissed. 14 of the staff resigned to take up posts in establishments in the public sector.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money has been paid by his Department for loss, destruction, or damage to Doncaster prison since it was opened; and if he will indicate the circumstances and amount of each separate payment. [38962]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arranged for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about how much money has been paid by his Department for loss, destruction or damage to Doncaster prison since the prison opened and if he will indicate the circumstances and amount of each separate payment.

No payments have been made in respect of loss, destruction or damage to Doncaster since it opened.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* staff and *(b)* people applying to become staff at Doncaster prison since it was opened have been refused Home Office certification as fit to perform such duties, and of these, how many have later reapplied and received such certification. [39021]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about unsuccessful applications for certification to work at Doncaster prison.

Twenty one people have been refused certification as prisoner custody officers to perform custodial duties at Doncaster prison. None of them was employed at the prison following its opening in June 1994 or subsequently reapplied for certification.

Director General of the Prison Service

Ms Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria have been used in the past to assess the size of the Director General of the Prison Service's performance-related bonus. [39602]

Miss Widdecombe: The former Director General was eligible for payment of a performance bonus of up to 35 per cent. of his basic salary. The amount payable was assessed on the basis of both qualitative and quantative measures reflecting performance against the Prison Service's key targets as set out in the agency's corporate and business plans.

Ms Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the terms of the financial settlement for the ex-Director General of the Prison Service. [39604]

Miss Widdecombe: The former Director General has issued a writ claiming compensation. The matter is being dealt with by the Treasury Solicitor on behalf of the Home Office.

Fire Services, Wales

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the future of the fire services in Wales. [39584]

Mr. Kirkhope: The long-standing proposal to establish three brigades in Wales following local government reorganisation from next April is based on clear and unequivocal professional advice from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire Services and from the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association. After careful consideration of the comments made during the recently completed consultation process, the Government intend to proceed with a three-brigade structure from next April.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations he has received from local authorities in Wales and other bodies, concerning the future structure of local government and consequent implementation in the organisation of the fire service; and if he will make a statement. [38984]

Mr. Kirkhope: My right hon. and learned Friend has received a number of representations from local authority interests and others about the brigade structure in Wales, including comments on draft combination schemes from the constituent authorities of each proposed combined fire authority and the existing county fire authorities. The proposal to establish three brigades was based on clear and unequivocal professional advice from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire Services and from the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association. After careful consideration of the position in the light of the above representations and comments, the Government intend to proceed with a three brigade structure for the fire service in Wales from next April. The draft combination scheme orders were laid in Parliament on 24 October.

Television Licence Fee

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are currently serving sentences in British prisons for non-payment of the television licence fee. [39739]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Directory General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mrs. Anne Campbell, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking how many people are currently serving sentences in British prisons for non-payment of the television licence fee.

The latest available information is for 30 September 1995. On that date there were four people in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales for non-payment of a fine imposed for using a television without a licence.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were serving a prison sentence for the non-payment of a television licence fee as at 10 October. [39754]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking how many people were serving a prison sentence for the non-payment of a television licence fee as at 10 October.

The latest available information is for 30 September 1995. On that date there were four people in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales for non-payment of a fine imposed for using a television without a licence.

Drugs Rehabilitation Services

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the detailed arrangements for drugs rehabilitation services which have been put in place in the mandatory drugs testing prisons in England and Wales; and what measurements of efficiency are being made. [39811]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Mr. Richard Tilt to Mr. Tim Rathbone, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question on the arrangements for drugs rehabilitation services which have been put in place in the mandatory drugs testing prisons in England and Wales; and what measurements of efficiency are being made.

By the end of the year all prisons will have developed a local drugs strategy which will include arrangements to identify individuals with drug problems and the provision of treatment, counselling and support. The strategy will include a timed implementation plan with performance measures and monitoring arrangements. The local strategy will form part of a prison governor's contract with his/her area manager and will be subject to audit.

In addition, the Prison Service is substantially expanding the number and type of drug treatment programmes and services. The first phase of expansion involves 13 pilot projects spread over 22 establishments. The projects include therapeutic communities, dedicated treatment units, detoxification, education, counselling and throughcare. We aim to have let the contracts for all these projects by the end of the year. They will be subject to independent evaluation over an 18 month period and the results will inform the future provision of drug treatment programmes throughout the Service. Proposals for 29 establishments to be included in the second phase of the pilot drug treatment programmes have been received and will be implemented during 1996.

Mandatory drug testing (MDT) is being introduced to all establishments in a rolling programme which will be completed by the end of March 1996. All prisons introducing MDT are required first to send staff to attend a Prison Service drugs strategy course and to develop supportive responses to those prisoners who test positive. An evaluation programme to examine the longer-term impact of MDT has already been established.

Mock Air Attacks on Prisons

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what instructions or guidance have been issued to prison governors since 27 September 1994 concerning the employment of mock attacks by low flying military jets in an attempt to resolve prison incidents. [38122]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about what instructions have been issued to prison governors since 27 September 1994 concerning the employment of mock attacks by low flying military jets to resolve prison incidents.

No instructions have been issued with regard to incidents in prisons.

Blakenhurst Prison

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he intends to take to ensure that the company running Blakenhurst prison in Birmingham recognises trade unions. [38083]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. John McAllion, dated 30 October 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about trade union recognition at Blakenhurst prison.

Whether or not a trade union is recognised at a contracted out prison is a matter for the contractor. The contractor at Blakenhurst prison, United Kingdom Detention Services, has decided not to recognise a trade union to represent staff.

There is a staff consultative committee at Blakenhurst which enables staff representatives to meet with senior managers on a regular and formal basis.

DEFENCE

Procurement Fraud

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the level of reported fraud in his Department in each year since 1990, including all forms of procurement fraud, including those perpetrated by contractors involving corruption of officials by contracts and collusion between officials and contractors; how many officials have been disciplined or dismissed for involvement in these cases; how many officials involved in these cases remain employed by the Ministry of Defence or other Government Departments and agencies; and if he will make a statement. [39158]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The level of reported non-procurement fraud and theft since 1990 is as follows:

1990–91: 53 cases
1991–92: 45 cases
1992–93: 54 cases
1993–94: 108 cases
1994–95: 207 cases

The figures for officials, including service personnel, disciplined or dismissed for non-procurement fraud and theft are as follows:

1990–91: 104 disciplined and/or dismissed
1991–92: 51 disciplined and/or dismissed
1992–93: 55 disciplined and/or dismissed
1993–94: 85 disciplined and/or dismissed
1994–95: 124 disciplined and/or dismissed

The level of reported procurement fraud including corruption and collusion is as follows:

1990–91: 23 cases
1991–92: 18 cases
1992–93: 27 cases
1993–94: 7 cases
1994–95: 10 cases

Three officials were convicted in this period for procurement crimes involving corruption and collusion. Each of them retired at the time or before investigations and prosecution commenced. None of the three is presently employed by another Government Department or agency.

Trident

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the cost savings that could be made over the next 25 years from the immediate cancellation of the Trident nuclear programme. [39245]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The Government remain committed to the Trident programme. It follows that no detailed assessment has been made of the financial consequences of its cancellation. At this stage of procurement, the chief saving that would accrue from cancellation would be the operating costs, currently estimated to be some £6 billion over the life of the programme.

Trident remains the most effective means of providing a credible deterrent into the next century. No other use of the resources to be spent on Trident, such as an increase in our conventional forces, could contribute so significantly to deterrence.

RAF Machrihanish

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the purpose, and the cost, of upgrading RAF Machrihanish in each year since 1990. [39044]

Mr. Soames: Information on the cost of upgrading is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Since 1990, however, about £56 million has been spent on capital projects at RAF Machrihanish to provide and maintain the level of infrastructure necessary at a NATO forward operating base. The majority of this expenditure was funded by NATO.

National Radiological Protection Board

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what instructions or advice his Department has given to the National Radiological Protection Board regarding the storage and safekeeping of records, including computerised data, which arose from or related to its study into the effects of radiation on the veterans of British nuclear tests; what instructions he has issued to have parts of this information destroyed; and if he will make a statement. [39212]

Mr. Soames: None. The NRPB is, however, proposing to cease to maintain its database on the incidence of death and cancer among veterans of the British nuclear test programme. The existing data will continue to be stored but may be retained in a paper-based or equivalent format.

Uranium Stocks

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the amounts of uranium stocked at *(a)* Chapelcross, *(b)* Dounreay and *(c)* Sellafield. [39013]

Mr. Arbuthnot: It would not be in the national interest to make public details of fissile materials, such as uranium, associated with the defence programme.

Low Flying

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by date and location for the last 12 months the low flying monitoring that has been carried out by the RAF Skyguard radars; and what were the results on each occasion. [39529]

Mr. Soames: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Llwyd) of 19 October 1995, *Official Report*, column *344*. No breaches of military low flying regulations were detected during the deployments conducted between 1 November 1994 and 20 October 1995, although the results of the Huntingdon deployment between 17 and 20 October 1995 are provisional until the radar and video tapes have been analysed.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the operational range of the RAF Skyguard radars; and if he will make a statement. [39527]

Mr. Soames: The maximum range of the Skyguard radar in the search mode is approximately 20 km and in the tracking mode, 15 km. However, effective ranges will vary according to the nature of the terrain in which the radar is operating.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by date and location for the last 12 months the low flying monitoring that has been carried out by the RAF Skyguard radar in the electronic warfare training at Royal Air Force, Spadeadam; and what were the results on each occasion. [39528]

Mr. Soames: The Skyguard radar has not been used to monitor military flying at low level within the electronic warfare tactics range at RAF Spadeadam during the past 12 months.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the designation of each unit that currently operates the Royal Air Force Skyguard radar. [39526]

Mr. Soames: The RAF Skyguard radars are operated by RAF Spadeadam personnel when operating in the electronic warfare threat role and by RAF Spadeadam and RAF police flying complaints flight personnel when monitoring military low flying.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Skyguard radars are in operational service with the Royal Air Force; and if he will make a statement. [39530]

Mr. Soames: There are two Skyguard radars in operational service with the Royal Air Force and one in-use reserve.

Military Corrective Training Centre (Colchester)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when he last visited the military corrective training centre at Colchester; [39491]

(2) at what dates during the past 12 months his Ministers have visited the military corrective training centre at Colchester. [39488]

Mr. Soames: I visited the centre on 21 June 1995.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the current types of offences committed for which prisoners at the military corrective training centre at Colchester are convicted; and if he will make a statement. [39505]

Mr. Soames: The following list gives details of offences for the current detainees being held at MCTC: Absent without leave and desertion; drug offences; violence; indecency with children; dishonesty; criminal damage and other military offences.

Lockheed U-2R Missions

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by date, for the last 48 months, and by airfield the number of Lockheed U-2R aircraft missions that have been made from Royal Air Force stations; if the aircraft missions were *(a)* arriving or *(b)* departing from the station; and if he will make a statement. [39533]

Mr. Soames: United States air force U-2R reconnaissance aircraft have conducted a number of missions in support of NATO and UN peacekeeping and humanitarian aid operations from RAF stations. With the closure of RAF Alconbury's runway on 31 March 1995, the U-2Rs were temporarily transferred to RAF Fairford to continue this mission. However, it is not our policy to comment in further detail on operational matters.

Yorkshire Air Museum

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action his Department is taking to preserve the Yorkshire air museum based at Elvington, North Yorkshire after the closure of Royal Air Force, Elvington, with particular reference to the air shows carried out there; and if he will make a statement. [39531]

Mr. Soames: The Yorkshire air museum is a commercial enterprise situated on its own land adjacent to RAF Elvington. The museum is one of a number of civil organisations to whom my Department has licensed casual use of RAF Elvington both before and since its closure in 1992 as a relief landing ground. Subject to former owner obligations, it is therefore planned to dispose of it in the best interests of the taxpayer by offering it for sale on the open market, at which time the Yorkshire air museum and others will have an opportunity to bid for it. It is, however, our intention to continue to make the airfield available for casual use for as long as practicable before sale.

Battle of Britain Memorial Flight

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decision he has come to in respect of the future of the battle of Britain memorial flight with particular reference to *(a)* its composition, *(b)* its activities and *(c)* its cost; and if he will make a statement. [39503]

Mr. Soames: There are no plans to change the composition or activities of the battle of Britain memorial flight, which will continue to be one of the most celebrated display assets of the Royal Air Force. A review of the current charges for air display assets generally is about to be undertaken, together with a study into the possibility of sponsorship for the BBMF.

Captain Chris Kelly

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to be in a position to make a statement on the circumstances of the death of Captain Chris Kelly. [39504]

Mr. Soames: As the board of inquiry into the death of Captain Kelly is on-going it would be inappropriate to make a statement at this time.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by grade the number of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39487]

Mr. Arbuthnot: This information is not available in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Information on staff numbers and costs for defence agencies is given in the annual report and accounts of each agency, which are laid before the House or placed in the Library of the House, as appropriate.

Former Yugoslavia (Reconnaissance)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by date for the last 48 months the number of Royal Air Force Canberra photo-reconnaissance missions that have been made over former Yugoslavia; and if he will make a statement. [39532]

Mr. Soames: It is not our policy to comment on operational matters of this nature.

Nuclear Tests

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement in respect of the United Kingdom resuming its nuclear test programme should the United States Government cease their moratorium on nuclear testing. [39574]

Mr. Arbuthnot: Her Majesty's Government have no plans to carry out further nuclear weapon test explosions and we hope to see the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty successfully completed in the first half of 1996. We have no reason to believe that the United States will abandon its moratorium before then.

Royal Naval College, Dartmouth

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 16 October, *Official Report*, column *36*, if he will make a statement outlining the procedure enabling students at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, to train for the management and operation of diesel powered submarines. [39959]

Mr. Soames: This is a matter for the Naval Recruiting and Training Agency, NRTA, under its framework document. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from A. D. Ferguson to Mr. Jeff Rooker, dated 30 October 1995:

The Secretary of State for Defence has asked the Chief Executive of the Naval Recruiting and Training Agency (NRTA) to reply to your Parliamentary Question, pursuant to the Answer given on 6 October, about the procedures that enable students at the Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth to train for the management and operation of diesel powered submarines. I am replying on behalf of the Chief Executive who is away.

You will wish to be aware that the Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, which is part of the NRTA, provides initial training to newly entered Royal Naval Officers (as part of the Naval General Training syllabus) and to International students from Foreign and Commonwealth navies. The NRTA does not, however, provide training in support of the management and operation of diesel powered submarines, since such submarines are no longer in operational use by the Royal Navy.

Operation Deliberate Force

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many targets were hit by RAF missions during Operation Deliberate Force. [40019]

Mr. Soames: Twenty-two were hit by RAF aircraft during Operation Deliberate Force.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many munitions and bombs were dropped by the RAF during Operation Deliberate Force. [40021]

Mr. Soames: Forty-eight laser-guided bombs and 30 1,000 lb freefall bombs were dropped by RAF aircraft during Operation Deliberate Force.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the total cost so far to the United Kingdom of Operation Deliberate Force. [40020]

Mr. Soames: The additional costs to the United Kingdom of Operation Deliberate Force are not separately identifiable from the costs arising from Operation Deny Flight, which are estimated to be some £31 million in 1995–96.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many missions were flown by RAF aircraft during Operation Deliberate Force. [40018]

Mr. Soames: RAF aircraft flew 268 missions during Operation Deliberate Force.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the estimates of collateral damage and the number of Bosnian Serb casualties during Operation Deliberate Force as a result of *(a)* NATO and *(b)* British action. [40022]

Mr. Soames: This information is not available though there is no evidence that Operation Deliberate Force caused significant civilian casualties or other collateral damage. In selecting targets, UN and NATO commanders paid careful attention to minimising such risks.

Mount Igman

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for East Lothian on 24 October, and to his letter of 17 August, what considerations led him to suggest that a non-governmental organisation's aid convoy over Mount Igman could jeopardise an agreement between the UN and the Bosnian Serb army. [40174]

Mr. Soames: The hon. Member was strongly urged to seek the advice of UNPROFOR and the UNHCR on the choice of aid routes to Sarajevo. At the time in question, their advice was firmly against the use of the Mount Igman route in the light of the agreement which the UN had secured with the Bosnian Serbs on the use of the Kiseljak road as the main aid route.

Married Quarters (Discounts)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discounts are offered on the sale of surplus married quarters; what is the basis of such discounts; and if such discounts can be offered in respect of properties other than the properties in which the claimer of the discount resides. [40491]

Mr. Soames: A discount of 30 per cent. is given under the discounted married quarters sales scheme. The 30 per cent discount has a five-year property retention condition, as stipulated by the Inland Revenue, which was based on local authority "right to buy", at the time of the scheme's inception. The married quarters offered for sale in the scheme are surplus, and, as such, would not normally be occupied by the applicant, and are regularly advertised to the three services.

Gulf War Fatalities

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his most recent estimation of the total number of fatalities suffered in the Gulf war by *(a)* coalition forces and *(b)* the Iraqis. [39826]

Mr. Soames: Coalition forces suffered the loss of 223 personnel killed in action in the Gulf war.

No reliable figures are available for Iraqi casualties.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (Orford Ness)

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the responsibility for, and the cost of, removing transformers containing polychlorinated biphenyls buried in his Department's land at Orford Ness in Suffolk. [40192]

Mr. Soames: My Department no longer owns any land at Orford Ness; the site was sold to the National Trust in March 1993. The National Trust is in the process of removing the contamination, and discussions are taking place between the trust, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which is an adjacent landowner, and the Ministry of Defence to determine how the work should be funded.

Bosnia (Rents)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the amounts of rent paid for each of the military facilities used by British troops in Bosnia and in total. [40398]

Mr. Soames: The information requested is not available as the United Nations pays the rent for the military facilities used by British troops in Bosnia.

Regimental Museums

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the name and location of each regimental museum in the United Kingdom. [40399]

Mr. Soames: The information requested is contained in the tables:

Regimental and corps museums directly funded by the Ministry of Defence

Corps or regiment	*Location*
Household Cavalry	Windsor
Queen's Dragoon Guards	Cardiff
The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards	Edinburgh
	York (4/7th DG)
Royal Dragoon Guards	Chester (5 Innis DG)
	Eastbourne (QRIH)
Queen's Royal Hussars	Warwick (QOH)
9/12th Lancers	Derby
	Preston (14/20th H)
Kings Royal Hussars	Winchester (RH)
	Newcastle upon Tyne (15/19th H)
Light Dragoons	Barnsley (13th/18th H)
Queen's Royal Lancers	Belvoir Castle (16/5th and 17th/21st L)
Royal Tank Regiment	Bovington
Royal Artillery	Woolwich
Royal Engineers	Chatham
Royal Signals	Blandford
The Foot Guards	London
Royal Scots	Edinburgh
	Dover
	Winchester (R Hamps)
Prince of Wales Royal Regiment	Guildford
Kings Own Royal Border Regiment	Carlisle
	London/Alnwick
	Bury (Lancs Fus)
Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	Bury (R Warwicks)
	Bury St Edmunds
	Chelmsford (Essex)
The Royal Anglian Regiment	Northampton/Norwich
Devonshire and Dorset Regiment	Dorchester
	Winchester
	Bodmin (DCLI)
The Light Infantry	Shrewsbury (KSLI)
Prince of Wales Own Regiment of Yorkshire	York
The Green Howards	Richmond
Royal Highland Fusiliers	Glasgow
The Cheshire Regiment	Chester
Royal Welch Fusiliers	Caernarvon
	Cardiff
Royal Regiment of Wales	Brecon
King's Own Scottish Borderers	Berwick upon Tweed
	Ballymena
The Royal Irish Regiment	Armagh (RRF)
Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment	Worcester/Nottingham
The Queen's Lancashire Regiment	Preston
The Staffordshire Regiment	Lichfield
Black Watch	Perth
	Aberdeen
Highlanders	Ford George
Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	Stirling
The Parachute Regiment	Aldershot
Brigade of Gurkhas	Winchester
The Royal Green Jackets	Winchester
Yorkshire and Lancashire	Rotherham
Army Air Corps	Middle Wallop
Royal Chaplains Department	Bagshot
Royal Logistic Corps	Deepcut/Mychett
Royal Army Medical Corps	Deepcut/Mychett
Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers	Aborfield
Adjutant General Corps—Royal Military Police	Chichester
Royal Army Dental Corps	Aldershot
Army Physical Training Corps	Aldershot
Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps	Deepcut/Mychett

Military museums that are not funded by MOD

Title	*Location*
Scottish United Services Museum	Edinburgh
Cheshire Yeomanry	Chester
4th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment	Hull
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment Museum	Luton
Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) Museums	Hamilton
Carmarthen Museum	Carmarthen
Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry Museum	Preston
Duke of Wellington's Regiment Museum	Halifax
Durham Light Infantry Museum	Durham City
Guernsey Militia Museum	Guernsey
Kings Liverpool Regiment Museum	Liverpool
Kings Own Royal Lancaster Regiment Museum	Lancaster
Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry Museum	Doncaster
Leicestershire and Derbyshire Yeomanry Museum	Derby
Leicestershire and Rutland Yeomanry	Oakham
Leicestershire Yeomanry Collection	Loughborough
Lincolnshire Regiment Collection	Lincoln
Lincolnshire Yeomanry Museum	Lincoln
Museum of the Manchesters (Kings Regiment)	Ashton under Lyne
Northamptonshire Yeomanry Museum	Northampton
Northumberland Hussars Yeomanry Museum	Newcastle upon Tyne
Pembroke Yeomanry Museum	Haverfordwest
Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum	Maidstone
Royal Devon Yeomanry Museum	Barnstaple
Royal Leicestershire Regimental Museum	Leicestershire
Royal Sussex Regiment Museum	Eastbourne
Sherwood Foresters	Derby
Somerset Military Museum	Taunton
Staffordshire Yeomanry Museum	Stafford
The Buffs Regimental Museum	Canterbury
Worcestershire Yeomanry Museum	Worcester
101 Northumbrian Field Regiment RA(V)	Newcastle upon Tyne

Military museums that are not funded by MOD

Title	*Location*
39 Engineer Regiment Museum	Waterbeach
Army Museums Ogilby Trust	Winchester
Artists and Rifles Museum	Chelsea
Ayrshire Yeomanry Museum	Alloway by Ayr
Buckinghamshire Military Museum	Aylesbury
Fife and Forfar Yeomanry Museum	Fife
Fusiliers London Volunteer Museum	Newport
Glamorgan Artillery Volunteers Museum	Newport
Hereford Light Infantry Museum	Hereford
Hertfordshire Regiment Museum	Hertford
Hertfordshire Yeomanry and Artillery Museum	Hitchin
Inns of Court and City Yeomanry Museum	Holborn
Kohima (2 Div) Museum	York
Leeds Rifles Museum	Leeds
Liverpool Scottish Regimental Museum	Liverpool
London Irish Rifles Museum	Chelsea
Loyal North Lancashire Regiment Museum	Preston
Montgomeryshire Yeomanry Museum	Welshpool
Museum of Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment	Hammersmith
Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry Museum	Oxford
Queen's Own Mercian Yeomanry Museum	Telford
Royal Army Education Corps Museum	Beaconsfield
Royal Army Pay Corps Museum	Winchester
Royal Berkshire Yeomanry Museum	Windsor
Royal Hospital Museum	Chelsea
Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Collection	Camberley
Royal Military School of Music Museum	Twickenham
Royal Monmouthshires RE Militia Museum	Monmouth
Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry Museum	Carlton
South Lancashire Regiment Museum	Warrington
South Notts Hussars Yeomanry Museum	Nottingham
Staff College Museum	Camberley
Sussex Yeomanry Museum	Brighton
Warwickshire Yeomanry Museum	Warwick
Westminster Dragoons Museum	Chelsea
Yorkshire Yeomanry Museum	York
Essex Yeomanry Museum Collection	Margaretting
Military and Aero Museums (Aldershot) Trust	Aldershot
Combined Operations Museum	Inveraray
East Riding of Yorks Yeomanry Collection	Beverley
Honourable Artillery Company Museum	City
Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Museum	Tonbridge
London Scottish Regimental Museum	Westminster
Museum of Army Transport	Beverley
Museum of the Scottish Horse	Dunkeld
Suffolk and Norfolk Yeomanry Museum	Sheringham
Westmoreland and Cumberland Yeomanry Museum	Penrith

Exercise Co-operative Nugget 95

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British personnel were involved in Co-operative Nugget 95 in Louisiana, USA; and if he will make a statement. [37797]

Mr. Soames *[holding answer 19 October 1995]:* A total of 97 British personnel—five officers and 92 soldiers—were involved in Exercise Co-operative Nugget 95, a NATO sponsored partnership for peace exercise.

Queen's University Air Squadron, Belfast

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the annual cost of the university air squadron at Queen's university, Belfast; and what percentage it represents of the total annual cost of all the university air squadrons in the United Kingdom. [39351]

Mr. Soames *[holding answer 25 October 1995]:* The estimated annual cost of Queen's university air squadron for the financial year 1995–96 is £957,000, which represents 9.3 per cent. of the total estimated annual cost of the 16 university air squadrons.

Employee Fraud

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total number of cases of all forms of fraud committed by employees of his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies, for each year from 1991–92 to 1994–95; and for each of these years, what was the total monetary sum (i) misappropriated in such frauds and (ii) subsequently recovered. [39139]

Mr. Arbuthnot *[holding answer 24 October 1995]:* The number of reported non-procurement frauds and thefts committed by Ministry of Defence employees, including defence agencies, during each of the years 1991–92 to 1994–95 is as follows:

1991–92: 45 cases
1992–93: 54 cases
1993–94: 108 cases
1994–95: 207 cases

There were no reported frauds and thefts committed by staff working in non-departmental public bodies during the period in question.

The estimated sums misappropriated and the sums recovered in each of the years 1991–92 to 1994–95 are as follows:

	Misappropriated £	*Recovered* £
1991–92	63,000	22,492
1992–93	205,000	37,816
1993–94	571,000	74,725
1994–95	1,095,584	128,722

With regard to procurement fraud, including corruption and collusion, the numbers of cases recorded over the years in question were as follows:

1991–92: 18 cases
1992–93: 27 cases
1993–94: 7 cases
1994–95: 10 cases

Only three of these involved the conviction of Ministry of Defence employees for corruption and collusion.

The estimated amounts misappropriated against procurement fraud for the years in question were as follows:

1991–92: £150,000 fraud by a subcontractor—no eventual loss to MOD.

1992–93: £20,000 advance payment fraud involving no ultimate loss to MOD.

1993-94: £1,511,500 mainly corruption. Recovery action in hand.

1994-95: Actual values of loss to MOD to be identified when cases come to fruition.

French Nuclear Tests

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has received or he expects to receive from the French Government on the current nuclear tests at Muroroa atoll; and to what use he expects to put such information. [39823]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) on 24 October 1995, *Official Report*, column *587*.

BMARC

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the role of his Department's police in the BMARC case. [40100]

Mr. Soames: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Leyton on 4 July 1995, *Official Report*, column *178*.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what grounds the documents and diaries of Mr. Gerald James were taken by the Ministry of Defence police; if he will make a statement on he relevance of their contents to his Department's investigations; and when they will all be returned to Mr. James. [40101]

Mr. Soames: As part of a wide-ranging MOD police corruption investigation involving the Astra group of companies, a number of documents were seized. All documents seized during those inquiries were considered company documents and were relevant to the inquiry. All documents taken from the Astra group of companies, belonging to those companies, have now been returned to the company liquidators.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contracts his Department has had with BMARC since 1979. [40102]

Mr. Arbuthnot: Records covering the period since the financial year 1989-90 show that the Ministry of Defence placed the following contracts with BMARC:

1989-90: approximately 30 contracts valued £6.2 million.

1990-91: approximately 30 contracts valued £5.5 million.

1991-92 approximately 15 contracts valued £4.5 million.

1992-93 fewer than five contracts valued £1.7 million.

Information for the period before 1989-90 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

British Manufacturer and Research Co. Ltd. went into administrative receivership in April 1992, and since 1992-93 no contracts have been placed with it.

RB44 Vehicles

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of his Department's RB44 light vehicles are roadworthy; and when they became so. [40396]

Mr. Arbuthnot: A modification programme to render the Reynolds Boughton RB44 heavy utility truck roadworthy was initiated on 2 October 1995, with approximately 50 vehicles being modified each week. To date, 136 vehicles have been modified and are thus considered roadworthy.

Dr. Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has spent on servicing the RB44 light vehicles since purchasing them; and by whom the servicing of his Department's RB44 light vehicles is conducted. [40397]

Mr. Arbuthnot: Servicing of the RB44 heavy utility truck is conducted by military or civilian maintenance personnel or under contract by commercial companies.

Information on the cost of servicing the vehicles is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Greenham Common

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the circulation list of organisations notified by his Department in respect of the notice of the closure of Greenham Common air base. [39119]

Mr. Soames: I have been asked to reply.

Following the announcement on 30 January 1992 by the US Government of their intention to withdraw from Greenham Common air base, and subsequent correspondence and discussions with the then Member for Newbury, the then Minister for the Armed Forces, my right hon. Friend the Member for Epsom and Ewell (Sir A. Hamilton) notified the House on 9 February 1993, that the majority of the site was surpluse to requirments and would be disposed of. In accordance with normal practice, letters to this effect were concurrently sent to the chief executives of Berkshire county and Newbury district councils.

Defence-related Jobs

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the number of *(a)* defence and *(b)* defence-related jobs in (i) Strathclyde and (ii) Scotland as a whole; and if he will make a statement. [41973]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I have been asked to reply.

For Scotland as a whole, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 16 October 1995, *Official Report*, columns *32-33*. For Strathclyde, my Department currently has some 5,100 service and 6,200 civilan personnel based there. A breakdown by Scottish region of jobs in the defence industry is not available.

WALES

Primary Schools

11. **Sir David Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was spent per pupil in primary schools in Wales in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what was the figure for 1978-79, at constant prices. [37839]

Mr. Richards: The latest figures available are for 1992–93: the amount spent per pupil in primary and nursery schools in that year was £1,657, at 1993–94 prices. This compares to £1,086 in 1979–80, the earliest period for which figures are available. This is an increase of 52.5 per cent. in real terms—a fact that the Labour party seems incapable of recognising.

Planning Policy Guidance

12. **Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has held regarding incorporation of the Department of the Environment's PPG13 into Welsh planning law and practice; and if he will make a statement. [37840]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: This is incorporated in the new draft planning policy guidance for Wales which was issued for public consultation in July.

Polluted Land

13. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to update the 1988 register of polluted land in Wales. [37841]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: None—the Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to survey their areas for contaminated land.

Job Prospects

14. **Mr. Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he has taken to improve job prospects in *(a)* Blaenau Gwent and *(b)* Wales. [37843]

Mr. Richards: The Government have created the right conditions for the economy to grow. Output is up and unemployment continues to fall. This shows the success of our policies throughout Wales. In addition, we do not propose to establish an Assembly in Cardiff which would interfere with and damage the Welsh economy. I trust that the hon. Gentleman supports our policy-which is in the best interests of his constituents.

Unemployment

15. **Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the current level of unemployment in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* the United Kingdom. [37844]

Mr. Hague: In September 1995, the seasonally adjusted number of persons on the claimant count in Wales was 106,300 or 8.2 per cent. of the work force. Corresponding figures for the United Kingdom were 2,265,100 and 8.1 per cent.

School Rolls

16. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the current rolls of *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools, including special schools; how many teachers there are in each sector; what were the equivalent figures in May 1979; and if he will make a statement. [37845]

Mr. Richards: The information requested is not available in respect of May 1979. The following table shows data for January in 1979 and 1995.

	At January 1979	*1995 (provisional)*
Primary schools		
Full and part-time pupils on roll	303,396	289,206
Full-time equivalent teachers	13,581	12,404
Secondary schools		
Full and part-time pupils on roll	241,661	197,897
Full-time equivalent teachers	14,413	12,288
Special schools		
Full and part-time pupils on roll	4,739[1]	3,607[1]
Full-time equivalent teachers	634	546

[1] Full-time pupils and teachers only.

Source:

Schools Census.

Health Funding

17. **Mr. Ainger:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with representatives of the health authorities in Wales concerning funding for 1996–97. [37846]

Mr. Richards: NHS funding, including the prospects for 1996–97, were discussed at a meeting held by my right hon. Friend with health authority chairmen on 18 October.

Town and City Centres

18. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to strengthen development control requirements in order to protect the viability of town and city centres in Wales. [37847]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: This issue is covered in the draft of the new comprehensive planning policy guidance for Wales, comments on which are now being considered.

European Funding

19. **Sir Wyn Roberts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment he has made of the transparent additionality of funds sought from the EC; and if he will make a statement. [37848]

Mr. Hague: Following my recent meeting with Commissioner Wulf-Mathies, the Commission has accepted that European structural funds are properly spent in Wales. As a result, £11.4 million of European regional aid to Wales has been released. The measures taken to improve the transparency of the presentation of grants to public bodies will make it very clear that European funds reach and will continue to reach those communities for which they are intended.

Valleys Initiative

20. **Mr. Hain:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what progress has been made on establishing industrial villages as part of the valleys initiative programme. [37849]

Mr. Hague: On 14 September 1994, my predecessor announced that he was making available £410,000 via Neath borough council, to the Tonmawr 2000 project implementation group to develop the industrial village concept. The money has been used to provide 190 sq m of business units in Tonmawr to meet a growing demand for space from local employers. An extension to the community sports centre is also creating a further five part-time jobs. Progress is being monitored closely.

Wages

21. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what new proposals he has to raise wage levels in Wales. [37850]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: We have achieved low interest rates, sound public finances and an enterprise culture. These are the foundations of a vigorous and long-lasting recovery and are conducive to higher quality, and therefore better paid, jobs.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what is his calculation of the median wage levels paid in each Welsh parliamentary constituency. [39827]

Mr Jones: The available information is based on sample surveys and cannot provide reliable estimates at this geographical level.

Inward Investment

22. **Mr. Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate he has formed as to the extent to which inward investment in Wales is related to its current constitutional position in the United Kingdom. [37851]

Mr. Hague: A wide range of factors are considered when inward investors make their investment decisions. Political and economic stability with low interest and inflation rates are major considerations, as are, labour availability and quality, good industrial relations, good communications and a good industrial infrastructure.

Assisted Places Scheme

23. **Mr. Hanson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he intends to initiate with local authorities in Wales prior to any enlargement of the assisted places scheme. [37852]

Mr. Richards: My right hon. Friend will be giving details in due course on proposals to expand the assisted places scheme in Wales.

Village Shops

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will ensure that the proposed business rate relief scheme for village shops will be available for shops in Wales in the near future. [38477]

Mr. Hague: I am considering the case for a business rate relief scheme for village shops in Wales. I will announce my conclusion in my forthcoming rural White Paper.

Medieval Boat, Severn Estuary

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assistance his Department has given to the archaeologists' attempts to raise a medieval boat hull from the Bedwin sands in the Severn estuary; and if he will make a statement. [39435]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The Welsh Office helped to fund the archaeological excavation of the Magor medieval boat as a joint venture with the National Museums and Galleries of Wales and Laing–GTM, the contractors for the second Severn crossing. The boat was raised from the mud of the Severn estuary in the early morning of Sunday 27 August this year. The Welsh Office contributed £19,428 towards the cost of excavation, with a further £20,239 being spent on recording and dismantling the boat ready for its conservation. A report of the work will also be funded by the Welsh Office.

Llantarnam Bypass

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects the Llantarnam bypass to be completed. [39586]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The contract completion date for the A4042 Llantarnam bypass in 9 January 1996.

Fire Service Reorganisation

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent representations he has received regarding the reorganisation of the fire service in Wales. [39578]

Mr. Jones: In the past six months, 12 written representations have been received about the reorganisation of the fire brigades in Wales.

Voluntary Organisations

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proposals he has to safeguard the financing of voluntary organisations in Wales after 1 April 1996. [39582]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The White Paper "A Charter for the Future", Cm 2155, emphasised the important role of the voluntary sector. Transition committees were advised to consult voluntary organisations. In preparing their service delivery plans, shadow authorities have been asked to build on existing arrangements and to set out their proposed strategies for working with the voluntary sector. Sections 51 and 54 of the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 contain safeguards for contracts or agreements which extend beyond 31 March 1996.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39866]

Mr. Hague: My predecessor met the chief executive of Cadw, Welsh Historic Monuments twice this year, once in January and once in May. Neither I nor my predecessor has met the chief executives of the Planning Inspectorate and ADAS executive agencies this year.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their costs for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39496]

Mr. Hague: For Cadw, Welsh Historic Monuments executive agency, responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the chief executive, Mr. T. J. Cassidy. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

I also have shared responsibility for the Planning Inspectorate and ADAS agencies. My right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food are arranging for replies to be given separately for these agencies.

Letter from T. J. Cassidy to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 26 October 1995:

As Cadw is an Executive Agency, the Secretary of State for Wales has asked me to write to you direct with respect to Cadw in response to your recent Parliamentary Question about staffing grades, numbers and costs.

The information is provided in the table below in which specialists grades have been assimilated into the equivalent administrative grade:

Grade	*1994–95 Actual* Number	Cost £	*1995–96 Estimate* Number	Cost £
Chief Executive	1	64,247	1	70,441
Grade 6	4	171,298	3	155,274
Grade 7	8	298,081	8	318,750
Senior Executive	15	433,647	15	446,847
Higher Executive	17	359,551	16	320,473
Executive	25	481,466	25	485,289
Administrative	44	518,289	39	467,033
Custodial	39	755,685	46	882,328
Industrial	91	1,056,493	85	1,003,694
Total	244	4,138,757	238	4,150,129

Second Severn Crossing

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects the second Severn crossing to be completed. [39585]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The administration of the second Severn crossing is a matter for the Department of Transport, which advises that the bridge is expected to be open to traffic in mid-1996.

Bridge Repairs

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what estimate he has made of the cost of the repair of bridges in Wales in the current financial year. [39575]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The estimate in respect of trunk roads is £6.8 million. Local authorities are responsible for bridges on non-trunk roads.

Gwent County Hall

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations the residuary body for Wales has received regarding the future use of the headquarters of Gwent county council. [39583]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To date, the residuary body for Wales has received written representations from Monmouthshire county council, Torfaen county borough council and Blaenau Gwent county borough council regarding the future use of Gwent county hall.

Grant-maintained Schools

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many schools in Wales are currently applying for grant-maintained status. [39593]

Mr. Richards: I am currently considering an application from St. Brigid's school, Denbigh.

Nursery Education

Mr. Ainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list *(a)* the number and *(b)* percentage of (i) three-year-olds and (ii) four-year-olds attending nursery and primary schools in each of the local education authorities in Wales in each of the last five years. [40104]

Mr. Richards: The information requested is given in the following tables. Figures in the last two tables are revised estimates and not therefore entirely consistent with those given to the hon. Member in my reply of 23 October, *Official Report*, columns 473–74.

	Clwyd	Dyfed	Gwent	Gwynedd	Mid Glamorgan	Powys	South Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	Wales
Three-year-olds in nursery schools[1]									
1989–90									
Number	195	91	700	—	692	—	420	131	2,229
Per cent.	3.7	2.1	11.6	—	9.2	—	7.4	2.8	5.9
1990–91									
Number	97	97	705	—	707	—	407	131	2,144
Per cent.	1.8	2.3	11.4	—	9.2	—	7.0	2.8	5.6
1991–92									
Number	113	96	628	—	727	—	426	136	2,126
Per cent.	2.1	2.2	9.8	—	9.2	—	7.1	2.8	5.4
1992–93									
Number	113	103	605	—	706	—	453	130	2,110
Per cent.	2.2	2.5	9.8	—	9.1	—	7.8	2.8	5.6

	Clwyd	Dyfed	Gwent	Gwynedd	Mid Glamorgan	Powys	South Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	Wales
1993–94									
Number	130	87	609	—	711	—	486	129	2,152
Per cent.	2.5	2.1	9.8	—	9.4	—	8.4	2.7	5.6
Four-year-olds in nursery schools[1]									
1989–90									
Number	97	75	352	—	415	—	305	53	1,297
Per cent.	1.9	1.7	5.9	—	5.5	—	5.4	1.1	3.4
1990–91									
Number	49	93	351	—	413	—	331	53	1,290
Per cent.	0.9	2.2	5.8	—	5.4	—	5.8	1.1	3.4
1991–92									
Number	56	98	317	—	423	—	311	55	1,260
Per cent.	1.1	2.3	5.0	—	5.4	—	5.3	1.2	3.3
1992–93									
Number	58	93	308	—	393	—	260	52	1,164
Per cent.	1.1	2.1	4.8	—	5.0	—	4.4	1.1	2.9
1993–94									
Number	65	94	305	—	373	—	239	52	1,128
Per cent.	1.3	2.3	4.9	—	4.8	—	4.1	1.1	3.0

	Clwyd	Dyfed	Gwent	Gwynedd	Mid Glamorgan	Powys	South Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	Wales
Three-year-olds in primary schools[1]									
1989–90									
Number	2,786	1,583	2,098	446	3,076	323	1,348	3,007	14,667
Per cent.	53.3	36.6	34.8	15.6	40.9	23.1	23.8	63.7	38.9
1990–91									
Number	3,103	1,705	2,217	185	3,193	362	1,408	3,028	15,201
Per cent.	58.7	39.8	35.9	6.3	41.6	25.4	24.4	64.1	39.7
1991–92									
Number	3,268	1,746	2,349	128	3,277	368	1,461	3,156	15,753
Per cent.	60.2	40.4	36.5	4.2	41.3	25.2	24.5	65.1	40.0
1992–93									
Number	3,231	1,628	2,468	467	3,210	353	1,616	3,066	16,039
Per cent.	63.0	39.7	39.8	15.7	41.2	25.5	27.9	66.6	42.2
1993–94									
Number	3,239	1,728	2,525	434	3,348	346	1,702	3,231	16,553
Per cent.	61.2	41.7	40.6	14.6	44.5	24.7	29.4	68.1	43.5
Four-year-olds in primary schools[1]									
1989–90									
Number	4,865	3,479	5,033	1,908	6,361	1,083	3,936	4,574	31,239
Per cent.	93.3	80.8	83.7	66.8	84.9	77.7	69.7	97.2	83.0
1990–91									
Number	4,990	3,505	5,029	1,900	6,234	1,095	4,041	4,534	31,328
Per cent.	95.6	82.8	82.4	65.5	82.2	77.9	70.8	97.2	82.8
1991–92									
Number	5,077	3,666	5,288	1,898	6,606	1,141	4,231	4,558	32,465
Per cent.	95.5	86.6	83.8	63.6	85.0	79.7	72.4	95.9	84.0
1992–93									
Number	5,146	3,630	5,473	2,213	6,721	1,210	4,508	4,602	33,503
Per cent.	94.4	81.5	84.7	72.9	85.1	80.8	76.3	95.4	84.8
1993–94									
Number	5,236	3,469	5,341	2,144	6,527	1,151	4,591	4,453	32,912
Per cent.	101.6	84.2	86.0	71.6	83.8	82.2	78.7	96.6	86.4

	Clwyd	Dyfed	Gwent	Gwynedd	Mid Glamorgan	Powys	South Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	Wales
Three and four-year-olds in nursery schools[1]									
1989–90									
Number	292	166	1,052	—	1,107	—	725	184	3,526
Per cent.	2.8	1.9	8.7	—	7.4	—	6.4	2.0	4.7
1990–91									
Number	146	190	1,056	—	1,120	—	738	184	3,434
Per cent.	1.4	2.2	8.6	—	7.3	—	6.4	2.0	4.5

	Clwyd	Dyfed	Gwent	Gwynedd	Mid Glamorgan	Powys	South Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	Wales
1991–92									
Number	169	194	945	—	1,150	—	737	191	3,386
Per cent.	1.6	2.3	7.4	—	7.3	—	6.2	2.0	4.3
1992–93									
Number	171	196	913	—	1,099	—	713	182	3,274
Per cent.	1.6	2.3	7.2	—	7.0	—	6.1	1.9	4.2
1993–94									
Number	195	181	914	—	1,084	—	725	181	3,280
Per cent.	1.9	2.2	7.4	—	7.1	—	6.2	1.9	4.3
Three and four-year-olds in primary schools[1]									
1980–90									
Number	7,651	5,062	7,131	2,354	9,437	1,406	5,284	7,581	45,906
Per cent.	73.3	58.7	59.2	41.2	62.9	50.4	46.7	80.5	60.9
1990–91									
Number	8,093	5,210	7,246	2,085	9,427	1,457	5,449	7,562	46,529
Per cent.	77.0	61.2	59.0	35.7	61.8	51.5	47.4	80.5	61.1
1991–92									
Number	8,345	5,412	7,637	2,026	9,883	1,509	5,692	7,714	48,218
Per cent.	77.7	63.3	59.9	33.6	62.9	52.2	48.2	80.3	61.8
1992–93									
Number	8,377	5,258	7,941	2,680	9,931	1,563	6,124	7,668	49,542
Per cent.	79.2	61.5	62.7	44.5	63.3	54.2	52.4	81.3	63.9
1993–94									
Number	8,475	5,197	7,866	2,578	9,875	1,497	6,293	7,684	49,465
Per cent.	81.1	62.9	63.3	43.2	64.5	53.5	54.1	82.2	64.9

[1] Figures shown are for January each year. Includes grant-maintained primary schools.

Calculations based on mid-year population estimates and estimates of pupil ages at December, percentages can therefore exceed 100 per cent. on occasion.

Symbols: Means nil or less than 0.1 per cent.

Cardiff Bay

Sir Anthony Durant: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many jobs have been created by the Cardiff Bay development corporation; and how much private sector money has been involved. [37827]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: A total of £420 million of private sector investment has been attracted to Cardiff bay. This has generated around 10,500 jobs, of which nearly 5,500 are permanent.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his current estimate of the winding up date of the Cardiff Bay development corporation; and what consultations he has had with the relevant local authorities concerning the transfer of its assets and liabilities. [40551]

Mr. Hague: My predecessor informed the House on 7 July 1994, *Official Report*, column 465, expected to be possible to wind up the Cardiff Bay development corporation by the end of 1999. This remains the position. Consultations with the appropriate unitary local authorities will open after the reorganisation of local government.

Tourism Grants

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his letter of 25 October, if he will list the projects offered grants by the Wales tourist board and the national lottery which could be expected to benefit financially from the terms of his letter. [40550]

Mr. Hague: I have asked the chief executive of the Wales tourist board to write to the hon. Member and I will arrange for a copy of his reply to be placed in the Library of the House.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list which areas in Wales have trusts which administer *(a)* ambulance services only, *(b)* acute services only, *(c)* community services only, *(d)* all three services, *(e)* ambulance and acute, *(f)* ambulance and community, *(g)* community and acute, *(h)* community and for part of the same area acute as well, *(i)* acute and for part of the same area community services and *(j)* other combinations; if he will set up an evaluation of the success or otherwise of those models; and if he will make a statement. [40549]

Mr. Hague: The information requested is as follows:

NHS trusts in Wales generally offer services in the following categories:

Ambulance

Mid Glamorgan Ambulance NHS Trust

North Wales Ambulance NHS Trust

South and East Wales Ambulance NHS Trust

West Wales Ambulance NHS Trust

Acute

East Glamorgan NHS Trust

Glan Clwyd District General Hospital NHS Trust

Glan Hafren NHS Trust

Gwynedd Hospitals NHS Trust

Morriston Hospital NHS Trust

Nevill Hall and District NHS Trust

Swansea NHS Trust

University Hospital of Wales Healthcare NHS Trust

Velindre NHS Trust

Wrexham Maelor Hospital NHS Trust

Acute, community and ambulance

Pembrokeshire NHS Trust

Acute/community

Carmarthen and District NHS Trust

Ceredigion and Mid Wales NHS Trust

Llandough Hospital and Community NHS Trust

Llanelli/Dinefwr NHS Trust

Powys Healthcare NHS Trust

Rhondda Healthcare NHS Trust

Acute, community and mental health

Bridgend and District NHS Trust

Glan-y-Môr NHS Trust

Community/mental health

Cardiff Community Healthcare NHS Trust

Clwydian Community Care NHS Trust

Gwent Community Health NHS Trust

Gwynedd Community Health NHS Trust

Mental health/illness

Derwen NHS Trust

Dental

University Dental Hospital NHS Trust

Experience of the existing configurations endorses the value of local priorities and consensus determining the development of services.

School Class Sizes

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the average class size for primary schools in Wales in January in each local education authority; and what was the actual and percentage change from January 1994 in each Welsh local education authority. [40222]

Mr. Richards: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Average size of ordinary, special and nursery classes in maintained primary schools in each local education authority area in 1994 and 1995 (provisional)

LEA area	*Average class size 1994*	*1995*	*Actual change 1994-95*	*Percentage change 1994-95*
Clwyd	26.2	26.6	0.4	1.6
Dyfed	21.7	22.6	0.9	4.3
Gwent	27.4	27.7	0.3	1.3
Gwynedd	22.8	22.9	0.1	0.3
Mid Glamorgan	27.0	27.1	0.1	0.2
Powys	22.1	22.4	0.3	1.4
South Glamorgan	27.5	27.1	-0.4	-1.4
West Glamorgan	25.7	25.9	0.2	0.8
Wales	25.6	25.8	0.2	1.0

Source:
Schools Census.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Barnsley and Doncaster TEC

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) how many contracts were issued in each financial year since the inception of Barnsley and Doncaster TEC and this year to date, to provide training for people with special needs; [39032]

(2) how many contracts were issued by Barnsely and Doncaster TEC in each of the financial years since its inception to provide training for people with special needs. [39045]

Mr Paice: The information requested is operational information on the Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council and the question would be best addressed to the TEC to answer.

Under the terms of the annual funding agreement between the Secretary of State for Education and Employment and Barnsley and Doncaster TEC, the TEC is required to ensure that suitable training will be made available to trainees who have a disability or special training need.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, how much the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC has received from the European social fund in each year since its inception. [39047]

Mr. Paice: This is a matter for individual training and enterprise councils.

Carers

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what policies she will pursue to enable carers to undertake employment. [38545]

Mr. Paice: The Government recognise that many carers wish to continue in employment, and we encourage this in a number of ways. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health has published a booklet, "Employers and Carers", which has been distributed widely to employers. The booklet sets out a number of practical measures which employers may take to assist carers to remain in work. In addition, we promote generally an efficient and flexible labour market in which a wide range of working patterns are available. Flexibility and variety in working patterns help carers to find work that best suits their domestic responsibilities.

We are making specific provision in the conditions for jobseeker's allowance to enable carers to restrict their availability for employment in line with their caring responsibilities and remain entitled to an allowance. Caring responsibilities will also be taken into account in any consideration of whether a jobseeker has been seeking work actively. Carers who wish to return to the labour market are in most circumstances eligible to join the wide range of programmes available to help unemployment people back to work, from the first day of unemployment.

Hospital Education

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how teaching hours per pupil and teaching standards in hospitals are monitored. [38547]

Mr. Robin Squire: Local education authorities have a duty to make suitable educational provision for pupils who are out of school because of illness or injury. The initial responsibility for monitoring such provision is, therefore, that of the maintaining authority. The inspection of provision made in a hospital school is the responsibility of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, who heads the Office for Standards in Education. I have asked HMCI to write to the hon. Member about the specific points that he has raised.

School Borrowing Approvals

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what estimate has been made of the total borrowing approvals if all schools were permitted to borrow against their assets. [40152]

Mr. Robin Squire: No such estimate had been made. Capital expenditure financed by borrowing in respect of local authority property, including LEA–maintained schools, is subject to the provisions of part IV of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made under that Act.

Voluntary-aided Schools

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will estimate the cost of providing 100 per cent. capital cost to voluntary-aided schools. [40151]

Mrs. Gillan: The central Government grant for approved governors' expenditure at voluntary-aided schools is at present paid at a rate of up to 85 per cent. If all work supported by grant in 1995–96 were to be funded at a rate of 100 per cent. the additional cost would be in excess of £17 million.

Local Education Authorities

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make it her policy to safeguard the role of local education authorities. [40149]

Mr. Robin Squire: With the introduction of local management of schools and the growth of the grant-maintained sector, the role of LEAs has evolved significantly. I look forward to their continuing to adapt to changing circumstances.

Fire Service

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many *(a)* representations and *(b)* complaints she has received concerning the provisions contained in the conditions of employment 15.3.2*(a)* for fire service personnel. [39258]

Mr. Kirkhope: I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary has not received any such representations or complaints. However, the National Joint Council for Local Authorities Fire Brigades, which represents fire service employers' and employees' organisations, is the body responsible for matters concerning the conditions of service of members of fire brigades.

National Funding Formula

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment when she expects to introduce a national funding formula. [40150]

Mr. Robin Squire: The Department is exploring the general implications of funding schools by means of a national formula. My right hon. Friend has made it clear that the introduction of such a formula is not an option for the near future.

Free School Meals

Mr. Hain: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list the entitlement to free school meals in the United Kingdom from 1975 to the latest available date expressed *(a)* numerically and *(b)* in percentage terms, indicating the figures for (1) primary school pupils, (2) secondary school pupils and (3) total pupils. [40218]

Mrs. Gillan: Information on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was collected from maintained schools in England for the first time in January 1993. Information for years since then is shown in the table.

Information on pupils elsewhere in the United Kingdom is a matter for my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Wales and, for Scotland and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in maintained schools in England 1993–95 (provisional)

	Position in January each year					
	Primary		*Secondary*		*Primary and secondary*	
	Pupils	*Percentage*[1]	*Pupils*	*Percentage*[1]	*Pupils*	*Percentage*[1]
1993	916,068	22	466,446	16	1,382,514	20
1994	949,787	22	517,113	18	1,466,900	20
1995 (provisional)	956,495	22	539,438	18	1,495,933	20

[1] Day pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal expressed as a percentage of day pupils on roll.

SCOTLAND

Water Sampling

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what have been the results to date of the water samples that have been taken off the Ayrshire coast and analysed for contamination; and if he will make a statement. [38294]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: As part of its routine monitoring activities the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food undertook water sampling at a number of locations in the North channel earlier this year. The analysis of these samples show that water quality is not impaired.

Controlled Drugs

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what powers the police currently have to enter commercial premises and private dwellings without permission to further their investigations of drug dealing, including the suspected trading of Temazepam; and if he will make a statement. [39192]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In addition to the power to search premises by virtue of a common law warrant where an offence is suspected, constables have specific powers under section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Section 23(1) confers on constables certain powers to enter premises of persons carrying on business as a producer or supplier of any controlled drug. Section 23(3) enables constables to obtain warrants to enter any premises where it is suspected that certain offences under the Act are being committed.

Gas Bills

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next plans to meet representatives of Scottish Gas to discuss the abolition of standing charges on fuel bills; and if he will make a statement. [39202]

Mr. Kynoch: My right. hon. Friend has no present plans to meet representatives of Scottish Gas. Standing gas charges are a matter for British Gas and the industry regulator, the Office of Gas Supply.

Capital Charges

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was paid from the national health service revenue budget in Scotland to meet capital charges in each of the most recent five year. [38800]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Each year the revenue budget is increased by the total estimated capital charges for NHS bodies in Scotland.

The capital charges allocation for each of the most recent five years is as follows:

Year	*Capital Charges Allocation (£000)*
1991–92	355,535
1992–93	290,425
1993–94	321,068
1994–95	361,210
1995–96	357,446

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which capital projects in the national health service in Scotland are currently being considered under the private finance initiative; and what is the cost of each individual project. [38801]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: All capital schemes are required to explore private finance options. The value of new schemes in progress totals approximately £700 million over the total project lives of these schemes. Major schemes—that is, those with a value of over £5 million—for which private finance options are currently being explored or are in the early stages of business case preparation are:

	£
Hairmyres and Stonehouse NHS Trust (new District General Hospital)	70 million
Law Hospital NHS Trust (new Law Hospital)	120 million
Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh (new RIE)	140 million
Western General Hospital (major upgrade)	60 million
Edinburgh Sick Children's NHS Trust (new A and E/Outpatients)	9 million
Dumfries and Galloway Acute and Maternity NHS Trust (Maternity/Day Care Unit)	7 million
Glasgow Royal Infirmary (Maternity Unit)	24 million
Aberdeen Royal Hospitals (Children's Hospital)	6 million
Tayside Health Board (Forfar Community Hospital)	8 million
Renfrewshire Healthcare (Elderly/Disabled Unit)	8 million
Greater Glasgow Community and Mental Health NHS Trust (Mental Health facility)	7 million
Yorkhill NHS Trust (Theatres development)	7 million
Southern General Hospitals (Care of the Elderly Unit)	8 million
Ayrshire and Arran Community Healthcare (East Ayrshire Community Hospital)	9 million

In addition, there are several hundred other schemes with a value below £5 million which are being considered under the private finance initiative.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much it costs a national health service trust in Scotland to prepare a bid for a capital project under the private finance initiative. [38802]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The costs to each trust in preparing a bid for a capital project varies depending on the size and complexity of the scheme. Estimates indicate that the cost to a trust of bringing a scheme to fruition in terms of preparation and fees varies between 3 per cent. and 5 per cent. of the total capital cost. The majority of these costs would be incurred whether the scheme is publicly funded or funded under the private finance initiative.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the arrangements for reviewing levels of services included in long-term contracts for hospital services which form part of a private finance initiative contract. [38803]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: All contracts include proper provision for ensuring that appropriate information and access are available for regular monitoring of the quality and quantity of services delivered under the contract.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the definition of the clinical services which will be exempted from contracts under the private finance initiative in the national health service in Scotland; and if he will list all of the hospital services which may be included in such contracts. [38804]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There is no centrally defined list of services which should be included in contracts under the private finance initiative.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the timetable for final approval of capital projects currently being considered under the private finance initiative in the national health service in Scotland. [38805]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Each scheme has its own timetable for completion. Final approval for each scheme will be given only after a full business case has been submitted to and approved by the management executive and, in certain cases, Her Majesty's Treasury.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the State for Scotland which hospital services are included in each of the contracts for capital projects in the national health service in Scotland currently being considered under the private finance initiative; and how long is the duration of the contract in each case. [38806]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is for NHS trusts to determine which hospital support services should be included in contracts. Contracts between trusts and the private sector will typically be for a duration of 20 to 25 years, with specified breaks and review periods built in.

Drugs

Mr. McMaster: To ask the State for Scotland how many people have been convicted of crimes related to their involvement in drug dealing at *(a)* Paisley sheriff court and *(b)* Renfrew district court in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement. [39194]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The available information is given in the table. Information for 1994 will become available in November 1995.

Persons with a main charge proved for drugs trafficking offences in Paisley sheriff court and Renfrew district court, 1989–93

	Year				
	1989	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*
Paisley sheriff court	6	8	10	13	32
Renfrew district court	0	0	0	0	0

Carpet Manufacturing

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to develop the opportunities for the Scottish carpet manufacturing industry on the international market; and if he will make a statement. [39206]

Mr. Kynoch: The Scottish Office recently launched an export development strategy for Scotland, designed to assist companies based in Scotland achieve greater success in international markets. Within the strategy, textiles is included as one of eight priority sectors for which initiatives and projects are being developed.

School Buses

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what further plans he has to review the legislation which governs the operation of school bus services, with particular reference to seat belts, supervision and bus capacity, and if he will make a statement. [39168]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Transport safety matters are primarily the responsibility of the Department of Transport. Following a public consultation earlier this year my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport intends to lay this autumn the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations and the Public Service Vehicles (Carrying Capacity) Regulations. These regulations, which will extend to Scotland, will require lap belts to be fitted to all minibuses and coaches when they are being used specifically to transport children under the age of 16 and end the "three for two" concession to public service vehicles whereby three children under the age of 14 may share a double seat when seat belts are fitted. There are no plans to introduce legislation governing the supervision of school children. Arrangements for the supervision of children on school transport is entirely a matter for each education authority to determine.

National Library

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what procedures students have to undertake after 1 October to gain access to the collections in the National library for Scotland; [38889]

(2) what categories of students are to have restricted access to the National library of Scotland after 1 October; and if he will make a statement; [38883]

(3) what procedures students before 1 October had to undertake to gain access to the collections in the National library for Scotland; [38888]

(4) what categories of students were allowed access to the National library for Scotland before 1 October. [38884]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The arrangements for allowing access to the collections of the National library of Scotland are the responsibility of the board of trustees. However, my right hon. Friend is aware that the arrangements for access by students have been modified with effect from 1 October 1995 to take account of the increasing pressures on the accommodation for readers and on the condition of the collections. The reading services provided by the NLS are intended for those engaged in research or reference work using the collections. School pupils, college students and undergraduates at ordinary degree level are not normally admitted, but honours students in their third or later year of studies may apply for admission. These restrictions have been in place for a number of years and remain unchanged.

Before 1 October 1995, eligible honours students could apply for a one-year admission ticket to consult material relevant to a course of studies which was not available elsewhere. Applications had to be countersigned by a professor or lecturer in the appropriate university department. Since 1 October, eligible honours students have been able to apply for short-term admission tickets for access to specific items for a particular research project which are not available elsewhere. Applications have to be countersigned by a nominated senior librarian in the appropriate university library.

These revised arrangements were discussed with and endorsed by the Scottish Confederation of University and

Research Libraries which represents all the Scottish university libraries.

Elections (Disabled Access)

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much it costs to provide and install temporary ramps for disabled access at polling stations during the most recent *(a)* general, *(b)* European, *(c)* regional council, *(d)* district council and *(e)* unitary authority elections in Scotland; what assessment he has made of the costs and benefits over a period of five, 10, 15 and 20 years of providing such ramps on a permanent basis; and if he will make a statement. [39176]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Grants for election equipment are provided as and when required. Equipment is then used at all subsequent elections. The total grants paid for temporary ramps since my right hon. Friend assumed responsibility for returning officers' fees and expenses in August 1991 is £15,316. Details of the installation costs cannot be identified separately from the overall cost of adapting and fitting up buildings at an election. We are awaiting the passage of the Disability Discrimination Bill prior to considering the funding of permanent ramps.

Unitary Authorities

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to extend cost centre accounting in the operation of the new unitary authorities, and if he will make a statement. [39198]

Mr. Kynoch: As originally announced in 1992, authorities will be required to set up an internal accounting framework for the professional support services that are to be subject to compulsory competitive tendering: construction and property services, information technology, personnel, legal and finance. The framework will show the full cost of providing these services and will also require authorities to allocate these support costs to front-line services, such as housing, planning, education etcetera, to enable front-line managers to monitor their expenditure in these areas.

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing the *(a)* committee and *(b)* management structure of each new unitary authority and the existing island councils. [39162]

Mr. Kynoch: An interim report, as of September 1995, has been prepared by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. A copy has been placed in the Library.

PACE Youth Theatre Group

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he, or his representative, will visit the PACE youth theatre group based at Paisley arts centre to discuss funding of community arts in Renfrewshire; and if he will make a statement. [39160]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. Friend has no plans to visit the PACE youth theatre group. National funding for performing arts projects is the responsibility of the Scottish Arts Council and applications for funding should be addressed to that body.

NHS Hospitals

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list each NHS hospital in Scotland which does not have trust status. [39204]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The table lists NHS hospitals in Scotland which do not form part of an NHS trust and the health board areas in which they are situated.

Orkney Health Board:
Balfour Hospital, Kirkwall
Eastbank Hospital, Kirkwall
Shetland Health Board:
Gilbert Bain Hospital, Lerwick
Montfield Hospital, Lerwick
Western Isles Health Board:
Daliburgh Hospital, South Uist
Lochmaddy Hospital, North Uist
St. Brendan's Hospital, Barra
Western Isles Hospital, Stornoway
State Hospitals and Special Health Board:
State Hospital Carstairs

Public Bodies

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the names of each member and former member of the House of Lords who, since 1979, has been appointed to any quango or other public body for which he has nomination or appointment rights, giving in each case the title of the post, the salary or honorarium payable and the duration of the appointment. [39166]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information covers those bodies sponsored by the Scottish Office and listed in the Cabinet Office publication "Public Bodies". It covers appointments currently held by present members of the House of Lords, excluding appointment as a justice of the peace or member of a children's panel. The following members of the House of Lords hold appointments on Scottish Office bodies:

The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres is chairman of the board of trustees National library of Scotland; he was appointed to the board on 1 January 1986 and his appointment is for life. Lord Cameron of Lochbroom is chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland, with an appointment running from 1 April 1995 to 31 March 2000, and a member of the Scottish Records Advisory Council, with an appointment running from 1 August 1993 to 31 July 1996. Lord Goold is a member of the Scottish Hospital Endowment Research trust; his appointment runs from 1 April 1990 to 31 March 1996. Lord Macfarlane of Bearsden is a member of the board of trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland; his appointment runs from 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1997.

None of the appointments is salaried or fee paid. Lord Ewing of Kirkford is a non-executive director of the Kirkcaldy Acute Hospitals NHS trust; his appointment runs from 7 January 1994 to 30 November 1997 and his salary is £5,000.

Information for earlier years is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the names of all former right hon. and hon. Members who since 1979 have been appointed to any non-departmental public body or other public body for which he has nomination or appointment rights, giving in each case the title of the post, the salary or honorarium payable and the duration of the appointment. [39201]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Of those former Members of Parliament who ceased to be Members of the House in 1987 and 1992, one currently holds appointment on a body for which my Department has responsibility. This is Lord Ewing of Kirkford who was appointed as a non-executive director of the Kirkcaldy Acute Hospitals NHS trust on 7 January 1994. He is appointed until 30 November 1997 and his salary is £5,000 per annum. I have also announced the appointment of Mr. Dick Douglas, as chairman designate of the Scottish Water and Sewerage Customers Council. His salary will be £15,000 per annum. The information held centrally by my Department does not show whether appointees were Members of this House during earlier Parliaments nor does it show appointments for earlier years; this could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Heart-lung Transplants

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consideration he is giving to allowing heart-lung transplants to be carried out in Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [39074]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: A needs assessment is currently being carried out. This, along with other factors, will help inform our consideration of the case for such a service.

Correspondence

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to reply to a letter dated 17 June from the hon. Member for East Lothian concerning Mrs. J. Mitchell's claim for hill livestock compensatory allowances. [38854]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: I regret that the hon. Member has not yet received a substantive reply to his letter, but my noble Friend the Minister with responsibility for agriculture in Scotland intends to write to the hon. Member very soon.

Road Signs

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what plans he has for the replacement of existing road signs to include metric distances; [38887]

(2) what plans he has for the introduction of metric distances for all new road signs. [38886]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: None.

Fox Hunts

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many police hours were spent attending fox hunts in each of the past three years; what was the total cost to public funds within the area of each police authority; and if he will make a statement. [39219]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not held centrally.

Students

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he received the Scottish Association of Citizen's Advice Bureau report entitled "Poverty by Degrees: Students—The Evidence of Citizens Advice Bureau clients in Scotland"; and what he intends to do to rectify the deficiencies identified in it. [39237]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I received a copy of the report shortly after its publication in September. I am always pleased to have information on the operation of the student support system, although the sample in this case was not necessarily typical.

As part of our commitment to monitor student finance we have recently commissioned a new, United Kingdom-wide student income and expenditure survey. It will provide up-to-date, comprehensive, and authoritative evidence on the picture throughout the UK. The survey will be carried out in spring 1966 and the results published later in the year.

Burns Bicentenary

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the progress of preparations for the commemoration of the Burns bicentenary in 1996, with particular reference to the scale and scope of projects and involvement of the communities and schools in events. [39157]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The programme for the Burns international festival, including details of a number of community and schools events, is expected to be published by the organisers, Burns Festival Ltd., in November. The Scottish Office has no information about any plans which local authorities or other local organisations may have for commemorating the anniversary.

Absent Voting

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what procedures will be put in place prior to the general election to ensure that those entitled to postal and proxy votes are made aware of their rights as soon as possible by means of public advertising; and if he will make a statement. [39169]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Arrangements have yet to be finalised for absent voting publicity, but it is proposed, following past practice, to advertise in all the Scottish national daily and Sunday newspapers, and to provide leaflets for the general public through various suitable outlets.

Scotland Europa

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the work of Scotland Europa Ltd; and what criteria he applies to measure the success of this body. [39223]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I met recently with the chief executive of Scotland Europa to hear of its work and plans for the future. The subscribers to Scotland Europa's services come from a wide range of interests, including business, educational bodies and local authorities, and the numbers are increasing every year. Thus, the body is successful by satisfying its paying customers and increasing their numbers.

Scottish Enterprise recently decided to continue to provide support to Scotland Europa in order to continue the service to Scottish business and organisations. The criteria against which it will judge the body include its success in providing for its customers information and advice on developments in the European Union, assistance in lobbying, help in seeking out other regional partners and participating in appropriate European programmes.

Women's conference

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he intends to take to implement the commitments made in Beijing at the United Nations fourth world conference on women; and what resources have been allocated to action the platform agreed. [38882]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Government are committed to ensuring that all Government Departments take full account of the platform for action. Non-governmental organisations have been asked for their views by 1 January 1996. De-briefing meetings, including one in Scotland, will be held with key NGOs shortly and a further meeting to review progress early in 1996. Resources will be allocated from within departmental budgets as appropriate.

Caravan Storage Facilities

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the *(a)* need and *(b)* supply of caravan storage facilities in each Scottish district; and if he will make a statement. [39199]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: None. There is no statutory requirement upon either the Secretary of State or local authorities to ensure provision of caravan storage facilities.

Telephone Bills

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next plans to meet representatives of British Telecom (Scotland) to discuss the abolition of standing charges on telephone bills; and if he will make a statement. [39205]

Mr. Kynoch: Control of British Telecom's prices is a matter for the Director General of Telecommunications.

Local Councillors

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the *(a)* daily attendance allowance and *(b)* subsistence allowance for (i) more than four, but less than eight hours, (ii) more than eight, but less than 24 hours, (iii) 24 hours within the United Kingdom, but outside London, (iv) 24 hours in London and (v) approved overseas travel for elected members of Scottish local authorities would be had these kept pace with inflation since 1974 and expressed in real terms at current prices: what would be the annual attendance allowance, excluding subsistence, of an elected member of a Scottish local authority who was eligible to claim a daily attendance allowance for an average of (I) one, (II) two, (III) three, (IV) four, (V) five, (VI) six and (VII) seven official duties per week on different days assuming that the system of payment had remained unchanged since 1974 and based on current prices in real terms. [39167]

Mr. Kynoch: As the information requested is particularly lengthy and complex, I shall write to the hon. Member and arrange for a signed copy of the letter to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Floods

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what funds are available from European Community sources to undertake projects aimed at reducing the risk of floods to homes, businesses, including farms and public buildings; which organisations may apply for such funding; and if he will make a statement. [39175]

Mr. Kynoch: I am not aware of any European Community sources of funds specifically for flood prevention. Under the European structural funds support may be available where there is a clear and demonstrable economic benefit to be derived from the project.

Regional and islands councils have powers, under the Flood Prevention (Scotland) Act 1961, to take flood prevention measures to protect non-agricultural land. Works, other than those of maintenance or repair, have to be widely advertised and submitted to the Secretary of State for confirmation. Grants are available from the Scottish Office at a rate of 50 per cent. for confirmed schemes.

Planning Policy Guideline

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will introduce statutory requirements for smaller unitary authorities to be able to employ appropriate archaeological officers in respect of NPPG5; and if he will make a statement. [39059]

Mr. Kynoch: No. My right hon. Friend published national planning policy guideline—NPPG5 "Archaeology and Planning" in January 1994. This, along with the associated planning advice note 42 "Archaeology—The Planning Process and Scheduled Monument Procedures", sets out the planning policy context and guidelines in respect of archaeological remains and discoveries for Scottish local authorities. It is for the authorities themselves to decide how best to meet their responsibilities within the resources available to them.

Further Education College Principals

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the current salaries of principals of further education colleges and the amount of any increments that have been awarded in each case, with the reasons for such increments *(a)* in the previous and *(b)* the current year. [38872]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: It is for individual boards of management to determine the remuneration of principals. Information on their current salaries will not be available centrally until the 1995–96 annual accounts are submitted next year. The remuneration of principals for 1994–95, as shown in the colleges' 1994–95 annual accounts, is as follows:

College	*Salary excluding pension contribution 1994–95 £'000*
Barony	44
Oatridge	44
Lews Castle	45
Elmwood	49
Clackmannan	47
Thurso	45
Cumbernauld	44
Glasgow College of Nautical Studies	50
John Wheatley	42
Angus	47
Banff and Buchan	50
Borders	54
Glasgow College of Food Technology	51
Cambuslang	46
Coatbridge	50
Stow	59
Glenrothes	52
Moray	51
Lauder	53
Anniesland	46
Dumfries	55
Bell	85
Kilmarnock	47
Ayr	54
Perth	48
Glasgow College of Building and Printing	54
West Lothian	44
Cardonald	52
North Glasgow	52
Central	53
Motherwell	49
Langside	51
Inverness	51
Jewel and Esk	55
Clydebank	58
Reid Kerr	53
Falkirk	54
Fife	55
James Watt	60
Dundee	61
Stevenson	54
Telford	62
Aberdeen	58

Prescription Charges

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the financial cost of implementing in Scotland the European Court of Justice ruling on prescription charge exemption for men aged 60 years and over *(a)* in a full financial year and *(b)* in respect of reimbursement for the three months prior to the judgment; and if he will ensure that this cost is not met from existing NHS budgets. [38970]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The overall cost of equalising the qualifying age for exemption from prescription charges for men and women at 60 is estimated to be around £4.5 million in a full financial year.

Refunds of prescription charges paid in the three months prior to the judgment are unlikely to amount to more than £1.5 million.

Decisions on funding are being taken within the context of the public expenditure survey.

Royal Alexandra Hospital

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of the floor space of the Royal Alexandra hospital, Paisley is not currently in use; and if he will make a statement on the reasons for this. [39163]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: All floor space in the Royal Alexandra hospital is fully utilised at the present time.

Operation Eagle

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the results of Strathclyde police's Operation Eagle. [39193]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I welcome Operation Eagle, which has successfully targeted all tiers of the drug dealing and user network throughout Strathclyde. To date, the police have made over 4,000 arrests; seized significant quantities of illicit drugs with an estimated street value of around £4.2 million together with almost £400,000 in cash; and recovered 35 firearms and 169 rounds of ammunition during drug searches. The operation is continuing. I look forward to opening Strathclyde police's seminar on 8 December which will be reviewing the final outcome.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the State for Scotland how many farm conservation plans have been approved, since revision, in the Machair of the Uists, Barra and Vatersay environmentally sensitive area. [39838]

Mr Robertson: As at 24 October 1995, 42 crofters have accepted agreements offered under the revised Machair of the Usists, Barra and Vatersay environmentally sensitive area scheme.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the State for Scotland how many farm conservation plans have been approved in the Stewartry environmentally sensitive area, since its revision, involving payments in year one of the plan of *(a)* £0–£1,000, *(b)* £1,001–£2,000, *(c)* £2,001–£3,000, *(d)* £3,001–£4,000, *(e)* £4,001–£5,000 and *(f)* £5,001–£6,000. [39836]

Mr Raymond S. Robertson: As at 24 October 1995, there were 90 approved plans in the revised Stewarty environmentally sensitive area scheme, all of which involve payment in year one. The number of agreements involving tier two payments in year one of the plan is as follows:

	Number
(a) Up to £1,000	4
(b) £1,00—£2,000	5
(c) £2,001—£3,000	4
(d) £3,001—£4,000	0
(e) £4,001—5,000	73
(f) £5,001—£6,000	0

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many farm conservation plans have been approved in the Machair of the Uists, Barra and Vatersay environmentally sensitive area, since its revision involving payments under tier two in year one of the plan of *(a)* £0-£500, *(b)* £500-£1,000, *(c)* £1,001-£1,500, and *(d)* £1,501-£2,000. [39839]

Mr. Robertson: The number of agreements in the revised Machair of the Uists, Barra and Vatersay environmentally sensitive area scheme involving tier two payments in year one of the plan is as follows:

	Number
(a) 0-£500	16
(b) £501-£1,000	10
(c) £1,001-£1,500	4
(d) £1,501-£2,000	16

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what monitoring and review arrangements he has established to ensure that the agri-environment programme in Scotland contributes to meeting the objectives of "Biodiversity: the United Kingdom Action Plan", Cm 2418. [39835]

Mr. Robertson: A 10-year contract has been let for monitoring the impact of the environmentally sensitive area scheme. This will cover ecological, archaeological and landscape effects. We intend to extend these arrangements, in due course, to cover the more recently launched elements of the agri-environment programme.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 29 March, *Official Report*, column *697*, what was the final expenditure on environmentally sensitive areas in Scotland in 1994–95; and on what the remainder of the allocated budget we spent. [39844]

Mr. Robertson: Provisional outturn expenditure on environmentally sensitive areas in Scotland in 1994–95 was £1.044 million. It is not possible to say precisely how the remainder of the provision was used, but the first priority for the use of any savings of this nature would be to meet inescapable demands for additional unplanned agricultural expenditure or any of the other programme areas for which the Secretary of State is responsible.

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the expected expenditure for *(a)* environmentally sensitive areas and *(b)* other agri-environment schemes in 1995–96. [39752]

Mr. Robertson: Financial provision for *(a)* environmentally sensitive areas and *(b)* other agri-environment schemes in 1995–96 is set out in the table.

	Financial provision 1995-96 (£ million)
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	5.5
Other Agri-Environment Schemes	1.697

It is too early to anticipate what expenditure will be incurred.

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many farm conservation plans have been approved, since designation, in the Cairngorms Straths environmentally sensitive area involving payments under tier two in year one of the plan of *(a)* up to £1,000, *(b)* £1,000-£2,000, *(c)* £2,001-£3,000 and *(d)* £3,001-£4,000. [39749]

Mr. Robertson *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* The number of agreements in Cairngorms Straths environmentally sensitive area scheme involving tier two payments in year one of the plan is as follows:

	Number
(a) Up to £1,000	1
(b) £1,001-£2,000	1
(c) £2,001-£3,000	2
(d) £3,001-£4,000	35

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many farm conservation plans have been approved, since designation, the Cairngorms Straths environmentally sensitive areas. [39748]

Mr. Robertson *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* As at 24 October 1995, 37 farmers and crofters have accepted agreements offered under the Cairngorms Straths environmentally sensitive areas scheme.

Prisoners (Closed Visits)

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what arrangements are made for prisoners who are restricted to closed visits to have *(a)* visits from their legal advisers, and *(b)* consular visits; [38844]

(2) in which prisons there are prisoners restricted to closed visits and what are the numbers of prisoners involved. [39416]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The subject of the question relates to matters undertaken by the Scottish Prison Service. I have asked its chief executive, Mr. E. W. Frizzell, to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from E. W. Frizzell to Mr. Seamus Mallon, dated 30 October 1995:

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton has asked me to reply to your Questions about closed visits for prisoners in Scotland. These concerned (a) the arrangements for prisoners on closed visits to have visits from their legal advisers and consular officials, and (b) in which prisons there are prisoners restricted to closed visits and what are the numbers of prisoners involved.

As for as (a) is concerned, regardless of whether a prisoner is on closed visits, visits from prisoners' legal advisers are held in rooms specifically designated for that purpose. Consular visits are also held in these rooms. Both types of visits, in accordance with Prison Rules, take place within sight, but outwith the hearing, of prison staff.

On the (b) the information as at 25 October is as follows:

Aberdeen	3
Barlinnie	50
Corton Vale	11
Dumfries	13
Edinburgh	9
Glenochil	33
Greenock	6
Inverness	3
Longriggend	9

Low Moss	6
Perth	11
Peterhead	1
Polmont	5
Shotts	7
Total	167

Greater Glasgow Health Board

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the recent employment of Alan Clark Associates by Greater Glasgow health board, and the procedure adopted by the health board in awarding this contract and the involvement of the board itself and the then chairman in the award of this contract. [39406]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* Such information is not held centrally; this is a matter for Greater Glasgow health board.

School Transport

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money was spent by his Department for each education authority in Scotland for each financial year since 1987–88 in supporting educational transport; and what were the number of pupils covered by this provision for each local authority, the total number of pupils within each education authority during this period, and the percentage covered by free school transport provision. [39408]

Mr. Robertson *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* The detailed information requested cannot be provided in the time scale allowed. I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as that information has been collated.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what changes his Department is considering to the guidance currently in force relating to the criteria for school pupils in Scotland to qualify for free transport and the manner in which he funds this transport provision. [39409]

Mr. Robertson *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* Under current legislation, decisions regarding the provision of school transport are entirely a matter for each education authority. Under sections 50 and 51 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, education authorities have a duty to make such transport arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of free transport, of transport facilities as may be arranged, and for paying all or part of reasonable travel expenses for school pupils belonging to their area. The Government have no plans to amend this legislation, or to change the manner in which this transport provision is funded.

On 24 May 1995, guidance was issued to the chief executives of the new unitary authorities about the current legislation relating to the provision of school transport as part of detailed guidance on their future education responsibilities from 1 April 1996. There are no plans to add to that guidance.

Ayrshire and Arran Health Board

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the arrangements made by Ayrshire and Arran health board to administer its public relations and communications since 1987, the names of agencies employed by the health board to undertake these duties during this period, the tendering process involved in awarding these contracts and the monetary value of contracts awarded to these agencies. [39410]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* Such information is not held centrally; this is a matter for Ayrshire and Arran health board.

Nursing Home Care

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people pay the cost of their nursing home care *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part; and how many have their costs entirely met through (i) income support or (ii) their local authority. [40185]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* The total number of nursing home residents with preserved rights to the higher levels of income support was 7,940 at November 1994.

The number of persons admitted on a permanent basis to nursing homes between 1 April 1994 and 31 March 1995 supported in full or in part by local authorities was 4,256.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the cost of *(a)* doubling and *(b)* trebling the present £8,000 capital disregard for nursing home fees. [40189]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health on Friday 27 October 1995, *Official Report,* column *853.*

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the number of people who have had to sell their homes to fund the cost of their long-term stay in *(a)* residential and *(b)* nursing homes in each of the last five years. [40177]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* The necessary information on which to base an estimate is not available centrally.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the average length of time a person spends in full-time nursing care. [40181]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 27 October 1994]:* The information requested is not available. However, the average lengths of stay of inpatients in hospitals in Scotland in 1994–95 are shown in the following table:

	Days
Acute specialties	5.5
Obstetrics	3.3
Long stay specialities	63.8
Psychiatric specialties	104.8
Mental handicap	242.8

During their stay in hospital inpatients will receive full-time nursing care.

Nurses' Pay

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to advise the Western Isles health board of a settlement on nurses' pay. [39875]

Lord James Douglas Hamilton *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* I expect to be able to advise all health boards in Scotland of a settlement on nurses pay in early November.

Health Boards

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the status of the Scottish health boards' general managers' group in relation to the Scottish Office. [39397]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* The Scottish health boards' general managers' group advises the Scottish Office Department of Health on matters affecting health boards. It provides a forum for two way communication between the Scottish Office and health boards on health service policy and the performance of the NHS in Scotland.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what criteria he applied in deciding to allocate additional funding to Grampian health board and to Highland health board from moneys available through an underspend in the previous year's NHS budget in Scotland. [38501]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 23 October 1995]:* The additional funding to Grampian health board and Highland health board is part of a £16.3 million allocation to be distributed to all health boards in Scotland on a weighted capitation basis. The boards were notified about the funds in August and formal allocations are expected to issue in November.

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what work his Department has so far undertaken to implement the expansion of the assisted places scheme in Scotland; which bodies have been consulted about this, and when he expects to announce further movements on this issue. [39399]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* Officials are currently considering possible options for expanding the assisted places scheme in Scotland, in line with our plans to double to around 6,000 the numbers of children whose parents would otherwise be unable to send them to a Scottish independent school.

We are consulting the Scottish Council of Independent Schools about how best to expand the scheme, taking account of the geographic spread. We will, however, seek to ensure that particular priority is given to extending choice and opportunity for the poorest families. We are aiming for the first additional places to be provided in the 1996–97 school session.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many children on the assisted places scheme had parents whose relevant family income was *(a)* below £9,450, *(b)* between £10,000 and £15,000, *(c)* between £15,000 and £20,000 and *(d)* between £20,000 and £24,000 as defined by notes and definitions, section 1.3 of "The Scottish Office Statistical Bulletin, Education series", Ref. No. Edn/C5/1995/9, entitled "The Assisted Places Scheme 1983–84 to 1993–94", in the latest five years for which figures are available. [38878]

Mr. Robertson: The available information is as follows:

School Session	*1990-91*	*1991-92*	*1992-93*	*1993-94*	*1994-95*
Below full fee remission threshold	1,219	1,292	1,385	1,388	1,423
Threshold-£10,000	270	148	89	70	43
£10,000-£15,000	815	719	671	644	612
£15,000-£20,000	485	552	583	591	584
Over £20,000	72	200	310	352	388
Total	2,861	2,911	3,038	3,045	3,050

Notes:

[1] Figures from 1992-93 are provisional pending receipt of final audited claims. The numbers of schools with outstanding claims for 1992-93, 1993-94 and 1994-95 are one, seven and 48 respectively.

[2] Annual adjustments are made to the income scales on which parental contributions are calculated, including the threshold level at which full fee remission is applicable. The threshold was £8,200 in 1990-91, £8,987 in 1991-92, £9,384 in 1992-93, £9,522 in 1993-94 and £9,616 in 1994-95.

[3] Figures are not collected centrally on the number of pupils whose parents' relevant incomes are between £20,000 and £24,000.

Public Relations and Press Officers

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what guidance his Department has issued to NHS trusts and health boards relating to the employment of public relations and press officers by these bodies. [39405]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* No specific guidance has been issued to NHS trusts and health boards relating to the employment of public relations and press officers.

Dental Services

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for each health board area in Scotland for each financial year since 1990–91 the numbers of patients registered with a dentist and the total number of patients registered with a dentist in Scotland for each year during this period. [39395]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answers which I gave him on 23 March 1995, *Official Report*, columns *956-57*, and 23 May 1995, column *739*.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for each health board area in Scotland for each financial year since 1990–91 the number of patients removed by dentists from their treatment and the number of dentists involved in this de-registration. [39396]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* Formal arrangements for patients to be registered with a dentist were introduced in October 1990. Information supplied by health boards about de-registrations since that date is contained in the table.

	October 1990-March 1991		*April 1991-March 1992*		*April 1992-March 1993*		*April 1993-March 1994*		*April 1994-March 1995*	
Health board	*No. of patients de-registered*	*No of dentists involved*[1]	*No. of patients de-registered*	*No of dentists involved*[1]	*No. of patients de-registered*	*No of dentists involved*[1]	*No. of patients de-registered*	*No of dentists involved*[1]	*No. of patients de-registered*	*No of dentists involved*[2]
Argyll and Clyde	3	1	25	2	2,241	14	42	7	—	5
Ayrshire and Arran	—	—	14	10	1,309	11	400	13	91	17
Borders	1	1	11	4	1,432	4	683	4	41	4
Dumfries and Galloway	—	—	11	2	4,518	10	1,388	10	901	17
Fife	1	1	—	—	295	32	417	21	510	24
Forth Valley	—	—	42	12	201	23	63	18	210	35
Grampian	—	—	9	5	257	21	179	18	361	44
Greater Glasgow	7	5	41	36	579	45	339	49	1,070	87
Highland	4	3	19	12	210	24	73	24	78	33
Lanarkshire	4	4	70	10	252	29	145	25	83	65
Lothian	18	2	101	21	483	23	1,625	17	1,319	23
Orkney	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Shetland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tayside	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	206[3]	29[3]	57	11	641	48
Western Isles	—	—	—	—	37	4	16	4	—	4

n/a—not available.

[1] Number of dentists involved in de-registration in a particular year.

[2] For 1994-95 the figures show the running total of dentists involved in de-registration from July 1992 to March 1995.

[3] From July 1992.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 31 October 1995

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards

Mr. Colin Shepherd: To ask the right hon. Member for Berwick upon Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, what progress has been made by the House of Commons Commission in selecting a candidate for the post of Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

Mr. Beith: A report recommending to the House Sir Gordon Downey KCB, formerly Comptroller and Auditor General, is being published at 3.30 pm today as HC789. Copies are available from the Vote Office.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 31 October 1995. [38647]

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Sir Peter Tapsell: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 31 October. [38467]

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Office Costs

Dr. Wright: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the expenditure on his office broken down into *(a)* salaries and *(b)* other costs for each year since 1980–81, in 1994–95 prices. [38823]

The Prime Minister: Figures on a consistent basis are not available. In 1980–81, recorded spending on my office and Chequers on the votes of the Civil Service Department/Cabinet Office was £3.684 million in 1994–95 prices. In 1981–82, charges were introduced for the use of Ministry of Defence aircraft. Including those charges, spending was, at 1994–95 prices, £4,649 million in 1981–82 and £4.852 million in 1982–83. In 1983–84, charges were introduced by the Property Services Agency for buildings and services. Including those charges, spending was, at 1994–95 prices, £5.197 million in 1983–84. In 1984–85, charges were introduced for the use of the Government car service and for service personnel at Chequers. Including those charges, spending was, at 1994–95 prices, £6.193 million in 1984–85 and £6.830 million in 1985–86. In 1986–87, the cost of office services was included in the No. 10 budget. Including those costs, spending since then has been as follows:

£ million

	Total costs 1994–95 prices	*Staff*	*Other*
1986–87	7.469	2.513	4.956
1987–88	7.741	2.519	5.222
1988–89	8.777	2.550	6.227
1989–90	9.600	2.703	6.897
1990–91	9.533	2.385	7.148
1991–92	9.450	2.487	6.963
1992–93	10.866	3.043	7.298
1993–94	9.384	3.327	6.057
1994–95[1]	7.671	3.217	4.454

[1] In 1994–95 spending of £0.718 million on communications was transferred from No. 10 budget to the Cabinet Office budget.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Office of Public Service (Costs)

Mr. Sykes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proposals there are to change the 1995–96 cash limit and running costs limit for the Office of Public Service. [40940]

Mr. Freeman: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the cash limit for the Office of Public Service—class XVIII, vote 1—will be increased by £1 million from £52,713,000 to £53,713,000 and the gross running cost limit will be decreased by £4,019,000 from £82,849,000 to £78,830,000. The changes are to reflect the machinery of government changes announced on 5 July 1995; the Office of Science and Technology being transferred to the Department of Trade and Industry; and the deregulation unit and competitiveness division being transferred from the Department of Trade and Industry—class IV, vote 1. The opportunity has also been taken to take up capital end year flexibility transferred from Her Majesty's Treasury—class XVII, vote 1—due to adjustment in the timing of completion of the pension administration system. Provision is also made for the privatisation expenses of executive agencies. The increase will be charged to the reserve and will not, therefore, add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Sickness Absence

Mr. Brandreth: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the overall level of sickness absence in the civil service. [40721]

Mr. Horam: The average number of working days' sickness absence per staff year in 1994 was 9.2, representing a reduction of 9 per cent. over 1993. This is equivalent to 8.4 working days per person, and is comparable with the level for the service sector generally set out in a recent Confederation of British Industry survey of other employers.

I have placed in the House Libraries copies of the report by the Civil Service Occupational Health and Safety Agency on sickness absence in the civil service during 1994, which contains a comprehensive analysis of the figures about the civil service.

Civil Service Statistics

Mr. Butler: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when "Civil Service Statistics 1995" will be published. [40942]

Mr. Horam: "Civil Service Statistics 1995" was published today and copies have been placed in the Library. This publication updates and revises civil service staff numbers for 1 April 1995 and highlights key trends in civil service staffing statistics for the financial year 1994–95. Revised copies of the civil service staff in post summary for 1 April 1995 have also been placed in the Library.

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Lord President of the Council for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38606]

Mr. Newton: The Privy Council is not responsible for making any grants.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Gill: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many statutory instruments were laid before Parliament between 16 July and 16 October. [38719]

Mr. Newton: During the period 16 July to 16 October 1995 inclusive, 274 statutory instruments were laid before the House of Commons.

LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Madden: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how many applicants refused asylum have appealed against the refusal to a special adjudicator since 1993; how many such appeals have, to date, been lodged; how many appeals have been upheld; how many appeals have been dismissed; how many appeal hearings are pending; how many special adjudicators have, to date, been appointed; and how many appeal hearings on average are held each week. [40444]

Mr. John M. Taylor: In the period July 1993 to September 1995, the immigration appellate authorities received 18,204 asylum appeals from the Home Office and disposed of 7,718. Hearings were pending in approximately 8,400 of the asylum appeals outstanding at the end of September 1995. On average, 260 appeals are listed for hearing each week and approximately 150 are determined or otherwise disposed of. The immigration appellate authorities do not keep statistics on the outcome of asylum appeals. Since July 1993, 25 full-time and 52 part-time special adjudicators have been appointed.

TRANSPORT

Cash and Running Costs Limits

Mr. Dunn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has to change his Department's cash limits and running costs limits; and what proposals there are to change the cash limit and running costs limit of the Office of the Rail Regulator for 1995–96. [40881]

Sir George Young: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimates, the following changes will be made:

(i) The cash limit for class VI vote 1 (Highways Agency) will be increased by £12,295,000 from £1,863,279,000 to £1,875,574,000. The increase in the cash limit includes the take up of £11,831,000 capital end year flexibility entitlement as announced by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995 (*Official Report* columns *776-82*) and adjustments in funding relating to the consolidation of the Highways Agency's role between this vote and class VI vote 2 and class VI vote 5. Running costs provision on this vote will increase by £135,000 from £86,889,000 to £87,024,000 reflecting a transfer from class VI vote 2.

(ii) The cash limit for class VI vote 2 (Administration and Transport Services) will be increased by £12,351,000 from £165,054,000 to £177,405,000. The additional provision includes the take up of £776,000 running costs end year flexibility entitlement as announced by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995 (*Official Report* columns *776-82*); increases in administrative capital expenditure; the transfer of funds to class VI vote 1 for (£135,000) running costs and professional advisers fees; the transfer of funds to class VI vote 8 for various rail consultancies (£1,960,000; and, the transfer of funds from this vote to class VI vote 5 for road safety publicity expenditure.

(iii) The cash limit for class VI vote 5 (Roads and Local Transport) will be increased by £1,608,000 from £513,157,000 to £514,765,000. The increase includes take up of £1,787,000 end year flexibility entitlement as announced by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995 (*Official Report* columns *776-82*); the transfer of receipts currently paid to the consolidated fund for interest on subordinated debts arising from the Severn Bridge to class VI vote 1; and, various transfers of funds between this vote and class VI vote 1; and, class VI vote 2.

(iv) The cash limit for class VI vote 6 (Department of Transport: Other Transport Agencies) will be increased by £1,660,000 from £80,156,000 to £81,816.000. The increase includes the take up of £1,200,000 running costs end year flexibility entitlement as announced by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995 (*Official Report* columns *776-82*) for various items of running costs and an increase in administrative capital expenditure.

(v) The cash limit for class VI vote 8 (Office of the Rail Regulator) will be increased by £1,822,000 from £8,629,000 to £10,451,000. The increase includes the take up of capital end year flexibility entitlement of £162,000 as announced by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995 (*Official Report* column *776-82*); a transfer of running costs provision (£1,960,000) from class VI vote 2 to cater for higher than expected expenditure on legal consultancies and the consequential increased levels of VAT receipts (£300,000) that have arisen.

(vi) The Department of Transport Local Authority Capital cash limit has been increased by £6,354,000 from £347,552,000 to £353,906,000. This reflects partial take up of capital end year flexibility entitlement as announced by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995 (*Official Report* column *776-82*).

(vii) The Department of Transport running costs limit has been increased by £16,000 from £413,448,000 to £413,464,000 and the Office of the Rail Regulator running costs limit has been increased by £1,660,000 from £8,220,000 to £9,880,000.

The overall increases will be offset by transfers or charged to the reserve and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Newbury Bypass

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated financial benefit of the A34 Newbury bypass; and if he will publish the full cost benefit analysis carried out in respect of this road. [38209]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked its chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. Cynog Dafis, dated 31 October 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr. John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question about the financial benefits of the Newbury Bypass. The net present value of the benefits of the scheme, at current prices, range between £124.8 million on low traffic growth assumptions and £285.6 million high traffic growth.

The full cost benefit analysis used to take the scheme through the statutory procedures is a bulky document which is not readily copied. I have therefore enclosed copies of the traffic and economic evidence presented to the 1988 Inquiry which, effectively summaries the full cost benefit analysis. The full cost benefit analysis can of course be made available for inspection if you would like to see it.

I also enclose a copy of the report prepared by the Study Team who as part of the study commission by the then Secretary of State, looked again at the traffic forecasts and the scheme's economic evaluation.

European Rail Services

Mr. Gunnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his current target date for the start of direct through-rail services on the west coast main line to Brussels and Paris. [39989]

Mr. Watts: European Passenger Services Ltd., which will operate these services, expects them to start in the first half of 1996.

Mr. Gunnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what is his current target date for the start of direct through-rail services on the east coast main line to Brussels and Paris. [39988]

Mr. Watts: European Passenger Services Ltd., which will operate these services, expects them to start in the first half of 1996.

Passenger Transport Executives

Sir Irvine Patrick: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the total number of people employed by each of the passenger transport executives in the metropolitan counties. [40575]

Mr. Norris: This information is not held by my Department.

Rail Investment

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the capital investment in Britain's railways made annually over each of the past 10 years in real terms excluding capital investment in channel tunnel related infrastructure and rolling stock. [40241]

Mr. Watts: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 6 June 1995, *Official Report*, column *49*.

Unlicensed Heavy Goods Vehicles

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what timetable he has for introducing legislation on the impounding of unlicensed heavy goods vehicles; and if he will make a statement. [40306]

Mr. Norris: The option of seeking powers for traffic commissioners to order the seizure and impounding and, where necessary, disposal of unlicensed illegally operated heavy goods and passenger vehicles is currently being examined by my Department as part of an assessment of the scale of illegal operations and effective measures for dealing with it.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many times the illegal operations working group has met; what its recommendations are; and if he will make a statement; [40307]

(2) if he will place a copy of the reports of the illegal operations working group in the Library; and if he will make a statement. [40308]

Mr. Norris: The Department of Transport's illegal operations working group has met twice and sometimes three times each year since it was established in August 1989. The group monitors the current approach in directing enforcement against illegal operations working within the constraints of existing powers and resources. Its report for 1994–95 described the main aspects of enforcement action directed against illegal HGV operators in 1994. A copy of its report has been placed in the Library of the House.

Repeater Signs

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will reconsider that aspect of the Traffic

Signs Regulations and General Directions 1984 which prohibits repeater signs on a road where there is street lighting. [40276]

Mr. Norris: The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 require repeater signs on unlit roads with a 30 mph limit but do not allow them where there are street lights because the presence of street lights is the indication of a built-up area. In the past, repeater signs were allowed in some 30 mph limits, but this caused enforcement difficulties. Some drivers prosecuted for speeding on roads without repeaters claimed that their absence led them to believe that a 30mph limit did not apply. Were we to permit repeaters on some lit 30 mph roads we would have to require them on all. The reality is that although drivers generally know what speed limit applies some choose to ignore it.

Motor Cycle Noise Act 1987

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what accounted for the delay in bringing into operation as from 1 August the Motor Cycle Noise Act 1987. [40482]

Mr. Norris: Regulations under the Motor Cycle Noise Act had initially to be postponed pending the outcome of negotiations on a new European Commission proposal on replacement silencers. The ensuing directive, 89/235/EEC, prompted the British Standards Institute to update BS 193 which was not completed until 1990. These requirements had to be transposed into domestic law before drafting of the regulations to control supply under the Motor Cycle Noise Act could begin. Regulations were laid before Parliament on 14 September 1995 but do not come into force until 1 August 1996 in order to allow stockists sufficient lead time to clear or mark their current stock.

Wing Bypass

Mr. Walden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made, following the Wing bypass investigation last year, of the progress by the Highways Authority. [39887]

Mr. Watts: My hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) announced in January last year that progress on the A418 Wing bypass scheme will be subject to the outcome of the A5-M40 study. The 1994 roads programme review placed the scheme in the longer-term category. In the meantime, no further assessment has been made.

Road Improvements (Stonehenge)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consultation he has recently carried out with *(a)* the Secretary of State for National Heritage, *(b)* the chairman of English Heritage, *(c)* the National Trust and *(d)* other interested organisations in respect of (i) the A303 and (ii) the A344 and the effect that their upgrading would have on the World Heritage site at Stonehenge; what were the results of his discussions; and if he will make a statement. [40003]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 31 October 1995:

As you know the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr John Watts, has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question in which you sought information about the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down improvement scheme.

The Highways Agency have consulted the Department of National Heritage, English Heritage and the National Trust throughout the preparation of this scheme. Recognising the unique sensitivity of the World Heritage Site at Stonehenge, the Agency have arranged a planning conference which will give all interested parties an opportunity to explore and debate possible ways of overcoming the traffic problems on this length of the trunk road. Conferences on other schemes have been successful in identifying a consensus on the major issues and possible ways forward. The Department of National Heritage, English Heritage and the National Trust will be sending delegates to the conference. All other organisations known to have interest in the scheme have been notified of the arrangements for the conference.

An assessment of the possible routes identified thus far is given in Preliminary Assessments Reports which are available to the public. Any of the possible solutions illustrated in the conference brochure would help to reduce the effect of traffic on Stonehenge.

Transport Surveys

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the opinion polling, including group work, currently being undertaken by his Department. [39894]

Mr. Norris: The Department of Transport regularly carried out surveys in connection with various transport issues. Details are listed in "Transport Statistics Great Britain" and "Quarterly Transport Statistics," copies of which are held in the House of Commons Library. None of these surveys involve opinion polling, although some of them will include questions of opinion about specific transport matters.

The following current surveys include some group discussions: survey of attitudes and behaviour of adults to wearing rear restraints; survey in connection with child road safety creative development research; interactive survey to examine public attitudes to transport policy and environment.

Car Park Security (British Rail)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with British Rail on the security of their car parks; and if he will make a statement. [39898]

Mr. Watts: I have regular discussions with British Rail on many aspects of railway operation, including passenger security issues.

Research Funding

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the research projects currently funded or part funded by his Department. [39770]

Mr. Norris: The Department currently funds more than 500 research projects and I have arranged for a list of the projects, wholly funded or part funded by my Department, to be placed in the Library.

Passenger Rail Services (Sales)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of passenger rail services he expects to be sold off by 1 April 1996. [39793]

Mr. Watts: We expect that franchises for a significant proportion of passenger rail services will have been awarded by 1 April 1996. The sales process for the first three franchises—Great Western, South West Trains and LTS Rail—is now in its final stages. The franchising director aims to select franchisees for these franchises by the end of the year, with private sector operation commencing in the first few months of 1996. The sales process has started for a further four franchises: InterCity East Coast, Midland Main Line, Network SouthCentral and Gatwick Express. These seven franchises represent 40 per cent. of passenger services by revenue. Preparation of sales documentation is under way for the next stages of the programme.

Stratford Station

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action his Department is taking to protect the safety of passengers, and the local community, in respect of the proposed increase of rail traffic at Stratford station, East London due to the *(a)* completion of the London Transport Jubilee line and *(b)* Eurotunnel traffic, and the transportation of trains carrying radioactive spent fuel rods through the station; and if he will make a statement. [39555]

Mr. Norris: The construction of new or altered railway stations or lines requires approval under the Transport Systems (Approval of Works, Plant and Equipment) Regulations 1994. In addition, the Railway (Safety Case) Regulations 1994 are designed to ensure that the safety implications of all railway operations are taken into consideration, and that effective arrangements are put in place to control risk, especially at the interfaces between operations. Any significant changes to the operation of the railway would require corresponding change to the railway safety case of the operator concerned. These and other health and safety requirements are monitored and enforced by the Health and Safety Executive's railway inspectorate.

The National Radiological Protection Board, on behalf of the Department of Transport, carries out periodic surveys of the radiological impact of the rail transport of irradiated nuclear fuel flasks and other radioactive materials. The radiation levels give no cause for radiological concern with current traffic levels.

M4 (Repairs)

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what are the estimated costs for the current repairs to the M4 between junctions 8 and 9 and 6; [39590]

(2) what plans he has to reduce congestion on the M4 between junctions 8 and 9 and 6, caused by roadworks; [39588]

(3) what representations he has received concerning the disruption caused by roadworks on the M4 between junctions 8 and 9 and 6; [39592]

(4) what are the estimated costs to business of the roadworks on the M4 between junctions 8 and 9 and 6; [39589]

(5) when he expects the roadworks on the M4 between junctions 8 and 9 and 6 to be completed; [39587]

(6) if he will list the contractors who bid for the current roadworks on the M4 between junctions 8 and 9 and 6 on the M4; [39591]

Mr. Watts: These are operational matters for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. Paul Murphy, dated 31 October 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr John Watts, has asked me to write to you in reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about the current roadworks on the M4 between Junctions 8/9 and 6.

This essential maintenance work includes overlaying the existing worn out surface with new hot rolled asphalt, upgrading the existing safety fencing, hardening of the central reserve and bridge rehabilitation and reconstruction works. The scheme is programmed for about 21 weeks and is expected to be completed in mid March 1996. The estimated cost of these works is about £10.1m. The agency has made no estimate of the costs to business arising from these works.

We have sought to reduce congestion arising from the scheme by giving wide publicity before the works started on both local and national radio and in the press. Warning signs were also erected on the M4 and M25 giving advance warning of the impending works. In addition, leaflets giving information and advice about the works have been distributed to local libraries, garages, service stations and Heathrow Airport. Many organisations, including the AA and RAC, were also notified in advance of the works starting. To minimise disruption during the course of the works, a minimum of two lanes will be kept open in each direction and slip road closure at Junction 7 will be restricted to night-times. As an incentive for the contractor to complete the works as quickly as possible, the contract has been let on a lane rental basis. This provides a bonus of £20,000 a day to be paid to the contractor for early completion but imposes a similar charge on the contractor if he overruns.

During the first week of the scheme, 36 telephone calls about the disruption caused by the works were received on the information line and about a dozen were received direct at the Agency's regional office.

The contract has been let to Camas Associated Asphalt. However, without the agreement of each of them, the Agency would not wish to publish the names of the other contractors who submitted unsuccessful bids as this is considered to be commercially confidential.

European Directives

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action remains outstanding in order to implement European directives under United Kingdom law. [39764]

Mr. Watts: There are currently 16 EC directives relating to transport that need further action to implement them in the UK. Steps are being taken to draw up the secondary legislation required for 12 of these. Of the remainder, one requires further legislation at the European level before steps can be taken to implement it in the United Kingdom; discussions are under way with industry on how to implement two others and the remaining one affects the channel tunnel and discussions are taking place with the French authorities on how to implement that aspect of it.

Ministers' Appointments (European Institutions)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what appointments he and his Ministers have with colleagues from European institutions in the next month. [39765]

Sir George Young: My hon. Friend the Minister with responsibilities for local transport and road safety plans to meet the Transport Commissioner, Mr. Kinnock, on 13 November to discuss the draft EC bus and coach directive and bull bars.

Opposition Spokesmen (Civil Service Contacts)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when members of Her Majesty's Opposition will be able to meet officially with civil servants in his Department to discuss implementation of policies after the next general election; and if he will make a statement. [39616]

Sir George Young: My right hon. friend the Prime Minister agreed with the then Leader of the Opposition in 1992 that such contacts should be permitted from early 1996.

Rolling Stock Manufacturing (Job Losses)

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many job losses have taken place in the railway rolling stock manufacturing industry in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement. [40243]

Mrs. Angela Knight: I have been asked to reply.

Information on job losses is collected only for the manufacturing sector as a whole.

Available information showing the net change in people employed in the manufacture of transport equipment other than motor vehicles and trailers is provided in the table.

Employees in employment in manufacturing of other transport equipment (SIC92 35) in Great Britain: August (thousands)

Year	*Level*	*Annual change*
1991	206	–32
1992	181	–25
1993	168	–13
1994	154	–14
1995	147	–7

Source:
CSO

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to increase British aid to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. [40027]

Mr. Hanley: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh contain a large proportion of the world's poorest people, and have made effective use of British aid. We expect to maintain substantial aid programmes to each country.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the United Kingdom's aid to *(a)* Pakistan, *(b)* India and *(c)* Bangladesh in (i) 1994 and (ii) the current year; and what are the projected figures for 1996. [40010]

Mr. Hanley: Figures are collated by financial year. Gross UK bilateral aid disbursements in 1993–94 and 1994–95 were as follows—disbursements by the Commonwealth Development Corporation are shown in brackets:

£ million

	Pakistan	*India*	*Bangladesh*
1993–94	48.1 (24.4)	102.2 (22.9)	55.4 (5.4)
1994–95 (provisional)	81.4 (46.9)	100.2 (17.5)	56.3 (9.0)

We expect to maintain substantial aid to all three countries in the current year and beyond. We also assist through our share of aid provided by multilateral agencies.

AIDS

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer of 23 October, *Official Report,* column *437,* if he will list the bilateral projects supported and the financial commitment to each. [39975]

Mr. Hanley: The table gives a breakdown by country and region of the projects that the ODA supports to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS in developing countries:

Country	*Number of projects*	*Total expenditure £*
Africa Regional	5	657,784
Ethiopia	2	244,122
Ghana	2	1,259,000
Kenya	4	13,231,733
Malawi	2	11,064,500
Nigeria	5	3,781,549
Tanzania	2	3,610,021
Togo	1	300,000
Uganda	6	2,460,322
Zambia	3	2,399,136
Zimbabwe	6	16,314,000
Bangladesh	2	5,903,821
India	6	678,195
Sri Lanka	1	855,000
Nicaragua	1	226,689
Non Specific[1]	12	4,431,143
Total	60	67,417,015

[1] Includes multi-country programmes.

Cash Limit (1995–96)

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what changes have been made in the 1995–96 cash limit for expenditure by the Overseas Development Administration. [41142]

Mr. Hanley: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the cash limit on the external assistance vote, class II, vote 5, will be increased by £4,919,000 from £1,759,074,000 to £1,763,993,000. The increase is in respect of rollover of underspending against the 1994–95 external assistance vote. The increase will be offset by a claim on the reserve and will not, therefore, add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Commonwealth Development Corporation

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what external finance limit has been set for the current financial year for the Commonwealth Development Corporation. [41143]

Mr. Hanley: The external finance limit for CDC for 1995–96 is being increased by £4,000,000, from £15,000,000 to £19,000,000. The limit takes account of an increase in the provision for CDC in class II, vote 5, provision for which is made in the winter supplementary estimate. This increase is being met by transfer of resources within the vote and does not add to the planned total of public expenditure.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Hackney Downs School

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement about Hackney Downs school. [41093]

Mr. Robin Squire: Hackney Downs school was inspected and found to be failing to provide an acceptable standard of education in August 1994. A further monitoring visit by the Office of Standards in Education in March 1995 found that the school continued to fail its pupils. Consequently, after consultation, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State transferred control of the school to an education association with effect from 1 September 1995.

The education association has now made recommendations to the Secretary of State about the future of the school. Its main recommendation is that it should close on 31 December 1995 and that all pupils should transfer to Homerton House boys school in Hackney.

The education association also recommends that Homerton House boys school should make special provision for year 11 boys taking GCSEs, and that Ministers should consider making available capital funding for its refurbishment.

My right hon. Friend is minded to agree with the recommendation that Hackney Downs school should close, in which case she is also minded to make available the necessary additional funds for the year 11 boys as well as funds for the refurbishment of Homerton House boys school.

My right hon. Friend has today written to the director of education of Hackney local education authority and the chairman of governors of Homerton House boys school inviting comments on all the education association's recommendations. She also welcomes views from any other interested party by Friday 10 November. My right hon. Friend will announce her decision shortly after that.

A copy of the north-east London education association's report has been placed in the Library.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what she is doing to encourage the private finance initiative in local authority schools. [41094]

Mrs. Gillan: The Department has been working closely with other Government Departments on possible rule changes to encourage the private finance initiative—PFI—on the basis of our contacts with individual local authorities. My hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Urban Regeneration is today announcing proposals from the Department of the Environment to increase the scope for upgrading local authority services through increased private sector investment and management expertise.

The proposals to generate more resources for PFI projects, by freeing up the requirement for authorities to set aside capital receipts for debt redemption, open up exciting opportunities to upgrade local authority schools. Disposal of education assets surplus to requirements will be encouraged by a reduction from 50 per cent. to 25 per cent. in the rate of set aside, for a limited period of two years from April 1996. Replacement of operational educational assets will also be made easier.

The proposals should allow both the public and the private sector to benefit from innovative programmes to upgrade the school building stock. They should also encourage local education authorities to rationalise school provision and thus remove expensive surplus places where it seems sensible to do so.

Overtime Working

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what estimates she has of the amount of overtime that is being worked nationally in *(a)* the last year for which data are available and *(b)* 10 years ago. [39374]

Mrs. Angela Knight: I have been asked to reply.

According to the labour force survey in spring, March to May 1995, 91 million hours overtime were worked per week in Great Britain. The current estimate for spring 1985 is 68 million hours overtime per week.

Part-time Posts

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the number of part-time employment posts in each of the past five years. [39974]

Mrs. Angela Knight: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is provided in the table:

Part-time employment in Great Britain: June (thousands)[1]

Year	*Level*
1991	6,563
1992	6,576
1993	6,605
1994	6,781
1995	6,974

Note:

[1] Includes employees, self-employed and work-related government training participants.

Source:

CSO.

Building Services Engineering Courses

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what proposals exist to ensure that the Higher Education Funding Council for England is able to provide additional margin funding to institutions providing building services engineering degree courses in respect of the special laboratory and equipment needs of this course. [40146]

Mr. Forth: The Higher Education Funding Council for England's allocations of capital funding for equipment are weighted to reflect the institution's historical patterns of spending in different subject areas. Its allocations of recurrent grant for teaching also reflect the institution's own internal distribution of funding between subjects. Students on laboratory or workshop-based courses also attract a higher tuition fee from their local education authorities.

It is for institutions themselves to determine funding priorities for building services engineering and other courses out of their overall income from grant and tuition fees.

Appointments (South Yorkshire)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list the public appointments for which her Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating in each case the duration of the appointment, the date when a new appointment is due and the salary. [39425]

Mr. Robin Squire: The Secretary of State for Education and Employment makes the following public appointments in the county of South Yorkshire:

(a) The Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities (CEPD) (Sheffield and Rotherham).

14 appointments of three years' duration, all due for renewal on 1 April 1997. All are unpaid.

(b) The Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities (CEPD) (Wakefield, Barnsley and Doncaster).

14 appointments of three years' duration, all due for renewal on 1 April 1997. All are unpaid.

(c) The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) Regional Committee (Yorkshire and Humberside).

12 appointments of three years' duration. The Chairman will be due for reappointment on 1 April 1996 and the 11 members on 1 October 1996. All are unpaid.

Employment Service (Resources)

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, pursuant to her answer of 18 October, *Official Report*, column *295–96*, how many additional staff will be employed to support additional places on jobplan, workshop and jobclub/job interview guarantee schemes in 1995–96, 1996–97 and 1997–98. [38996]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Dr. Lynne Jones, dated 31 October 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the number of additional staff that will be employed to support extra places on the Jobplan Workshop and Jobclub/Job Interview Guarantee schemes to help people leaving Incapacity Benefit (IB).

We have allocated the following additional staff for the Job Interview Guarantee Programme:

Year	*Additional staff*
1995–96	100
1996–97	84
1997–98	20

Jobplan Workshops and most Jobclubs are delivered by external contractors. For these programmes we have negotiated with existing contractors to provide additional places for the ex-IB clients, and therefore Employment Service staffing has not changed. Full details of the additional places were included in my letter dated 18th October.

I hope this is helpful.

Barnsley and Doncaster Training and Enterprise Council

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment on what date her Department last sent a financial appraisal and monitoring team for a review of the monitoring and sample checking systems of the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC in relation to operating agreement compliance, if the non-vocational qualification claims under output-related funding of training provided by all companies providing training at the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC are verified, and if she will make a statement. [38992]

Mr. Paice: The Government office for Yorkshire and Humberside carried out the first phase of an annual audit of Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council's financial control systems in July 1995, and is returning to complete the audit during November 1995.

In the course of annual audits of this kind, including that at Barnsley and Doncaster TEC, a large sample of claims for every type of output from companies providing training and other training providers is verified.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list by year since its inception how much *(a)* profit and *(b)* loss Barnsley and Doncaster TEC has made. [39012]

Mr. Paice: Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council's first published accounts were for the year ended 31 March 1991 and covered the period 1 January 1991 to 31 March 1991.

Annual results since inception are as follows:

£000

Year ended	*Surplus/(Deficit) before tax*	*Surplus (Deficit) after tax*
31 March 1991	505	293
31 March 1992	2,797	2,688
31 March 1993	1,017	1,012
31 March 1994	(882)	(821)
31 March 1995	162	172

Source:
Barnsley and Doncaster TEC Annual Audited Accounts.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list by year since its inception for Barnsley and Doncaster TEC how many out-of-school child care places were delivered, and how many are planned to be delivered in future years; and at what cost. [39049]

Mr. Paice: The first year of child care funding for Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council was 1994–95.

In 1994–95 the TEC provided 252 child care places at a cost of £127,440. For 1995–96 the TEC has been allocated a target of a further 250 additional places at a contract value of £188,941. There is no funding available for new places in 1996–97 and future years.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will publish a table showing the identifiable *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue or current expenditure by Barnsley and Doncaster TEC, by district council electoral division or on any other geographical basis on which the data are collated or accounted, in each year since its inception; how much in both expenditure categories is (i) legally committed and (ii) planned for fiscal years 1995–96 and 1996–97; what is the pro-rata expenditure in each category for each district council electoral division, expressed as a percentage of the total capital and revenue budgets measured against their respective populations; if she will rank the district council electoral division in descending order by level of expenditure in both categories, and if she will make a statement. [38980]

Mr. Paice: The information requested is operational information on the Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council and the question would be best addressed to the TEC to answer.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list the financial reserves held by the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC for each year since its inception. [39248]

Mr. Paice: Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council first published accounts for the year-ended 31 March 1991, covering the period 1 January 1991 to 31 March 1991.

Financial reserves held since inception are as follows:

£000

Year ended	Land and development fund reserve	General fund reserve	Total reserves
31st March 1991	293	—	293
31st March 1992	2,481	500	2,981
31st March 1993	3,288	705	3,993
31st March 1994	1,672	1,500	3,172
31st March 1995	1,844	1,500	3,344

Source:
Barnsley and Doncaster TEC Annual Audited Accounts.

Computers in Schools

Sir Wyn Roberts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what statistics she has on the change in the number of computers available to schools in England in the last decade. [38821]

Mr. Robin Squire: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Estimated computers available in maintained schools in England

Year	Primary Average per school	Primary Total available	Secondary Average per school	Secondary Total available
1984–85	1.7	33,500	13.4	58,700
1987–88	2.5	48,300	23.2	96,300
1989–90	4.3	82,400	41.1	163,400
1991–92	7.0	132,500	58.0	233,100
1993–94	9.9	185,000	85.1	308,800

Source:
DFEE Survey of Information Technology in Schools.
Further infromation on the availability and use of Information Technology in Schools is published in Statistical Bulletin 3/95, a copy of which is in the Library.

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) how many people in receipt of unemployment benefit sign on by post in each travel-to-work area in England; [38572]

(2) how many unemployed people in England in receipt of benefit in each travel-to-work area in England live more than six miles from their nearest Employment Service office; [38567]

(3) which categories of unemployed claimant are given the option of signing on by post. [38571]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the questions has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Mr. Gordon Prentice, dated 31 October 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions about signing procedures and travel-to-work areas.

The statistics you requested on the number of people claiming benefit and living more than six miles from their nearest Employment Service Jobcentre (ESJ) are not available for travel to work areas. Similarly, no statistics are kept on the number of these people who are postal claimants. We do, however, record figures for the numbers of people claiming by post for each of the ES's seven English regions.

In September, the latest month for which figures are available, there were:

Employment service region	Number of postal claimants
Northern	4,466
Yorkshire and Humberside	12,282
East Midlands and Eastern	15,624
London and South East	31,819
South West	15,804
West Midlands	4,330
North West	4,468

The concession for claiming benefit by post is that someone must live more than six miles by ordinary road from their nearest ESJ. This rule can, at the local office manager's discretion, be waived in cases which would involve hardship. Clients who are disabled and those with such inadequate transport facilities that they would be absent from home for more than four hours, are therefore also offered the postal signing facility.

I hope this is helpful.

Special Education

Mr. William O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what has been the growth in demand for special education requirements in each year since 1990, giving the number of pupils in each year. [38788]

Mr. Forth: The most readily available measure of the demand for special education provision is the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. The full figures for pupils in England with statements since 1990 are provided in the table.

Year	Number of statements
1990	139,779
1991	154,743
1992	165,095
1993	176,698
1994	192,308
1995[1]	198,329

[1] Provisional.

National Vocational Qualifications

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to market NVQs. [38799]

Mr. Forth: The Department for Education and Employment has asked the National Council for Vocational Qualifications to provide leadership and co-ordination of NVQ marketing. The Department also supports marketing through the "Free Your Potential" campaign, which promotes the role of NVQs in vocational training for individuals and employers.

Civil Servants (Sheffield)

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement on the impact of the merger of the Education and Employment Departments on the employment of civil servants in Sheffield. [40033]

Mr. Robin Squire: The merger may offer some scope for the rationalisation of activities on the various sites occupied by the new Department for Education and Employment, but it is too early to be precise about details. However, the merger is unlikely to result in any significant loss of posts in Sheffield.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement on the relative costs of employing civil servants within her Department in *(a)* London and *(b)* Sheffield. [40034]

Mr. Squire: The average annual salary and accommodation costs for staff of the Department for Education and Employment in London and Sheffield are £37,100 and £24,800 respectively. Accommodation costs account for £9,600 of the difference.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make it her policy to relocate further civil servants from London, including those in the education part of her Department, to join those currently based in Sheffield. [40035]

Mr. Squire: There are no plans to change the current policy of the Department, which is that staff should be located wherever they are best able to support the efficient and effective conduct of the Department's activities. The merger may offer some scope for rationalisation of activities on the various sites occupied by the new Department for Education and Employment, but it is too soon to be precise about details.

Derwent System Schools

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) what credit approvals have been given to date for the repair and replacement of Derwent system schools; [40289]

(2) if she will make a statement on the future of Derwent system schools; [40290]

(3) what representations she has received on the need to replace Derwent system schools; and what bids for credit approval have been received; [40291]

(4) if she will make a statement on the current condition of Derwent system schools; [40292]

(5) how many Derwent system schools there are; and in which local authorities they are located; [40293]

(6) if she will make a statement about the replacement of Derwent system schools. [40294]

Mrs. Gillan: Information about the number, location and condition of Derwent system schools is not held centrally. A small number of applications for credit approval have been made specifically referring to systems buildings, but the type of construction is not always identified.

In 1987, the Department advised all local education authorities of problems which had been found with certain Derwent system buildings, and in 1988 recommended that certain timber-framed and prefabricated buildings, including Derwent system buildings, should be checked.

Local education authorities and governing bodies are responsible for the maintenance of the fabric of their school buildings.

TREASURY

Government Expenditure

Mr. Denham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total expenditure on (i) health, (ii) education, (iii) social security, (iv) transport, (v) defence and (vi) housing in 1979, 1984, 1989 and 1994 expressed as *(a)* the percentage of total Government expenditure and *(b)* the percentage of total Government tax revenue. [38258]

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 23 October 1995]:* The information is given in the tables.

(a) Expenditure as a percentage of General Government Expenditure excluding privatisation proceeds

	1979	*1984*	*1989*	*1994*
Health	10.6	11.2	12.5	13.2
Education	12.0	11.3	12.3	12.3
Social Security	24.5	28.2	28.4	33.6
Transport	4.0	3.5	3.6	3.6
Defence	10.4	11.4	10.4	8.2
Housing	6.2	3.4	2.4	1.9

(b) Expenditure as a percentage of total General Government Receipts

	1979	*1984*	*1989*	*1994*
Health	13.4	13.3	13.4	16.7
Education	15.2	13.4	13.2	15.6
Social Security	30.9	33.5	30.4	42.4
Transport	5.0	4.1	3.8	4.6
Defence	13.2	13.6	11.1	10.3
Housing	7.9	4.0	2.6	2.4

Wine Import Duty

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his answer of 24 October, *Official Report*, column *535*, when the EU agreement was approved to require wine import duty to be levied in terms of ecu per hectolitre; when this agreement was approved by Parliament; when Customs and Excise commenced the new import tariffs; and on which day, in relation to the day of import, the value of the ecu is assessed to determine the amount of duty payable. [40219]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* EC legislation existing prior to our accession set out the legal basis for Customs duties. The treaty of accession of the United Kingdom to the European Community and the European Communities Act 1972—specifically section 5—both of which were approved by Parliament, give the legal basis for the adoption, by the United Kingdom, of the EC common customs tariff. Accordingly, since 1 January 1974 the UK tariff has incorporated the EC common customs tariff, including specific duty rates expressed in European units of account, now termed European currency units. There are a number of other items throughout the tariff which also attract specific duties expressed in ecus. The ecu rate for wine is governed by a monthly industrial ecu conversion rate published in the EC *Official Journal* C series at the end of the month and applicable for the whole of the following month.

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to extend the ecu basis for import tariffs to items other than wine. [40220]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* We have no knowledge of any proposals to extend the ecu basis for import tariff items. However, it should be noted that there are currently a number of other items throughout the tariff which also attract specific duties expressed in ecus.

National Loans Fund

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will estimate the impact on *(a)* public expenditure and *(b)* the public sector borrowing requirement of selling outstanding debt to the national loans fund held by (i) the Housing Corporation, (ii) the Civil Aviation Authority, (iii) British Rail, (iv) Scottish Homes and (v) new towns development corporations and commission; [40772]

(2) if he will list and give the face value of outstanding loans to the national loans fund which if sold would have an effect on *(a)* public expenditure and *(b)* the public sector borrowing requirement. [40771]

Mrs. Angela Knight: The table shows the total value of loans from the national loans fund outstanding on 30 October 1995. NLF loans are not marketable.

If a nationalised industry or other public corporation repays an NLF loan, the effect is to reduce general Government expenditure. There will be a similar effect on the PSBR except in so far as the corporation offsets this by taking out other loans or running down its deposits.

If a private sector body repays an NLF loan, that will reduce general Government expenditure and the PSBR.

If a local authority or central Government body repays a loan to the NLF there is no effect on the general Government expenditure or the PSBR because the transaction is internal to the Government sector.

Loans from national loans fund: advances outstanding at 30 October 1995

	Advances outstanding at 31 October 1995 £
Loans to nationalised industries	
British Rail	722,916,667
British Waterways Board	17,186,000
Civil Aviation Authority	453,452,971
Scottish Nuclear Ltd.	192,665,347
Railtrack	1,247,335,619
Total loans to nationalised industries	2,633,556,604
Loans to other public corporations	
Crown agents	1,924,650
Development Board for Rural Wales	8,445,937
Land Authority for Wales	3,227,500
New Towns-Development Corporations and Commission	893,317,145
Scottish Enterprise	949,403
Scottish Homes	395,690,863
UK Atomic Energy Authority	138,666,667
Welsh Development Agency	1,002,737
Total loans to other public corporations	1,443,224,902
Loans to local authorities	40,725,747,490
Loans to the private sector	
Harbour authorities	733,280
Housing associations	13,003,056
Total loans to the private sector	13,736,336
Loans within central Government	
Central Office of Information	381,820
Housing Corporation (England)	752,288,998
Housing for Wales	59,071,733
Married quarters for Armed Forces	64,322,214
Northern Ireland	1,642,604,612
Total loans within central Government	2,518,669,377
Total	47,334,934,709

Sanitary Products

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the cost to the Exchequer per year of reducing VAT on sanitary protection to 5 per cent. [40582]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Approximately £25 million per year.

Advance Corporation Tax

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish revenue costs of reducing the rate of advance corporation tax and tax on dividends to *(a)* 17.5 per cent., *(b)* 15 per cent., *(c)* 12.5 per cent. and *(d)* 10 per cent. in a full year and of reducing the lower rate of tax to the same rates on the first (i) £1,000, (ii) £2,000 and (iii) £3,000 of rateable income, retaining any balance of £3,200 at the 20 per cent. rate. [39101]

Mr. Jack: The direct revenue effects of reducing the rate of advance corporation tax from 20 per cent. and the income tax charge on dividends from the lower rate of 20 per cent. to the specified levels are shown in the table. Estimates of the variation in revenue effects over the specified range of income tax rates and bands of taxable income are also given. Further information could be supplied only at disproportionate cost. The estimates take no account of possible behavioural effects which could be significant.

Direct revenue effects (£ billion, cost (–)/yield (+)) at 1996–97 forecast income levels[1]

ACT rate and tax rate on dividends (Per cent.)	*Net revenue effect*[2]
17.5	+0.7
15	+1.4

Direct revenue effects (£ billion, cost (–)/yield (+)) at 1996–97 forecast income levels[1]

ACT rate and tax rate on dividends (Per cent.)	*Net revenue effect*[2]
12.5	+2.1
10	+2.7

Notes:

[1] Based on the 1995 summer economic forecast.

[2] Assuming that the fall in ACT yield would be offset by higher payments of mainstream corporation tax.

Income tax lower rate (Per cent.)[1]	*Band of taxable income* *£1,000*	*£3,000*
17.5	–0.6	–1.8
10	–2.5	–7.0

[1] Costs include consequential effects on capital gains tax and exclude the effects of corresponding changes in the rate of ACT and the basic tax rate on individuals.

Tax Rates

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many additional people will pay tax at the higher rate if the basic rate upper limit is not raised in line with indexation in 1996–97; and what will be the average loss per taxpayer. [38997]

Mr. Jack: About 200,000 taxpayers would be brought into higher rate tax. The average additional income tax liability compared with indexation for the 2.4 million taxpayers affected would be about £145.

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the revenue cost or yield in 1995–96 and in a full year of the introduction of a minimum tax rate of *(a)* 15 per cent., *(b)* 20 per cent., *(c)* 25 per cent., *(d)* 30 per cent., *(e)* 35 per cent., *(f)* 40 per cent., *(g)* 45 per cent., *(h)* 50 per cent. and *(i)* 55 per cent. on gross incomes of over (i) £50,000, (ii) £70,000, (iii) £80,000, (iv) £90,000, (v) £100,000, (vi) £110,000, (vii) £120,000 (viii) £130,000, (ix) £140,000 and (x) £150,000. [39104]

Mr. Jack: The table gives available estimates showing the variation in revenue yields over the specified ranges of tax rates and thresholds of gross incomes up to £100,000. Reliable estimates are not available for higher thresholds of gross income.

Full year revenue yield at 1995–96 levels. Rate of minimum tax

£ million

Gross income	*15 per cent.*	*35 per cent.*	*55 per cent.*
Over £50,000	10	1,860	11,800
Over £70,000	5	710	7,230
Over £100,000	5	280	4,610

The estimates do not take account of any behavioural effects which might result from the introduction of the new arrangements.

Income Statistics

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will estimate the numbers of people in the United Kingdom in 1995–96 with gross and taxable incomes of *(a)* more than £100,000, *(b)* more than £150,000, *(c)* more than £200,000, *(d)* more than £300,000, *(e)* more than £400,000 and *(f)* more than £500,000. [39114]

(2) if he will list the total gross income and total income tax liability of taxpayers falling in the bands *(a)* £20,000–£30,000, *(b)* £30,000–£40,000 and so on in £10,000 bands up to £130,000, specifying in each case the number of taxpayers falling in each band. [39089]

Mr. Jack: Available estimates are given in the table. It is not possible to provide reliable estimates for the specified bands of income above £100,000, nor is its possible to incorporate the detailed effect of mortgage interest relief which, in total, reduces income tax liability by £1.1 billion for taxpayers included in the table.

1995–96 *£*	*Gross income*[1] *£ millions*	*Income tax liability*[2] *£ millions*	*Number of taxpayers (thousands)*
20,000 to 30,000	89,600	16,800	3,700
30,000 to 40,000	38,200	8,500	1,100
40,000 to 50,000	18,700	4,770	420
50,000 to 60,000	10,600	2,950	200
60,000 to 70,000	6,650	1,950	100
70,000 to 80,000	4,950	1,500	70
80,000 to 90,000	3,470	1,090	40
90,000 to 100,000	2,470	790	30
100,000+	23,200	8,130	120

[1] Gross income is defined as total income for income tax purposes. It excludes income from certain social security benefits and some investment income such as National Savings Certificates.

[2] Not taking account of mortgage interest relief.

Taxpayers' Liability

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are his projections for the total income and total income tax and national insurance liability of the top 1 per cent. of taxpayers and all taxpayers in 1996–97, based on the indexed 1995–96 regime, giving the amount by which tax and national insurance have changed when compared with the indexed regimes of *(a)* 1987–88, *(b)* 1992–93 and *(c)* 1995–96. [39112]

Mr. Jack: Available projections about total tax liabilities were published in table 2.2 of the 1995 summer economic forecast. The liabilities of the top 1 per cent. of taxpayers will depend on the income levels of this group.

Vehicle Taxes

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which EC countries use a vehicle tax or licence fee related to engine size and which do not. [39903]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Most EU countries graduate their vehicle tax or licence fee according to engine characteristics.

Ministerial Transport Costs

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40744]

Mrs. Angela Knight: The total cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years is as follows:

	£
1990–91	216,127
1991–92	294,341
1992–93	277,559
1993–94	284,610
1994–95	283,518
1995 to date	171,913

No allowance has been paid to ministers for the use of their own vehicles in the past five years.

Annual Meetings (World Bank and International Monetary Fund)

Mr. Matthew Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the recent annual meetings of the World bank and the International Monetary Fund. [40971]

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I attended meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World bank in Washington on 8 and 9 October, where progress was made on several issues of importance for the world economy and for developing countries. I also attended the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' meeting in Kingston, Jamaica on 4-5 October.

In Kingston, Ministers endorsed a report on measures against money laundering, following my proposals at last year's meeting in Valletta. This matter will now be considered by Commonwealth Heads of Government in Auckland in November.

I emphasised the desirability of an effective UN, and the need for reform of UN economic and social bodies. I hoped that the Commonwealth would give further impetus to the many UN reform activities under way.

I gained further support for my initiative to relieve the burden of multilateral debt on a small group of the poorest countries, as well as reiterating the need for full implementation of the Naples and Trinidad terms for official bilateral debt.

There was further discussion of multilateral debt at the interim and development committees of the World bank and IMF. The bank and fund will continue their work and report with proposals to the spring meetings in Washington next April. I am pleased to report that, one year on from the launch of my initiative, there is now an emerging consensus that this issue must be solved.

As usual, the IMF and World bank meetings were preceded by meetings of G7 and G10 Finance Ministers and central bank governors.

In the G7, we reviewed global economic and financial conditions, concluding that in most countries the conditions for continued growth and employment gains are in place and inflation well under control. We agreed that policies should continue to aim at sustaining non-inflationary growth.

I joined other Ministers in urging the IMF and World bank to carry out an early, thorough assessment of needs for the reconstruction of Bosnia following a peace settlement. We had a useful discussion of the Russian economy with representatives of the Russian Government, led by First Deputy Prime Minister Chubais.

The G10 endorsed the conclusions of a study on savings, investment and real interest rates, commissioned at my suggestion last year. These are that reducing fiscal deficits would be the swiftest and surest way to reverse the decline in national saving rates and the increase in average interest rates over the last 35 years.

We agreed that it would be desirable to develop new parallel financing arrangements complementary to the general arrangements to borrow. Discussions will take place with potential participants, with the objective of agreement by next April.

At the IMF interim committee I emphasised the need for flexible labour markets and a favourable business environment at a time of increasing technological change and international competition.

Further progress was made in responding to the lessons of the Mexican crisis, as envisaged at the Halifax summit in June. This includes exceptional procedures for the IMF to respond promptly and prudently in the event of serious financial crises. I strongly supported conclusions on the need for regular and timely provision of comprehensive and good quality data to the fund and the establishment of standards for data publication. I welcomed fund efforts to make the surveillance of members' economies franker and more selective. I also urged the fund to develop effective ways of evaluating its own performance. Work is continuing on the 11th review of quotas, although the fund's liquidity is currently adequate.

I took the opportunity of the development committee meeting to welcome the new president of the World bank, Mr. Jim Wolfensohn, and expressed my support for his leadership. In a discussion of ways to reduce poverty, I emphasised the need for sound economic policies. The committee agreed on the importance of a significant replenishment of IDA. I stressed that donor countries should each shoulder a fair share of the burden.

Copies of my speeches to the Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting, the interim committee and the development committee, and of the communiques of those meetings and the G7 and G10 Finance Ministers' meetings have been placed in the Library of the House.

DEFENCE

Military Liaison Officers

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the location, rank and role of each British military liaison officer based in France. [40160]

Mr. Soames: The UK's armed forces currently have the following liaison officers based in France.

	Location
Royal Navy	
Commander	Creil
Army	
Lt. Colonel	Metz
Lt. Colonel	Saumur
Lt. Colonel	Coer
Lt. Colonel	Versailles
Lt. Colonel	Paris
Lt. Colonel	Draguignan

	Location
Lt. Colonel	Montpellier and Pau
Colonel	Metz
Royal Air Force	
Sqn Leader	Taverny
Sqn Leader	Bordeaux
Flight Lieutenant	Salon
Flight Lieutenant	Marignane
Flight Lieutenant	Merignac

The role of a liaison officer is to act as a link between the two allied organisations.

Mr. Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the location, rank and role of each French military liaison officer based in the United Kingdom. [40159]

Mr. Soames: The French armed forces have the following liaison officers based in the United Kingdom.

	Location
Army	
Colonel	Upavon
Colonel	Wilton
Lieutenant-Colonel	Camberley
Colonel	Andover
Lieutenant-Colonel	Warminister
Lieutenant-Colonel	Blandford
Air Force	
Commandant	MOD Harrogate
Commandant	MOD Wyton
Capitaine	RAF Valley
Commandant	RAF Waddington
Capitaine	RAF Coningsby
Capitaine	RAF Neatishead
Commandant	Bentley Priory
Capitaine	RAF Marham
Capitaine	RAF Shawbury
Capitaine	Boscombe Down
Lieutenant	RAF Linton-on-Ouse

The role of a liaison officer is to act as a link between the two allied organisations.

Nuclear Weapons (France)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the dates when United Kingdom officials or employees of the atomic weapons establishments have visited the *(a)* Centre d'Etudes de Limil-Valenton in Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, *(b)* Centre d'Etudes de Valduc, *(c)* Centre d'Etudes du Ripoult, *(d)* Centre d'Etudes Scientifique et Techniques d'Aquitane, Le Barp, *(e)* Centre d'Etudes de Bruyeres-le Chatel and *(f)* Centre d'Etudes de Vaujours, Moronvilliers, France, over the past five years, indicating the purpose of each visit; [40162]

(2) if he will make a statement on how far technical discussions between the United Kingdom and France relating to possible arrangements for peer review, as set out in the eighth report of the Defence Select Committee, "Progress of the Trident programme" (HC 350 of Session 1994–195), have progressed; what data or technical information have been sent from France to the United Kingdom for peer review as a result of these technical discussions; and if he will make a statement on progress on computer simulation discussions; [40195]

(3) if he will list the dates when United Kingdom officials or employees of the atomic weapons establishments have visited French nuclear weapons research facilities over the past five years; and if he will indicate details of the purpose of each visit; [40157]

(4) what technical assistance is being provided to the French Government to aid them in their development of alternatives to underground nuclear weapons testing; [40155]

(5) if he will list the dates when French officials or scientists visited the atomic weapons establishments in the last five years; and if he will indicate the purpose of each visit. [40156]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I have nothing to add to my answer to the hon. Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Simpson) on 16 October 1995, *Official Report,* column *37.*

French Naval Vessels

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the names of all French naval vessels that have visited the United Kingdom over the last 10 years, indicating their port of call and the dates of their visits. [40163]

Mr. Soames: The information is available only from mid-1991 onwards. Research of records prior to that date could be undertaken only at disproportionate cost.

Vessel	*Port*	*Date of visit*
1991		
Sterne	Dartmouth	24–26 June
La Belle Poule	Milford Haven	11–14 July
Sterne	Swansea	22–25 July
L'Audacieuse	Cowes	3–6 August
Circe	Plymouth	24–27 August
Lutteur	Poole	23–27 September
Phenix	Leith	27–29 September
Calliope and Cybele	London	21–25 October
Baccarat	Plymouth	25–28 October
La Fidele	Guernsey	29–31 October
Beveziers	Faslane	8–11 November
Beveziers	Rosyth	22–25 November
Amyot D'Inville	Leith	5–9 December
1992		
Emeraude	Plymouth	24–28 January
Thetis	Falmouth	31 January–3 February
Grebe	Plymouth	7–11 February–2 March
Le Vigilante	Dartmouth	11–16 March
L'Audacieuse	Dundee	13–17 March
Laperouse	Portsmouth	24–28 March
Vulcain	Penzance	10–14 April
Emeraude	Portsmouth	22–27 April
Styx	Guernsey	24–27 April
La Grande Hermine	Guernsey	13–15 May
Latouche Treville	Glasgow	26–30 May
Saire	Jersey	26–27 May
Eridan	Liverpool	26–29 May
Andromede and Orion	Cardiff	1–4 June
Saire	Poole	2–6 June
La Fidele	Poole	3–5 June
Latouche Treville	Leith	12–16 June
Phenix	Inveness	18–22 June
Acharne and Cybele	Poole	24–26 June
Phenix	Cardiff	26–30 June

Vessel	*Port*	*Date of visit*
Jaguar, Leopard, Lion, Loire, Lynx Panthere and Tigre	Leith	29 June–2 July
Aconit	London	11–15 July
Acharne	Plymouth	31 July–4 August
Acharne	Cowes	4–7 August
Phenix	Cowes	5–9 August
Emeraude	Faslane	25–30 August
La Combattante and Lutteur	Kingswear	26–30 August
Cybele	Portsmouth	28 August–1 September
Thetis	Greenock	6–14 September
Thetis	Campbeltown	14–19 September
Sirene	Falmouth	18–21 September
Phenix	Guernsey	29 September–2 October
L'Audacieuse	Shoreham	27–30 October
Agosta	Leith	30 October–3 November
Somme	Plymouth	6–9 November
Agosta	Leith	13–17 November
5 x MSC[1]	London	27 November–1 December
Jaguar and Lion	Guernsey	1–9 December
1993		
Tenace	Falmouth	15–18 January
Vulcain	Poole	15–19 January
5 x MCMV[2]	Dartmouth	18–25 January
Psyche	Rosyth	5–9 February
Pegase	Cardiff	9–12 February
Psyche	Leith	19–23 February
La Fidele and Saire	Jersey	2–5 March
5 x MCMV[2]	London	12–16 March
La Combattante	Guernsey	24–25 March
Clio	Portsmouth	2–6 April
L'Etoile and La Belle Poule	Plymouth	16–20 April
Psyche	Plymouth	29 April–3 May
Amethyste and Ouessant	Portsmouth	10–14 May
Primauguet	Portsmouth	11–14 May
Borda	London	21–24 May
Aconit	Liverpool	25–30 May
La Fidele	Poole	25–27 May
Frehel	Poole	25–28 May
Styx	Dartmouth	28 May–1 June
Grebe	Jersey	28–31 May
La Grande Hermine	Guernsey	1–2 June
De Grasse	Glasgow	3–5 June
CDT Birot, CDT Blaison and Lt de Lavallee	Leith	7–11 June
Chacal, Lion, Panthere and Tigre	Isle of Man	18–21 June
De Grasse	Leith	18–22 June
Clio	Dundee	21–25 June
La Grande Hermine	Guernsey	25–27 June
Eridan, La Belle Poule, L'Etoile, and Goeland	Newcastle	13–17 July
Sirene	Dundee	16–20 July
Amethyste	Faslane	27 August–3 September
A. D'Inville	Plymouth	27–31 August
Sterne	Cardiff	31 August–3 September
Cotre Mutin	Cowes	7–10 September
Styx	Leith	16–22 September
L'Audacieuse, Calliope, Cassiopee, Eridan, Lt.de Le Henaff, Loire, Orion and Primauguet	Leith	17–20 September
Acharne	Poole	28 September–1 October
Alencon and Ouistreham	Plymouth	15–18 October
Sirene	Leith	29 October–1 November
Ouessant	Plymouth	4–8 November
Glaive	Torquay	5–8 November
Saire	Alderney	10–11 November
Sirene	Leith	12–15 November
Lion and Lynx	Guernsey	24 November–1 December
Cdt Birot and Jean Moulin	Plymouth	20 November–2 December
1994		
L'Audacieuse	Jersey	5–7 January
Vulcain	Poole	[2]4–7 January
Aconit, Cassiopee, Le Henaff and Orion	London	4–8 February
Eridan	Swansea	11–14 February
Sterne	Cowes	14–17 February
Beveziers	Leith	18–22 February
Sirene	Leith	18–22 February
Beveziers	Leith	5–8 March
Centaure	Falmouth	11–16 March
Grebe	Southampton	11–14 March
Planet	Leith	15–16 March
La Combattante	Jersey	5–9 April
4 x MCMV[2]	Chatham	15–18 April
Clio and Croix Du Sud	Plymouth	14–18 May
9 x MCMV[2]	Leith	20–23 May
Eridan	Plymouth	2–6 June
Duguay–Trouin	Portsmouth	2–5 June
Styx	Weymouth	2–3 June
Circe	Milford Haven	3–6 June
Drougou	Portsmouth	3–5 June
Styx	Dartmouth	4–6 June
Borda	Guernsey	4–5 June
Frehel	Guernsey	9–12 June
Chef Robet and Trident	Jersey	9–13 June
Mutin	Salcombe	14–15 June
Mutin	Dartmouth	15–16 June
Circe	Falmouth	17–20 June
Mutin	Chausey	18–20 June
L'Audacieuse	Weymouth	20–23 June
Borda	Douglas	24–27 June
Grand Hermine	Helford	24–27 June
L'Herminer	Chatham	29 June–5 July
Belle Poule	Guernsey	1–4 July
Styx	Jersey	11–15 July
Sterne	Cowes	29 July–6 August
Vulcain	Chatham	19–23 August
Grebe	Penzance	19–23 August
Vulcain	Jersey	2–6 September
Epee	Jersey	7–9 September
Acharne and Lutteur	Poole	13–16 September
Pegase	Milford Haven	16–19 September
Grebe	Penzance	19–23 September
Cybele	Plymouth	20–23 September
Vulcain	Portland	26–30 September
EDIC 9010	Marchwood	5–7 October
Beveziers	Plymouth	7–11 October
Borda	Torquay	14–17 October
Glaive	Guernsey	21–24 October
Agosta	Leith	21–25 October
L'Audacieuse	Plymouth	21–25 October
Perle	Plymouth	28 October–2 November
Agosta	Leith	4–8 November
Duguay–Trouin	Leith	4–8 November
Duguay–Trouin	London	10–14 November
Cote D'Aquitaine	Portsmouth	1–2 December
La Praya	Chatham	21–25 November
Frehel	Alderney	24–25 November
10 X Support Craft	Devonport	24–27 November
Cote D'Aquitaine	Portsmouth	1–2 December
4 X MCMV[2]	London	9–13 December
1995		
Andromede	Portsmouth	16–19 January
Surcouf	London	1–4 February
Sirene	Leith	3–6 February
L'Ailette	Southampton	7–9 February
Sirene	Leith	17–21 February
La Fidele and Saire	Poole	13–16 March
3 X MCMV[2]	Jersey	17–20 March
Croix du Sud	London	27–31 March
Lavalle and CDT L'Herminier	Plymouth	30 March–3 April

Vessel	*Port*	*Date of visit*
4 X MCMV[2]	Jersey	31 March–3 April
Malabar	Falmouth	31 March–4 April
L'Audacieuse	Oban	31 March–4 April
Lutteur	Portsmouth	16–18 May
Mutin	Falmouth	19–26 May
Epee	Guernsey	19–21 May
Mutin	Helford	23 May–6 June
Borda	Poole	30 May–2 June
L'Audacieuse	leith	2–5 June
Latouche Treville	Leith	9–13 June
Loire	London	12–15 June
La Fidele	Alderney	20–21 June
Antares and Glycine	Swansea	27–29 June
Mutin	Oban	21–24 July
Circe	Falmouth	24–27 July
Mutin	Dundee	28–31 July
Mutin	Grimsby	3–7 August
Grebe	Douglas	4–8 August
CDT De Pimodan	Swansea	4–8 August
Calliopee	Plymouth	16–21 August
Aldebaran	Dartmouth	23–27 August
Mutin	Cowes	24–28 August
Utile	Milford Haven	25–29 August
Cybele	Portsmouth	1–4 September
Laperouse	Southampton	5–8 September
Elan	Southampton	5–8 September
Elan	Lowestoft	13–20 September
L'Etoile	Guernsey	19–21 September
La Fidele and La Lutteur	Poole	19–22 September
Elan	Southampton	21–25 September
Agosta	Leith	20–23 October
Circe	Portsmouth	27–30 October
Ouessant	Portsmouth	27–31 October

[1] MSC = Coastal Mine Sweeper.

[2] MCMV = Mine Countermeasures Vessel.

Military Information Sharing (France and Britain)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all committees established for the purposes of co-ordinating and sharing information and ideas between French and British armed forces on military matters. [40158]

Mr. Soames: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Franco-British Joint Commission on Nuclear Policy

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the purpose of the Franco-British Joint Commission on Nuclear Policy and Doctrine, indicating how often on average the body meets each year. [40161]

Mr. Soames: The joint commission provides a forum for discussion of matters of mutual interest to the United Kingdom and France in the area of nuclear policy and doctrine. It has met two or three times a year. The details of its discussions are confidential between the two Governments.

Armed Services (Recruitment Costs)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the cost in real terms of recruitment to the armed services in each of the past six years. [39990]

Mr. Soames: The information is not held in the form requested for all years and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Outturn figures for the past three years are as follows:

1992–93: £89.053 million

1993–94: £97.310 million

1994–95: £93.277 million

Western European Union Medal

Sir Keith Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the response of the United Kingdom and other western European Governments to the proposal by United Kingdom delegates for a Western European Union medal for service in Western European Union operations agreed by the Western European Union parliamentary assembly in December 1994. [40032]

Mr. Soames: On 20 December 1994 the Western European Union Council gave its agreement in principle to the draft proposal by the former Netherlands presidency for a Western European Union mission service medal.

Since then, the Government, as a Council member of the Western European Union, have agreed in principle that this medal would be compatible with the British honours system for specific, agreed cases. However, to date, no proposal has been received from the Western European Union for the award of the medal, with appropriate clasp, for issue to any UK citizens.

RAF Machrihanish

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by year since 1990 the types and marks of *(a)* NATO and *(b)* other nationals' aircraft that have used RAF Machrihanish. [39046]

Mr. Soames: The information requested is contained in the table.

A schedule of NATO and other military aircraft that have used RAF Machrihanish since 1990

NATO

1990

Tucano T1
Jetstream T2
Islander AL1
Andover C2/E3
HS 125
Dominie T1
Canberra PR9
Jet Provost T5A
Hawk T1
Shackleton AEW2
Nimrod MR2
C130 C1/C3
Buccaneer S2B
Harrier GR3,5,T4
Jaguar GR1,T2
Phantom II F4J, FGR1 and FGR2
Tornado F3, GR1
Chinook HC1
Gazelle AH1
Lynx AH1, HAS2
Puma HC1
Scout AH1
Sea King HAR3, HAS 5 and HC 4
Wessex HC 2
C12 Kingair
C21 Learjet
C23 Sherpa

C9B
P3C Orion
HC130
MC130E
C141B
A10
F1-11 and EF1-11
CH 53 and MH 53
CP 140
F16
MS 760
Broussard
Breguet Alphajet
C160
Breguet Atlantic
CH 53
F27
P3C

1991

Bulldog T1
Jetstream T2
Andover E3
Dominie T1
HS 125
Hawk T1
Jet Provost T5A
Hunter T7
Canberra PR9
Shackleton AEW2
Nimrod MR2
E3D Sentry
C130 C1/C3
Islander BN2
Buccaneer S2B
Harrier GR3, 5, T4
Jaguar GR1, T2
Phantom H F4J, FGRI and FGR2
Tornado F3, GR1
Chinook HC1
Gazelle AH1
Lynx AH1, HAS2
Puma HC1
Scout AH1
Sea King HAR3, HAS5 and HC4
Wessex HC2
C2A Greyhound
C12 Kingair
HC130
MC130E
C141B
C9B
KC135
P3C, P3A
A10
F1-11 and EF1-11
F16
Mirage 5
CP140
Embraer 121
Nord 262
Breguet Atlantic
Antonov 26
CH53
P3C
FK27
C21 Learjet
Alphajet

1992

Bulldog T1
Tucano T1
Jetstream T2
Andover E3
Dominie T1
HS125
Canberra PR9
Islander BN2
Jet Provost T5A
Hawk T1
Hunter T7
Nimrod MR2
E3A/E3D Sentry
C130 C1/C3
VC 10K
Buccaneer S2B
Harrier GR3, 5, 7, and T4
Jaguar GR1, T2
Tornado F3, GR1, GR1A
Augusta 109
Chinook HC1
Gazelle AH1
Lynx AH1, HAS2
Puma H1
Scout AH1
Sea King HAR3
HAS 5 and HC 4
Wessex HC 2
C2A
C5B Galaxy
C12 Kingair
C21 Learjet
HC130
MC130E
C141
C137
Boeing 727
Boeing B52
KC135
KC10
P3C
Lockheed S3A
Viking
F1-11 and EF1-11
Lockheed U2R
CF18 Hornet
CP 140
Boeing 707
C160
Alpha Jet
Mirage F1
Breguet Atlantic
C160
P3C
DH6
P3B
F16

1993

Bulldog T1
Tucano T1
Jetstream T2
Andover E3
HS 125
Dominie T1
Hunter T7
Jet Provost T5A
Hawk T1
Islander BN2
Canberra PR9
BAe146
C130 C1/C3
Nimrod MR2
Buccaneer S2B
Harrier GR3, 5, T4
Jaguar GR1, T2
Tornado F3, GR1, GR1A
Chinook HC1
Gazelle AH1
Lynx AH1, HA52
Puma HC1
Scout AH1
Sea King HAR3, HAS 5 and HC 4
Wessex HC2
C12 Kingair

C21 Learjet
HC130
MC130E
C141
KC135
P3C, P3B
F15
F1-11
Bell UH1
ND262
Breguet Atlantic
Breguet Alize
F4
C160
CP140
G222
Bolkow 105
Allouette III
F16

1994

Islander BN2
Jetstream T2
Andover E3
Dominie T1
HS 125
C130 C1/C3
Nimrod MR2
Hawk T1
Buccaneer S2B
Jaguar GR1, T2
Tornado F3, GR1, GR1A
Augusta 109
Chinook HC1
Lynx AH1
Puma HC1
Sea King HAR3, HAS 5 and HC4
Wessex HC2
C5
C9B
C12 Kingair
C21 Learjet
HC130
MC130E
C141
KC135
Boeing 707
P3A
P3C
T39 Sabreliner
F15
MH53
CP140
C144 Gulfsteam
F16
DH6
Gazelle AH1

1995–October

Islander BN2
Andover E3
HS 125
BAe146
VC10
C130 C1/C3
Nimrod MR2
Jaguar GR1, T2
Tornado F3, GR1, GR1A
Hawk T1
Gazelle AHI
Lynx AHI
Puma HC1
HAS 5, HC4
Wessex HC2, CC4
C12 Kingair
C21 Learjet
MC130E
P3C
Alpha Jet
200 King Air

Other

1990: Nil

1991: Nil

1992: Nil

1993: P3C

1994: Nil

1995 to October: Nil

Defence Exports, Singapore

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) of 11 July, *Official Report,* column *527,* what evidence of illegal activity has come to light in relation to defence exports to Singapore and has been brought to the attention of Customs and Excise. [40497]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I have nothing to add to the reply that I gave the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) on 11 July, *Official Report,* column *527,* except to confirm that research into aspects of defence exports to Singapore continues.

Potential Compensation Claims

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money his Department allocated as provision for the payments of potential compensation claims in each of the last five years. [37776]

Mr. Soames *[holding answer 19 October 1995]:* This information is not readily available for 1990–91, but financial provision for payment of compensation claims from 1991–92 onwards was as follows:

Financial Year	*Allocation*
1991–92	£10 million (estimated)
1992–93	£11 million
1993–94	£26 million (of which £15 million was provision made for compensation payments made to Servicewomen dismissed on grounds of pregnancy)
1994–95	£43 million (of which £26 million was provision made for compensation payments made to Servicewomen dismissed on grounds of pregnancy)

Married Quarters (Disposals)

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the latest position regarding disposal of married quarters. [40387]

Mr. Soames: We are continuing to consider possibilities for transferring ownership of the married quarters estate to the private sector. We expect to be in a position to clarify the way ahead before the end of the year.

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the number of married quarters in each local housing authority area; and what is the percentage vacant. [40386]

Mr. Soames: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Unit Closures

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to what degree his Department accepts financial responsibility for contingent liabilities arising from closures of establishments or disbandment of units. [40394]

Mr. Soames: It is the policy of the Ministry of Defence to avoid incurring contingent liabilities wherever possible. Very exceptionally, an indemnity might be given on or in relation to the disposal of a site, as for instance on the disposal of Gruinard island against claims arising from its decontamination.

Solent Buoyage

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what powers he has to offer the Solent Buoyage to competent harbour authorities other than Trinity House. [40371]

Mr. Soames: The Queen's Harbour Master exercises responsibility on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence for the maintenance of all buoyage within the Dockyard port of Portsmouth; to ensure safe mooring and navigation. There are no powers within the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth Order 1978 to allow for the transfer of specific responsibilities to other harbour authorities.

Mr. Fields: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Navy to relinquish their responsibility for Solent buoyage. [40370]

Mr. Soames: My Department has no plans to relinquish any of its responsibilities within the area of the dockyard part of Portsmouth.

No. 32 (The Royal) Squadron

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what basic provision is made for capital costs, storage, maintenance and similar expenditure in assessing costs appropriate to the royal usage of No. 32 (The Royal) Squadron. [40391]

Mr. Soames: Costs of royal usage on official business are based on a proportionate cash assessment of total operating costs comprising personnel, aviation fuel, equipment and engineering support and other operating costs. By convention, capital costs are not included in the calculation.

Service Personnel (Loans)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the Governments to which service personnel have been loaned during the period from April 1992. [40493]

Mr. Soames: The countries to which service personnel have been loaned since 1992 are Angola, Antigua, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Brunei, Dominica, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Hong Kong, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, St Lucia, St Vincent, Swaziland, Turks and Caicos Islands, United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Stage Hynotism

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what monitoring is undertaken by his Department of the adverse health effects of stage hypnotism. [38223]

Mr. Kirkhope: We expect shortly to publish the report of a review of the effects of participation in stage hypnotism and the workings of the Hypnotism Act 1952. The report will include an assessment of clinical evidence submitted to the review's panel of psychiatrists and psychologists.

DNA Samples

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if persons asked to give DNA samples during the investigation of crimes are notified that the samples will be retained for future reference, whether or not they are charged with or convicted of the crimes under investigation. [39960]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* When members of the public volunteer to give samples as part of a mass screening, the samples taken are compared only with the sample found at the scene of the crime under investigation. The samples are destroyed at the end of the investigation and the profiles derived from them are not retained on the DNA database.

When a sample is taken from a person suspected of involvement in a recordable offence, the police are required to inform the person that the sample may be the subject of a speculative search. Whether and for how long the samples will be retained is dependent upon the outcome of the investigation.

Samples taken from persons convicted of or cautioned for a recordable offence will be retained for the same period as the offender's criminal record on Phoenix. Samples taken from people who are acquitted or not proceeded against will be retained if another person from whom a sample has been taken in the same investigation is convicted of an offence. These samples may be needed for further comparative analysis if it is subsequently suggested that there has been a miscarriage of justice.

DNA profiles will be retained in a searchable form on the DNA database only if the suspect is convicted of or cautioned for a recordable offence or if action against that individual is ongoing.

Mohammed Riaz and Abdul Quayyum Raja

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to inform Mohammed Riaz and Abdul Quayyum Raja of his decision concerning their tariffs; on what date he received the case papers; and if he will make a statement. [40446]

Miss Widdecombe: The case papers were submitted to Ministers on 4 October. The decisions on tariff will be taken and disclosed to the prisoners as soon as reasonably practicable.

Patrick Kelly and Michael O'Brien

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) for what reason Patrick Kelly and Michael O'Brien, prisoners, are *(a)* detained in the special security unit at Whitemoor prison, *(b)* refused reading material and *(c)* kept in cells which have no heating; if, the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) talked to either prisoner when she visited Whitemoor prison; what complaints she received about their detention; and if he will make a statement; [40449]

(2) if he will release Patrick Kelly, currently detained in the special security unit at Whitemoor prison, and arrange for his early transfer either to Northern Ireland or to the Irish Republic; and if he will make a statement. [40447]

Miss Widdecombe *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* Patrick Kelly is serving a sentence of imprisonment of 25 years for the attempted murder of a police officer and conspiring to cause explosions. Under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 1991, consideration cannot be given, save in exceptional circumstances, to Mr. Kelly's discretionary release until May 2005.

Mr. Kelly's recent request for transfer to Northern Ireland was refused on the grounds that he does not meet the criteria for transfer. He has no known links with Northern Ireland and he was not previously resident there before his present conviction. There were considered to be insufficient compelling compassionate factors to justify, exceptionally, granting him a transfer. This decision is currently under review.

Mr. Kelly has indicated his wish to be repatriated to the Republic of Ireland. This will be considered on its merits, in consultation with the Irish Government, when arrangements for the repatriation of prisoners between the two jurisdictions come into force on 1 November.

Mr. Kelly and Mr. O'Brien are both category A prisoners with exceptional escape risk classifications. As such, it is necessary for them to be held in conditions suitable for prisoners of the highest security category. It is normal policy, subject to operational constraints which may affect the availability of such accommodation, to hold such prisoners in special secure units—SSUs.

Mr. Kelly and Mr. O'Brien have not been refused reading material although, because they are on a dirty protest, they are not, for reasons of hygiene, allowed to have books from the prison library. On 17 October, as part of a disciplinary award for failing to comply with the regime requirements of the SSU, they were not permitted to receive publications from outside sources for seven days. They did, however, continue to be provided with daily newspapers. Publications sent to them during that period were stored and given to the prisoners after 24 October.

The cells in the SSU are heated. There were some technical problems when the heating was first required after the summer, but since the middle of October there have been no reported problems. The heating is now operated automatically by a temperature control located within the unit.

I recently visited the Whitemoor SSU, but did not see either prisoner.

Fraud

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total number of cases of all forms of fraud committed by employees of his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies for each year from 1991–92 to 1994–95; and for each of these years, what was the total monetary sum (1) misappropriated in such frauds and (2) subsequently recovered. [39127]

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 24 October 1995]:* The number of cases of fraud committed by staff of the Home Office, its agencies and non-departmental public bodies is tabulated for the years 1991–92 to 1994–95. The monetary value of the fraud and how much was recovered is shown.

Year	*Department*	*Agency*	*NDPB*
1991–92			
Number of frauds committed	16	—	—
Monetary value	16,668	—	—
Amount recovered £	9,602	—	—
1992–93			
Number of frauds committed	15	—	—
Monetary value £	22,349	—	—
Amount recovered £	3,847	—	—
1993–94			
Number of frauds committed	5	15	1
Monetary value £	710	48,906	190
Amount recovered £	460	1,559	190
1994–95			
Number of frauds committed	1	4	—
Monetary value £	1,400	38,896	—
Amount recovered £	301	—	—

Irish Prisoners

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures are in place to invite applications from Irish nationals serving sentences in prisons in the United Kingdom to be transferred to prisons in the Irish Republic; how many Irish nationals are detained in United Kingdom prisons; how many have indicated their intention of applying to be transferred; how many have applied; what are the arrangements for recording and processing such applications; and if he will make a statement. [40451]

Miss Widdecombe *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* The Council of Europe convention on the transfer of sentenced persons comes into effect for the Republic of Ireland from 1 November. The convention requires that all eligible prisoners who may wish to seek repatriation are informed by the sentencing jurisdiction of the availability of these procedures. With the agreement of the Irish Government, Irish prisoners in England and Wales will be advised of these arrangements through instructions given to prison governors. I am placing a copy of the relevant instruction—"Instruction to Governors 101/95"—in the Library.

As at 30 September 1995, 644 prisoners held in England and Wales gave their nationality on reception into prison as Irish. Under the convention, prisoners may not themselves apply for repatriation but may indicate an interest in this. To date, 35 Irish prisoners have done so. It will be open to either jurisdiction to make a formal request for repatriation on a prisoner's behalf.

All requests for repatriation involving prisoners held in England and Wales are recorded and processed by Prion Service headquarters.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for asylum by persons applying *(a)* on entry to the United Kingdom and *(b)* after entry were decided in 1994 and in January to September 1995; and how many of each category were granted asylum and exceptional leave to remain. [40605]

Mr. Kirkhope: The information requested is given in the table.

Decisions on asylum applications made at ports of entry and after entry into the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, 1994 and January to September 1995

	1994			1995 (January to September)		
	Port applications	In country applications	Total	Port applications	In country applications	Total
Decisions[1][2][3]						
Total decisions	7,150	13,840	20,990	7,325	12,585	19,910
Recognised as a refugee and granted asylum	300	530	825	250	570	820
Not recognised as a refugee but granted exceptional leave	1,785	1,875	3,660	1,700	2,055	3,750
Refusals						
Total refused	5,065	11,435	16,500	5,375	9,965	15,340
Refused asylum and exceptional leave after full consideration	4,255	8,400	12,655	4,490	8,080	12,570
Refused on safe third country grounds	810	55	865	885	130	1,015
Refused under para.340 of Immigration Rules[4]	—	2,985	2,985	—	1,755	1,755

[1] Provisional and estimated figures rounded to the nearest 5.

[2] Information is of initial determination decisions, excluding the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.

[3] Decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period.

[4] For failure to provide evidence to support the asylum claim within a reasonable period.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken or intends to take to ensure that refugees arriving from abroad are aware that they must apply for asylum on arrival in order to protect their potential entitlement to social security benefits. [40607]

Mr. Kirkhope: None. The immigration rules make it clear that matters which may damage an asylum applicant's credibility include failure to apply forthwith upon arrival—paragraph 341 of HC 395. Genuine asylum claims ought not to be affected by considerations of benefit entitlement. People who gain admission on the basis that they will support themselves should be held to that requirement whether or not they subsequently claim asylum.

British Betting Office Association

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to make a decision on the British Betting Office Association's request to join the bookmakers committee to the Levy Board and the reconstitutions of the committee; and if he will make a statement. [40589]

Mr. Kirkhope: The review of the committee's composition is still in progress; the outcome will be announced as soon as possible.

Phillip Agee

Mr. Allason: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the grounds upon which the decision was taken in respect of granting permission to Phillip Agee to enter the United Kingdom. [40204]

Mr. Howard: I have revoked the deportation order made against Mr. Agee in 1977 because I consider that he no longer represents a threat to national security.

West Midlands Fire Service

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the pension deficit of the West Midlands fire service with particular reference to its impact on *(a)* effectiveness of the service and *(b)* the future of the scheme. [40247]

Mr. Kirkhope: The West Midlands fire and civil defence authority is required to set a budget that enables it to meet its obligations under the Fire Services Act 1947, including the provision of an effective fire service and payment of pensions. As far as I am aware, the authority is meeting these statutory obligations. As my right hon. and learned Friend announced on 3 March 1994, the fire service pension scheme is under review, but in determining levels of local government revenue funding, the Government are already taking into account, among other relevant factors, what they know to be the increasing pension liabilities of a number of fire authorities.

National Lottery Charities Board

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the disbursements made by the National Lottery Charities Board to organisations in Brigg and Cleethorpes. [39956]

Mr. Kirkhope: No grants have so far been announced by the National Lottery Charities Board in respect of organisations in the Brigg and Cleethorpes constituency.

Blue Police Boxes

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will discuss with the Secretary of State for National Heritage collecting centrally information on the locations of the remaining in-situ blue boxes in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [40007]

Mr. Maclean: No.

Fingerprints

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action police forces in the United Kingdom are taking to ensure they have a system for identifying fingerprints taken at the scene of crime; and if he will make a statement. [39730]

Mr. Maclean: All police forces in England and Wales have systems for the identification of fingerprints taken at scenes of crimes and, in the great majority of cases, they involve computer support. A national automated fingerprint identification system will be introduced in eight pilot schemes involving eight forces in 1997 and will be implemented in all forces in England and Wales by 2001, replacing existing automated fingerprint recognition systems.

Constabularies Amalgamations

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to promote the amalgamation of any of the Humberside, Lincolnshire or individual Yorkshire constabularies; and if he will make a statement. [39512]

Mr. Maclean: I have no plans to amalgamate any of the Humberside, Lincolnshire or Yorkshire police forces.

Sirens and High Speed (Emergency Services)

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the regulations for the police, ambulance, and fire services, relating to the use of sirens and high speed. [39782]

Mr. Maclean: Control on the use of sirens is provided by the published Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 which state that sirens may be used by vehicles belonging to the recognised emergency services at any time when

> it is necessary or desirable to do so either to indicate to other road users the urgency of the purposes for which the vehicle is being used, or to warn other road users of the presence of the vehicle on the road".

In addition, there is a statutory exemption from compliance with speed limits in section 87 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The exemption applies to police, fire and ambulance service vehicles when observance of speed limits would be likely to

> "hinder the use of the vehicle for the purpose for which the vehicle was being used"

at the time concerned. Any further controls are operational matters for individual police forces, fire brigades and ambulance services.

Prisoners

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the largest group of offenders currently serving sentences in British prisons. [39742]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mrs. Anne Campbell, dated 31 October 1995:

> The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking what is the largest group of offenders currently serving sentences in British prisons.
>
> The latest provisional information is for 30 September 1995. On that date the offence group with the largest number of sentenced offenders in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales was for violence against the person. 8,700 people were held after sentence for offences of violence against the person. This figure excludes all prisoners for whom an offence is not recorded (five per cent of the total prison population). Information on the prison population, broken down by offence is published annually in "Prison statistics, England and Wales" (table 1.7 of the 1993 edition, Cm 2893), a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Automatic Fingerprinting

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current situation in respect of the use by police forces of IBM's automatic fingerprinting recognition system; and if he will make a statement. [39729]

Mr. Maclean: The contract between the automated fingerprint recognition—AFR—consortium, representing 36 police forces in England and Wales, and IBM for the provision of automated fingerprint recognition facilities was terminated earlier this year. The forces concerned have made other arrangements: the 32 which have remained members of the AFR consortium are receiving an interim service provided by the Lockheed Martin Corporation.

Remission and Sentencing

Ms Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated cost of implementing *(a)* the Woodcock report, *(b)* the Learmont report and *(c)* the proposed changes to remission and sentencing. [39597]

Miss Widdecombe: The estimated costs of implementing the recommendations of the Woodcock report are being reconsidered in the light of Sir John Learmont's report.

Sir John Learmont's own assessment of the costs of his recommendations appears at appendix Q to his report.

Details of the proposed changes in sentencing policy will be set out in a White Paper due to be published early next year.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Orthopaedic Services (Waiting Times)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what is the current waiting time for an appointment with a consultant at each hospital in Northern Ireland which provides orthopaedic services; [39247]

(2) how many patients are on current waiting lists at each hospital for an appointment with an orthopaedic consultant. [39249]

Mr. Moss: The table shows the number of patients and time waiting for a first outpatient appointment in the trauma and orthopaedic speciality at the end of June 1995.

Unit of Management/Trust	*Hospital*	*0–2 months*	*3–5 months*	*6–8 months*	*9–11 months*	*12–14 months*	*15–17 months*	*18–20 months*	*21–23 months*	*24+ months*	*Total*
Altnagelvin Group of Hospitals	Altnagelvin	504	201	229	215	149	40	16	5	1	1,360
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	Belfast City	593	248	172	112	105	41	7	0	0	1,278
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	Musgrave Park	896	415	267	273	207	239	183	180	596	3,256
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	Mater	28	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	Royal, RBHSC[1]	611	547	392	204	114	33	26	11	28	1,966
Ulster, North Down and Ards Hospital HSS Trust	Ulster	319	131	95	51	48	37	33	29	184	927

[1] Information held centrally relates to the total number of patients waiting in each Unit of Management or Trust, for a first outpatient appointment. Therefore it is not possible to provide individual totals for the Royal Victoria and the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

Health Services (Market Testing)

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the health services that have been market tested by or notified to his Department and won by the private sector indicating *(a)* the location and *(b)* the organisation winning the tender. [40618]

Mr. Moss: Health services, in terms of clinical and clinical support services, have not been market tested in Northern Ireland. The table gives the information requested in respect of non-clinical support services.

Details of services market tested and won by the private sector up to 31 March 1995.

Services(s) tested	*Provider unit(s)*	*Service provider(s)*
Domestic Services	Armagh and Dungannon Unit	Gardner Merchant
	Homefirst Community Unit	ISS Mediclean
	North Down and Ards Community Trust (non-residential accommodation)	ISS Mediclean
	Altnagelvin Hospital Unit	ISS Mediclean
	Western Area Mental Health Unit (Northern sector)	Gardner Merchant
	Central Services Agency	Grosvenor Cleaning
	Ulster, North Down and Ards Hospitals Trust (North Down and Ards Hospitals)	ISS Mediclean
Catering Services	Altnagelvin Group of Hospitals Unit	Compass Services
	Foyle Community Unit	
	Western Board Headquarters and Bureau	
	Western Area Mental Health Unit (Northern Sector)	
Laundry and Linen Services	South and East Belfast Trust—Linen hire	Lilliput Laundry
Hotel Services		
Domestic/Catering Services	Craigavon Area Hospital Trust	Gardner Merchant
	Craigavon and Banbridge Community Trust	
	Southern Board Headquarters	
Domestic/Catering Portering/ Security Telephonists and Transport Services	Green Park Healthcare Trust	Mediguard Services
Domestic/Catering Portering/ Supplies Transport Services	Omagh Femranagh Hospitals and Community Unit	Compass Services
High Level Cleaning	South and East Belfast Trust	Grove Services
	Ulster, North Down and Ards Hospitals Trust	Various
Pest Control	South and East Belfast Trust	Alpha Pest Control
	North and West Belfast Trust	Alpha Pest Control
	Omagh and Fermanagh Unit	Alpha Pest Control
	Altnagelvin Group of Hospitals Unit	Alpha Pest Control
	Western Area Mental Health Unit	Rentokil Ltd.
	Green Park Healthcare Trust	Rentokil Ltd.
Sanitary Cleaning	North and West Belfast Trust	Canon Hygiene
	Altnagelvin Group of Hospitals Unit	Canon Hygiene
Window Blind Cleaning	North and West Belfast Trust	Decora Blinds

Details of services market tested and won by the private sector up to 31 March 1995.

Services(s) tested	*Provider unit(s)*	*Service provider(s)*
Clinical Waste Disposal	North and West Belfast Trust	Down Waste Disposal
Window Cleaning	Causeway Trust	City Contract
	Homefirst Community Unit	Armagh Industrial
	United Hospitals Unit	Armagh Industrial
	South and East Belfast Trust	Armagh Industrial Group
	Mater Infirmorum Hospital Trust	Grosvenor Cleaning
	North and West Belfast Trust	Grosvenor Cleaning
	Omagh and Fermangh Unit	W. McCartney
	Altnagelvin Group of Hospitals Unit	City Contract Clean.
	Western Area Mental Health Unit	City Contract Clean.
	Foyle Community Unit	City Contract Clean.
	Belfast City Hospital Trust	S. and J. Robinson
	Green Park Healthcare Trust	Armagh Industrial
	Ulster, North Down and Ards Hospitals Trust	J. Robinson
Transport Hire	Homefirst Community Unit	Various[1]
	North and West Belfast Trust	City Cabs
	Western Board Ambulance Service	Various[1]
	Omagh Fermanagh Unit	Various[1]
	Green Park Healthcare Trust	ABA/Enterprise
Social Services Transport	Causeway Trust	Darragh's Coaches
	(Social and Adult Centres)	Logan's Coaches
Transport Maintenance	Southern Health and Social Services Board	Various[1]
	South and East Belfast Trust	Castlereagh Motors
	North and West Belfast Trust	Macs and Stewarts
	Western Board Ambulance Service	Various[1]
	Omagh Fermanagh Unit	Various[1]
	Western Area Mental Health (S. Sector)	R. Donnell
	Foyle Community Unit	Various[1]
	Belfast City Hospital Trust	Harknese
	Green Park Healthcare Trust	Various[1]
Non-Emergency Transport	Homefirst Community Unit	Various[1]
Grounds and Roads Maintenance	Homefirst Community Unit (Loughside)	T L R Landscapes
	Homefirst Community Unit (Bannside)	J F K Nurseries
	South and East Belfast Trust	Cameron Landscapes
	Omagh Fermanagh Unit (Fermanagh Sector)	Ashwood Nurseries
Courier Services	North Down and Ards Community Trust	Armouirguard
Security Services	North Down and Ards Community Trust	Armouirguard
	Mater Infirmorum Hospital Trust	Securicor
	Central Services Agency	Guardforce
Printing and Publishing	Northern Board (General Printing)	Nicholson/Bass
	Northern Board (Publications)	Graham and Heslip

[1] More than one contractor. Full details of all the contractors not available centrally.

District Health Authorities (Surpluses and Deficits)

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* surpluses and *(b)* deficits were recorded by each district health authority in 1994–95. [40662]

Mr. Moss: The surpluses and deficits recorded by each health and social services board for Northern Ireland for 1994–95 are set out in the table.

The accounts of the health and social services boards report separately on revenue income and expenditure and capital income and expenditure. The table analyses the net surplus or deficit over each.

These accounts have not yet been certified by the appointed auditor and so may be subject to change.

	NHSSB £	*SHSSB* £	*EHSSB* £	*WHSSB* £
Revenue	22,407	653,940	(1,985,796)	(1,138,784)
Capital	201,324	1,251,754	(278,302)	1,559,937
Total	223,731	1,905,694	(2,264,098)	421,153

Note:

Figures in brackets represent deficits i.e. excess of expenditure over income.

Pay Bargaining

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will provide in respect of his plan for pay delegation submitted to the Treasury *(a)* a description of the staff in each bargaining unit covered by the plan, distinguishing staff in HQ functions, agencies and agency candidates, and in other identifiable business units and the negotiating machinery to be put in place in each bargaining unit. [38277]

Sir John Wheeler: The pay delegation plan submitted by the Northern Ireland Office to the Treasury covers staff in grades 6 and below in the following bodies, which will in 1996 constitute a single bargaining unit:

THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

Legal Offices

Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland

Crown Solicitor's Office

Agencies

Northern Ireland Prison Service (except prison officers and prison governors)

Compensation Agency

Forensic Science Agency of Northern Ireland

Other Bodies

Police Authority for Northern Ireland (except industrial staff)
Office of the Chief Electoral Officer
Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights
Independent Commission for Police Complaints for Northern Ireland
Independent Assessor of Military Complaints Procedures
Independent Commissioner for the Holding Centres

Proposals for discussion about pay bargaining procedures have been sent to the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance, the First Division Association, the National Union of Civil and Public Servants and the Civil and Public Services Association.

ENVIRONMENT

Air Monitoring Stations

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the location of all air monitoring stations in the United Kingdom and what pollutants each station measures. [39363]

Mr. Clappison: The Department of the Environment monitors air pollutants at 50 automatic monitoring sites in its urban, rural and hydrocarbon networks. A list of the stations and the pollutants they measure is given in the table.

DOE automatic monitoring stations—October 1995

County name	*Site name*	*Network*	*Species measured*[1]	*Grid ref.*
Avon	Bristol Centre	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	ST594732
	Bristol East	Hydrocarbon	VOCs	ST599729
Belfast	Belfast East	Urban	SO_2	J357740
	Belfast Centre	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	J339744
	Belfast South	Hydrocarbon	VOCs	J333726
Cheshire	Glazebury	Rural	O_3	SJ690959
Cleveland	Billingham	Urban	NO_x	NZ470237
	Middlesbrough	Urban Affiliate	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10},VOCs	NZ505194
Cumbria	Great Dun Fell	Rural	O_3	NY711322
	Wharleycroft	Rural	O_3	NY698247
Derbyshire	Ladybower	Rural	O_3,NO_x,SO_2	SK164892
Devon	Yarner Wood	Rural	O_3	SX867890
Dumfries and Galloway	Eskdalemuir	Rural	O_3	NT235028
East Sussex	Lullington Heath	Rural	O_3,NO_x,SO_2	TQ538016
Fermanagh	Lough Navar	Rural	O_3	IH065545
Greater London	Bridge Place	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2	TQ289788
	Bexley	Urban Affiliate	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	TQ518763
	Cromwell Road	Urban	NO_x,CO,SO_2	TQ264789
	West London	Urban	NO_x,CO	TQ251788
	London Bloomsbury	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	TQ302820
	London UCL	Hydrocarbon	VOCs	TQ299822
	London Eltham	Hydrocarbon	VOCs	TQ440747
Greater Manchester	Manchester	Urban	NO_x,CO	SJ838980
Hampshire	Southampton Centre	Urban Hydrocarbon	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10},VOCs	SU429121
Highland	Strath Vaich	Rural	O_3,NO_x,SO_2	NH347750
Humberside	Hull Centre	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	SE105293
Leicestershire	Leicester Centre	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	SK587040
Lothian	Bush	Rural	O_3	NT245635
	Edinburgh Centre	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	NT254738
	Edinburgh Med. Sch	Hydrocarbon	VOCs	NT257730
Merseyside	Liverpool Centre	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	SJ349908
	Liverpool Speke	Urban	VOCs	SJ438835
North Yorkshire	High Muffles	Rural	O_3	SE776939
Nottinghamshire	Bottesford	Rural	O_3	SK797376
Oxfordshire	Harwell	Rural	O_3	SU474863
Powys	Aston Hill	Rural	O_3	SO298901
South Glamorgan	Cardiff Centre	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	ST184765
	Cardiff East	Hydrocarbon	VOCs	ST193773
South Yorkshire	Sheffield	Urban	NO_x,CO	SK403905
	Barnsley 12	Urban	SO_2	SE342067
Strathclyde	Glasgow	Urban	NO_x,CO	NS595653
Suffolk	Sibton	Rural	O_3	TM364719
Tyne and Wear	Sunderland	Urban	SO_2	NZ398570
	Newcastle Centre	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	NZ251649
West Glamorgan	Swansea Centre	Urban Affiliate	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	SS655931
West Midlands	Walsall	Urban	NO_x	SO995985
	Birmingham Centre	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	SP064868
	Birmingham East	Urban Affiliate Hydrocarbon	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10},VOCs	SP116889
West Yorkshire	Leeds Centre	Urban	O_3,NO_x,CO,SO_2,PM_{10}	SE299343
	Leeds Potternewton	Hydrocarbon	VOCs	SE307367

[1] VOCs=Volatile organic compounds
O_3=ozone
NO_x=oxides of nitrogen
SO_2=sulphur dioxide
PM_{10}=fine particles

Details of the non-automatic smoke and sulphur dioxide sites (approximately 225 sites) are available in "UK Smoke and Sulphur Dioxide Monitoring Networks Summary Tables for April 1993–March 1994".

Details of non-automatic nitrogen dioxide sites (approximately 1,100 sites) are available in "UK Nitrogen Dioxide Survey results for the first year—1993".

Details of the Department's other non-automatic networks (metals, acid deposition, rural sulphur dioxide and toxic organic micro pollutants; 86 sites) are available in "Air Pollution in the UK: 1993/94".

Copies of all three reports are available from the National Environmental Technology Centre, Culham, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 3DB.

Restoration Orders

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress he has made on proposals to introduce restoration orders for sites of special scientific interest. [39362]

Mr. Clappison: We shall consult interested parties shortly.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39521]

Sir Paul Beresford: Estimated outturn for 1994–95 and plans for 1995–96 for civil service manpower and pay bill are set out in my Department's annual report, Cm 2807, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House. A breakdown by grade and individual agency could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Nirex (Cumbria)

Dr. John Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of the RM Consultants report for Her Majesty's Inspector of Pollution on the movement of groundwater in the area of the proposed Nirex nuclear waste repository in Cumbria; [39732]

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of the WS Atkins report for Her Majesty's inspector of pollution on the movement of groundwater in the area of the proposed Nirex nuclear waste repository in Cumbria. [39733]

Mr. Gummer: A set of reports arising from the work undertaken by HMIP will be placed in the Library. This will include the reports by RM Consultants and W S Atkins.

Asylum Seekers (Housing Application)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the number of housing applicants, for each local authority, refused permanent housing due to being asylum seekers since the introduction of the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993. [39882]

Mr. Clappison *[holding answer 27 October 1995]*: Under the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993, asylum seekers found to be statutorily homeless by a local housing authority are entitled only to temporary accommodation for as long as they remain an asylum seeker. Data are collected from local authorities in England on their activities under the homelessness provisions of the Housing Act 1985 on a quarterly basis.

I have today placed in the Library a table of the reported data on applicants registered with the Home Office as an asylum seeker and found to be statutorily homeless between January 1994 and June 1995. Such data were not collected prior to January 1994.

Information about the number of asylum seekers who have applied to register on a housing waiting list is not held centrally.

Mineral Extraction (Yorkshire Dales National Park)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the quarries in the Yorkshire Dales national park with the dates on which the permissions for mineral extraction expire. [40469]

Sir Paul Beresford: This information is not held centrally, but may be available from the minerals planning authorities for the area—North Yorkshire county council and Cumbria county council.

Thames Path

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take compulsory purchase powers to allow the river frontage in Hurlingham park to be used for the Thames path. [40470]

Mr. Clappison: Since the Countryside Commission's proposals for the Thames path where it runs through Hurlingham park—and the subsequent approved route in this area—did not include the river frontage, the question did not arise.

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the Countryside Commission concerning difficulties of securing access to the river frontage where the new Thames path could run across open land next to the water's edge. [40472]

Mr. Clappison: In approving the route proposed by the Countryside Commission after consultation with the interested parties, the Secretary of State acknowledged the special issues arising out of implementation of the path where it goes through London. [40471]

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment at how many places along its route in London the Thames path leaves the river frontage other than because of a building or other similar obstruction.

Mr. Clappison: The Thames path in London leaves the river where access would otherwise be physically possible at four places—the Hurlingham club, the Houses of Parliament, Syon park, a site of special scientific interest, and the Nazareth house convent.

Water Consumption

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice he has issued in respect of the preparation of contingency plans prepared to meet water consumption requirements in each region next summer in the event of below average winter rainfall; and if he will make a statement. [40685]

Mr. Clappison: It is the responsibility of water companies to safeguard supplies to their customers, and prepare any contingency plans they consider to be necessary to maintain supplies next summer in the event of below average winter rainfall. The Government have requested the National Rivers Authority to continue monitoring the water resources situation and report whenever it considers further action is needed. The Government announced a review in consultation with the National Rivers Authority, water companies and other interested parties, of the lessons to be learnt from this year's drought and what action needs to be taken.

Newbury Bypass

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the A34 Newbury bypass river crossings have been assessed to estimate their impact on otters. [38210]

Mr. Clappison: At the time of the environment assessment for the A34 Newbury bypass there was no evidence that the rivers in question were populated by otters.

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if licences have been issued permitting the removal of badgers from land affected by the construction of the A34 Newbury bypass. [38211]

Mr. Clappison: No. However, licences have been issued to allow surveys of badger populations to be carried out.

Mesothelioma (Hillingdon)

Sir Michael Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information is available about the incidence of mesothelioma in the London borough of Hillingdon during the past 25 years; and if he will publish details of the number of cases. [40651]

Sir Paul Beresford: The Health and Safety Executive maintains a register of deaths in Great Britain for which mesothelioma is mentioned on the death certificate. The numbers of deaths from mesothelioma in the London borough of Hillingdon are shown for each year for 1976 to 1991 in the table:

Year	*Male*	*Female*
1976	3	0
1977	0	1
1978	2	0
1979	2	0
1980	1	0
1981	0	0
1982	0	1
1983	4	1
1984	2	0
1985	3	2
1986	5	1
1987	5	0
1988	10	0
1989	2	1
1990	5	0
1991	3	0

The register records only a geographical code for area of usual residence at death from 1976 onwards. The latest year for which complete data is available is 1991. The incidence of mesothelioma is closely linked to the number of deaths as mesothelioma is almost always fatal within one year of diagnosis.

Private Finance Initiatives

Mr. Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further steps he is taking to encourage private finance initiatives in local government, and if he will make a statement. [41095]

Mr. Curry: A year ago we announced a first package of measures under the private finance initiative, whose aim was to encourage joint ventures between local authorities and the private sector, and the disposal of surplus assets. We are continuing to implement and develop those proposals. Today, I can announce another set of changes to the capital finance rules to encourage further private sector involvement in the upgrading and, when necessary, replacement of local authority facilities. I am also announcing new research into the operation of joint public and private sector ventures.

The rule changes I am announcing will increase from 50 per cent. to 90 per cent. the usable proportion of receipts from the sales of county farms for two years from 1 April 1996, as announced in the rural White Paper; increase from 50 per cent. to 75 per cent. the usable proportion of receipts from the sale of educational assets for two years from 1 April 1996; increase from 25 per cent. to 50 per cent. from 1 April 1996 the usable proportion of receipts from the sale of shares in education companies; reduce the capital cost for authorities when they enter into "design, build, finance and operate" type contracts for the replacement or upgrading by the private sector of facilities such as schools, leisure centres and theatres; give authorities greater scope for financing the replacement of these facilities out of the proceeds of their sale, by a number of rule changes whereby authorities can take account of the cost of replacement assets in calculating set-aside, including relaxations in respect of the treatment of leased assets; remove disincentives to the dual use of such facilities by an authority and the private sector; reduce the capital cost of equipment replacement contracts, making it easier, for example, for authorities to use energy services packages which improve energy efficiency and reduce energy costs.

I hope to publish draft regulations embodying these changes within the next few weeks, and to lay them before the House, following consultation with interested parties, so that they can come into effect by 1 April 1996. In parallel with this consultation, I hope that further changes can be developed to extend the "design, build, finance and operate" concept to virtually the full range of local authority capital expenditure.

The new research into the working of the private finance initiative, commissioned by my Department and to be carried out by Coopers and Lybrand, will establish the nature and extent of authorities' involvement in joint companies through a questionnaire sent to all English local authorities. This will be followed by an investigation in detail of the role of companies in a number of case-study local authorities.

In addition to a report on the research findings, it is intended that the study will lead to the publication of a good practice guide, designed to help local authorities in developing private sector partnerships through the medium of companies.

Authorities' responses to the private finance initiative have been very encouraging. There is now much greater consciousness of what private finance can achieve, improving local authority facilities and services. The Treasury's private finance panel has worked with the local authority associations to prepare a consultation paper drawing authorities attention to the scope for such action. The setting up of the local government public private partnerships programme, with its own staff to help authorities find the most effective opportunities, is a welcome further step.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Education and Employment is making a separate announcement about the specific implications for private finance in education. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales is also making an announcement.

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State what progress has been made by the independent review panel commissioned to consider further written representations from consultees dissatisfied with the Government's response, published in May, to the consultation on proposed nitrate vulnerable zones. [41096]

Mr. Gummer: The independent review panel, chaired by Mr. Terence Etherton QC, has completed its work. Today my right hon. Friends the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Secretary of State for Wales and I have published the panel's report. It is being sent to all those who submitted further written representations to the panel.

We are impressed by the quality of the report and, subject to resolution of the issues which it recommends us to consider further, including with the National Rivers Authority, we intend to be guided by its recommendations.

The panel received 87 submissions relating to 29 of the 72 proposed nitrate vulnerable zones. It has considered these submissions to assess whether the Government's published methodology has been correctly and consistently applied in drawing up the boundaries of the proposed zones. The report presents the panel's views on the case made by each objector, in relation to a specific proposed zone, and makes recommendations for Government to consider. It also presents the arguments for and against the proposed surface water zone at Nayland, and the panel's conclusions on the proposed designation. Furthermore, the report also discusses various issues of principle raised in the submissions received by the panel.

The panel has had a difficult task in dealing with a great deal of information in a relatively short period of time and we are grateful for its endeavours.

I am placing copies of the panel's report in the Library.

NATIONAL HERITAGE

Heritage Green Paper

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage when she expects to publish the Green Paper on heritage announced by her predecessor, the right hon. Member for Loughborough (Mr. Dorrell), at the annual dinner of the Architects Association. [38749]

Mr. Sproat: I hope to publish the Green Paper around the end of the year.

Buildings of Historical Importance

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many buildings listed as of historical importance were cleared of such listing and demolished in each of the past five years in Humberside and the three counties of Yorkshire; if she will list locations; and if she will make a statement. [39573]

Mr. Sproat: Responsibility for controls over the demolition of listed buildings rests with the local planning authorities and the Department of the Environment. The Department has provided the following details of the number of listed building consents granted for the total demolition of a listed building in Humberside and the three counties of Yorkshire:

1991: 8

1992: 2

1993: 6

1994: 1

1995: 3 (up to 31 February 1995)

It is not possible to say how many of these consents have been implemented and information on the location of the buildings is not readily available.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many buildings of historical importance were renovated, and at what cost, in each of the past five years in Humberside and each of the three counties of Yorkshire; how many of these were industrial buildings; if she will list the locations of each; and if she will make a statement. [39481]

Mr. Sproat: Information on the total number of historic buildings renovated during a given period is not available. Government funding for the repair of historic buildings in England is channelled through English Heritage. All repair grants offered by English Heritage to buildings and monuments of outstanding national importance are listed in its publications, "Grants 1984–92", "Grants 1992–93 and "Grant 1993–94", copies of which are available in the Library. I will arrange for a copy of "Grants 1994–95" to be placed in the Libraries of the House when it is published.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many buildings listed as being of special architectural or historical importance are currently located in Humberside and each of the three counties of Yorkshire; how many of these *(a)* have been and *(b)* are currently subject to grant aid; if she will list the locations of each; and if she will make a statement. [39482]

Mr. Sproat: Until the statutory lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest are computerised next year, details of the number of listed buildings in specific areas are not readily available. Government funding for the repair of historic buildings in England is channelled through English Heritage. All repair grants offered by English Heritage in respect of buildings and monuments of outstanding national importance are listed in its publications, "Grants 1984–92, "Grants 1992–93" and "Grants 1993–94", copies of which are available in the Library. I will arrange for a copy of "Grants 1994–95 to be placed in the Library when it is published.

Royal Palaces

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how much of the expenditure on the occupied royal palaces in each year since 1986 has been in respect of *(a)* the exceptional work started in 1987–88 and *(b)* the Windsor fire. [38858]

Mr. Sproat: The costs of the exceptional work associated with the rewiring of Windsor castle are:

	£ million
1986–87 to 1990–91	13.87
1991–92	4.29
1992–93	6.41
1993–94	3.18
1994–95	0.46

Figures for each year between 1986–87 and 1990–91 are not available.

Since the Windsor castle fire in November 1992, the following amount has been spent from grant in aid on restoration work:

	£ million
1992–93	1.16
1993–94	1.86
1994–95	2.69

Mr. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what was expenditure on the occupied royal palaces in 1994–95 and in 1984–85; and what principal elements of cost account for the difference. [38859]

Mr. Sproat: Expenditure on the occupied royal palaces as shown in the 1990 report of the Royal Trustees was £11.2 million—equivalent to £18.3 million at 1994–95 prices. In 1994–95 it was £20.5 million. Grant in aid in 1994–95 included £2.7 million for exceptional costs associated with the restoration of Windsor castle, £2 million for the installation of automatic fire detection equipment in the occupied palaces, and £2.1 million for items such as rates and VAT which were not included in the 1984–85 allocation.

Defence of Britain Project

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list by location *(a)* the world war II pill-boxes that will be saved under her defence of Britain project and *(b)* those that are deemed not worth saving; and if she will make a statement. [39058]

Mr. Sproat: The primary aim of the defence of Britain project, which is being part funded by my Department, is to compile a database of 20th century military defences in the United Kingdom. Completion of the database will take several years and, when completed, will be used as a planning and research tool. English Heritage is represented on the project management panel and is also carrying out a thematic survey of defence structures in tandem with the defence of Britain project. Any structures considered to be of national architectural or historic importance will be recommended for listing when English Heritage's survey is complete.

Elizabethan Dove-cote (Barnburgh)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will ask English Heritage to consider the preservation of the Elizabethan dove-cote on British Coal land in the parish of Barnburgh, Doncaster, in the county of South Yorkshire; and if she will make a statement. [39516]

Mr. Sproat: This dove-cote is, in fact, already listed at grade II. As such, any proposals which would affect its architectural or historic interest would require listed building consent. I understand that the development proposals for the adjoining land will not, in any case, affect the dove-cote and that the local planning authority is anxious to preserve its historic setting.

National Lottery Funds

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage (1) what is the interest accruing to the Exchequer from those parts of awards from national lottery funds which have been allocated but not yet disbursed for each of the last 12 months; [39744]

(2) what extra projects have been funded by the interest accruing to the Exchequer from those parts of awards from national lottery funds which have been allocated but not yet disbursed for each of the last 12 months. [39745]

Mr. Sproat: The national lottery distribution fund is maintained under the control of the Secretary of State for National Heritage. All money paid into the fund not immediately required for distribution is paid over to the national debt commissioners and invested by them in accordance with Treasury directions. All interest accruing on the fund as a whole is added back and reinvested. It is not possible to identify separately projects which have been supported from this interest. I have set out the interest which accrued on the fund as a whole for the 10 full months since the start of the lottery.

Month	*Interest £000*
1994	
December	239
1995	
January	578
February	1,261
March	1,172
April	2,136
May	3,113
June	1,139
July	6,199
August	7,238
September	6,449
Total	29,524

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage for what grant-giving funds her Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38604]

Mr. Sproat: National lottery funds can partner funds from any source, including other public sector sources, provided other grant schemes do not preclude sector funding in partnership. Lottery money may partner private sector contributions, but cannot count as such.

Proceeds from the national lottery are classified as general Government expenditure, because, under the terms of section 21 of the National Lottery etc. Act 1993, the national lottery distribution fund is under the control and management of the Secretary of State. However, the Government do not seek to control the spending of this fund since it does not affect the burden of taxation on the economy. National lottery proceeds are not, therefore, brought within the public expenditure control total.

Information on schemes which seek exclusively non-public sector funding in partnership is not held centrally. Officials are collating this information and I will ensure that details are placed in the *Official Report* in due course.

SCOTLAND

Barnacle Geese

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps his Department has taken to monitor the one-year voluntary pilot management to protect barnacle geese in the Solway area; and if he will make a statement on the progress of the scheme. [37243]

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 23 October 1995]:* The one-year pilot for the Solway barnacle goose management scheme was undertaken by Scottish Natural Heritage to address conflicts between farmers and barnacle geese in the Solway area.

SNH has reported that the operation and monitoring of the scheme have shown that the approach adopted has been successful and has had the general support and participation of most local farmers.

Approval has now been given to the continuation of the project as a three-year demonstration scheme to build on the work already undertaken; SNH will continue to monitor and report on the development of the scheme.

NHS Budget

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will make a statement on underspending in the NHS budget in Scotland for each year since 1989–90, indicating the extent to which such underspend was re-invested in the NHS in the following year; [38500]

(2) what was the total underspend or overspend in the NHS budget in Scotland in 1994–95; and if he will provide a breakdown of where the underspend or overspend occurred. [38502]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 23 October 1995]:* The figures showing the underspends in the NHS hospital and community health and family health service budgets in Scotland since 1989–90, and the end year flexibility entitlement for each year, are set out in the table. Family health services overspent in 1993–94. The appropriation accounts for 1994–95 have still to be finalised and the figures for that year are provisional.

£000s

	1989–90	*1990–91*	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*(Provisional) 1994–95*
Family Health Services	10,392	22,983	2,916	8,039	–20,661	7,836
Hospital and Community Health Services	6,797	20,130	8,175	9,072	56,736	48,236
End year flexibility entitlement	8,409	10,068	—	8,401	29,709	48,492

Family health services are demand led and funded from non-cash limited provision. Underdrawings against this provision are not available for redistribution in subsequent years. Most underdrawings on the cash-limited provision for hospital and community health services are available for redistribution though in earlier years the eligibility criteria were more restrictive.

Underdrawings on the cash-limited hospital and community health services comprise mainly health board and NHS trust carry-forward balances. In the interests of sensible financial management, boards may carry-forward an element of their underdrawings. Once boards' annual accounts have been audited, the carry-forward balances, after parliamentary approval, will be formally allocated back to individual health boards, together with any additional resources secured from central underdrawings which in 1995–96 amounts to £16.3 million.

A similar procedure is applied to NHS trusts.

Health boards and NHS trusts can utilise their carry-forward funds to purchase patient care and for capital projects. The funds distributed from central underdrawings are to be used for local initiatives with the emphasis on pump-priming initiatives in priority areas particularly mental health, cardio and cerebro vascular disease, and cancer.

Scabies (Dykebar Hospital)

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action has been taken by the chief executive for the NHS in Scotland to ensure that the risk of a further epidemic of scabies is minimised at Dykebar hospital, Paisley. [39164]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Renfrewshire Healthcare NHS trust has taken appropriate action to confine an outbreak that affected a handful of people at Dykebar hospital, Paisley.

Public Bodies

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list each non-departmental public body, research council, executive agency, board, trust, public body and other organisation to which he has a right to make *(a)* appointments and *(b)* nominations; and if he will make a statement on the equivalent figures for 1980. [39222]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The list of non-departmental public bodies, NHS bodies and nationalised industries to which I make appointments is contained in the Cabinet Office publication "Public Bodies". The total number of appointments made to those bodies sponsored by the Scottish Office at 1 September 1994—the latest date for which figures are available—was 3,567, of which 3,253 were made by Ministers. This compares with 5,013 in 1983, the earliest date for which comparable figures are available, of which 3,818 were made by Ministers. In respect of executive agencies, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) on 9 February 1995, *Official Report*, columns *235-36*. In addition I make a number of appointments jointly with other Ministers to some executive agencies and to some non-departmental public bodies of other Departments. This information is not held centrally by my Department and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to visit Scottish universities over the coming year. [38885]

Mr. Raymond S. Roberton: My right hon. Friend intends to visit universities, and other higher education institutions, throughout the year. I also plan to visit higher education institutions on appropriate occasions in the coming year.

Scottish Homes

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next plans to meet the chairman or chief executive of Scottish Homes to discuss their accountability to him, his Ministers, Parliament, elected parliamentarians and the public; and if he will make a statement. [39190]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: My right hon. Friend and I meet the board of Scottish Homes from time to time to discuss a range of issues. I next plan to meet the board early next year. Scottish Homes is accountable to my right hon. Friend and, through him, to the House.

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the arrangements for reporting possible cases of misuse of funds, maladministration and negligence involving Scottish Homes to *(a)* an independent ombudsman, *(b)* their internal auditors and *(c)* their external auditors; and if he will make a statement. [39174]

Mr. Robertson: Scottish Homes has a published complaints procedure. I have arranged for a copy to be placed in the Library.

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the names, previous occupations, payments or allowances and next date for reappointment of the *(a)* chairman, *(b)* vice-chairman, and *(c)* members of the board of Scottish Homes. [39186]

Mr. Robertson: The information requested is set out in the table.

Name	*Occupation/previous occupation*	*Salary*	*Period of current appointment*
Sir James Mellon KCMG (Chairman)	Former Diplomat	£39,290	1 April 1993–31 March 1996
Mrs. Frances McCall MBE	Member, Management Committee, Calvay Co-operative	£6,830	1 April 1995–31 March 1998
Prof. Duncan Maclennan MA MPhil FRSA	Director of the Centre for Housing Research, Glasgow University	£6,830	1 April 1993–31 March 1997
Mrs. Heather Sheerin OBE	Co-Director, retail carpet business	£6,830	1 April 1993–31 March 1997
Mrs. Daphne Sleigh	Freelance Market Researcher	£6,830	1 April 1995–31 March 1999
Cameron Parker OBE	Non Executive Vice-Chairman, Lithgows Ltd	£6,830	1 April 1992–31 March 1996
Professor John Rankin Small CBE	Deputy Principal, Heriot Watt University and Professor of Accountancy and Finance	£6,830	1 April 1993–31 March 1997
Alistair C. Dempster	Chief Executive, TSB Bank Scotland plc; Deputy Chairman TSB Bank Channel Islands Limited	£6,380	1 April 1993–31–March 1998
John D. Spencely	Chairman, Reiach and Hall Architects	£6,830	1 April 1995–31 March 1999
Peter McKinlay (Ex-officio)	Chief Executive, Scottish Homes	£83,490	7 October 1991–31 December 1999

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the procedures for dismissing the chairman and chief executive of Scottish Homes. [39187]

Mr. Robertson: Schedule 1, paragraph 5(3) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1988 sets out the circumstances in which my right hon. Friend may remove a member of the Scottish Homes board—other than the chief executive—from office. A decision to terminate the appointment of the chief executive would be a matter for the Scottish Homes board.

Paisley Group

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the discussion he had with representatives of the Paisley group during his visit to the town during September; what is his assessment of the scope to progress the initiatives discussed; what is his assessment of the potential to develop a partnership approach aimed at enhancing a positive perception of the town and the surrounding area; and when he next plans to meet representatives of the group and its parliamentary representatives to discuss possible actions and initiatives. [39182]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I had a useful discussion with representatives of the Paisley group on 12 September and I encouraged them to develop their ideas and consult other agencies which have a potentially valuable role to play in improving perceptions of Paisley. There is clearly scope for enhancing Paisley's image by promoting the town's many strengths and a partnership approach is the most effective way of doing this. For that reason, I have written to the group encouraging it to build on other initiatives already under way in Paisley and to co-ordinate its activities to achieve the maximum impact. I have asked Renfrewshire Enterprise to meet the group and consider how it may assist them.

Higher Education

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for each higher education institution in Scotland the library budget for 1995–96 together with the numbers of current undergraduate and postgraduate students and staff. [38879]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: Information on budgets for the new 1995–96 academic session is not collected or available centrally. Higher education institutions are free to determine the allocations they make for support services from the various resources—including Scottish Higher Education Funding Council grants and tuition fees—they receive for teaching and research.

Student numbers and staffing for the new academic session are also not yet known. Our expenditure plans for 1995–96—as set out in the departmental report "Serving Scotland's Needs" (Cm 2814)—assumed 118,000 full-time equivalent students at HEIs funded by SHEFC.

Information on actual expenditure and numbers of students and staff will be published in due course.

Asthma

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met members of the National Asthma Campaign to discuss air quality reporting and other concerns of the group. [38890]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. Friend has had no such meeting with members of the National Asthma Campaign.

Tree Preservation Order System

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to review the effectiveness of the tree preservation order system in Scotland with particular reference to the prosecution of those who fell or pollard trees prior to submitting planning applications to develop on such sites, or when such applications are under consideration; and if he will make a statement. [39161]

Mr. Kynoch: I propose to initiate a review of the tree preservation order system in Scotland in 1996. The review will be wide ranging and will consider all aspects of the operation of the present system.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what methods Scottish Natural Heritage uses to calculate the number of sites of special scientific interest damaged in Scotland each year. [39239]

Mr. Kynoch: The definition used in categorising damage to sites in Scotland are set out in the annual report of Scottish Natural Heritage, a copy of which is in the Library.

Scottish Natural Heritage is adopting the principles laid down in the "Common Standards for Monitoring" report—Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 1993.

Paisley Pattern Goods

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to develop the manufacture of paisley pattern goods within the town of Paisley as a potential attraction for inward investment and a potential source of international marketing; and if he will make a statement. [39179]

Mr. Kynoch: Local economic initiatives generally fall to be pursued by the local enterprise companies. My right hon. Friend fully supports the current range of activities being taken by Renfrewshire Enterprise and its partners to build on the strategy established by the paisley pattern initiative and to identify and develop commercial opportunities arising from the link between Paisley and the paisley pattern.

Joint Learning Disability Strategy Conference

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which companies and organisations attended the joint learning disability strategy for provider agencies conference, organised by Greater Glasgow health board and Strathclyde regional council, and held at the Garfield hotel, Cumbernauld road, Stepps, in September. [39758]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The conference held on 20 September was attended as follows:

NHS
Greater Glasgow Health Board
Glasgow Community and Mental Health Services NHS Trust

Regional/District Councils
Strathclyde Regional Council
Glasgow City Council
Strathkelvin District Council

Private Providers
AHP Rehabilitation Limited
Alphonsus House
Alternatives for Living Ltd.
Bassingham Court Ltd.
Care Solutions Ltd.
Cause for Concern
Community Care Company UK Ltd.
Community Integrated Care
Fairhome Care Group
Homelife Options Ltd.
Independent Living Ltd.
Lifeways Community Care.
Mariner Homes
Milbury Care Services
Raglin Ltd.
Westminster Healthcare Ltd.

Housing Agencies
Cube Housing Association Limited
GAP Housing Association
Glen Oaks Housing Association
Margaret Blackwood Housing Association
Queens Cross Housing Association
Shettleston Housing Association
Springburn/Possilpark Housing Association
West of Scotland Housing Association
Yoker Housing Association

Voluntary Organisations
Archiocese of Glasgow
Barlanark Community Business Ltd.
British Red Cross
Castlebrae Co-op
Church of Scotland
Community Enterprise
Cornerstone Community Care

Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme
Ealing Consortium
Enable–Glasgow Branch
Enable Homes
Enable Services
Fair Deal for 1 in 100
Glasgow Community Development Service (Simon Duffy)
Key Housing
Leonard Cheshire Foundation
McFarlane Homes
Mentally Handicapped Trust
Millburn Homes
Outlook Project
Quarriers
Real Life Options
Richmond Fellowship Scotland
Royal National Institute for Deaf People
Royal National Institute for the Blind
SAM Housing Project
Scottish Council for Spastics
Sense Scotland
SHARE
Strathkelvin Contact Point
The Scottish Society for Autistic Children
Turning Point
Vanguard Individual Support Agency
YMCA Glasgow

Members of the Public
Three

Grass (Hay and Silage)

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total area of grass for hay and silage recorded in the June agricultural census within the boundary of the Machair of the Uists, Barra and Vatersay environmentally sensitive area. [39837]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: In 1994, the total area of grass for moving for hay and silage production was 654.2 hectares. This figures includes an estimate for minor holdings.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many NHS trusts in Scotland have their board meetings *(a)* fully open to the public, *(b)* partially open to the public and *(c)* closed to the public. [39398]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* The information is as follows:

(a) Open to the public: 6

(b) Partially open to the public: 16

(c) Closed to the public: 25

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much *(a)* NHS trusts and *(b)* health boards spent on public relations in the previous financial year. [39404]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* This information is not held centrally.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what resources he has made available to promote the encouragement of liaison between parents and voluntary organisations and named persons' involvement as in accordance with the university of Edinburgh report to the Scottish Education Department on children with special educational needs. [40171]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: The Scottish Office has committed considerable resources to the production of guidance for all those involved in the processes connected with records of needs to encourage the full involvement of parents and where appropriate voluntary organisations.

The Scottish Office publication, "A Parent's Guide to Special Educational Needs", provides relevant information and guidance for parents, including an extensive list of appropriate contacts in the voluntary sector. Further, more detailed, guidance will be published shortly.

The Scottish Office has also helped the national voluntary organisation, Children in Scotland, to establish the special needs forum, which provides information and training about special educational needs for parents and voluntary organisations. In 1994, with financial assistance from the Scottish Office, Children In Scotland published "A Special Partnership", a guidebook for named persons and parents to help them to participate more effectively in the recording processes.

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many Scottish children with specific speech or language disorders are having their special educational needs met in residential establishments in England as a result of the lack of appropriate provision in Scotland. [40172]

Mr. Robertson: The information requested is not held centrally.

Private Patients

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list by trust in each region, details of income from private patients for 1993–94 and 1994–95 *(a)* as a total and *(b)* as a percentage of total trust income. [39949]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information, grouped by health board area, is set out in the table. The figures have been taken from NHS trust annual accounts. The figures for 1994–95 are provisional. Figures for Central Scotland Healthcare NHS trust include those for Royal Scottish National Hospital NHS trust, which dissolved on formation of the new trust on 1 October 1994. Figures for West Lothian NHS trust include charges to overseas visitors.

	1993–94		*1994–95*	
Health Board Area/NHS Trust Name	*Private patient income £000*	*Percentage of total income*	*Private patient income £000*	*Percentage of total income*
Argyll and Clyde				
Inverclyde Royal	n/a	n/a	27	0.07
Renfrewshire Healthcare	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Royal Alexandra Hospital	2	0.00	0	0.00

Health Board Area/NHS Trust Name	*1993–94* *Private patient income £000*	*1993–94* *Percentage of total income*	*1994–95* *Private patient income £000*	*1994–95* *Percentage of total income*
Ayrshire and Arran				
Ayrshire and Arran Community Healthcare	0	0.00	0	0.00
North Ayrshire and Arran	46	0.07	46	0.07
South Ayrshire Hospitals	69	0.15	123	0.28
Dumfries and Galloway				
Dumfries and Galloway Acute and Maternity Hospitals	n/a	n/a	35	0.09
Fife				
Fife Healthcare	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Kirkcaldy Acute Hospitals	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Queen Margaret Hospital	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Forth Valley				
Central Scotland Healthcare	0	0.00	16	0.03
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary	n/a	n/a	29	0.08
Stirling Royal Infirmary	33	0.09	24	0.07
Grampian				
Aberdeen Royal Hospitals	504	0.44	672	0.70
Grampian Healthcare	37	0.03	11	0.01
Moray Health Services	26	0.11	27	0.11
Greater Glasgow				
Glasgow Royal Infirmary University	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Greater Glasgow Community and Mental Health Services	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Southern General Hospital	417	0.53	103	0.14
Stobhill	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Victoria Infirmary	17	0.03	0	0.00
West Glasgow Hospitals	n/a	n/a	30	0.03
Yorkhill	49	0.09	93	0.20
Highland				
Caithness and Sutherland	1	0.01	19	0.13
Highland Communities	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Raigmore Hospital	114	0.24	157	0.31
Lanarkshire				
Hairmyres and Stonehouse Hospitals	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Law Hospital	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Monklands and Bellshill Hospitals	0	0.00	0	0.00
Lothian				
East and Midlothian	n/a	n/a	4	0.01
Edinburgh Healthcare	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Edinburgh Sick Children's	n/a	n/a	19	0.09
The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh	n/a	n/a	822	0.67
Western General Hospitals	n/a	n/a	337	0.56
West Lothian	29	0.05	69	0.11
Tayside				
Angus	n/a	n/a	38	0.10
Dundee Healthcare	n/a	n/a	0	0.00
Dundee Teaching Hospitals	45	0.04	40	0.05
Perth and Kinross Healthcare	n/a	n/a	154	0.28
Totals	1,389	0.14	2,895	0.11

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 18 July, *Official Report*, columns *1119–20*, if he will now confirm and update the figures on private patient income. [39954]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The figures on private patient income for the period up to 1993–94 were provided in the previous answer of 24 November 1994, *Official Report*, columns *333–34*. These figures were confirmed as final in the answer of 18 July, *Official Report*, columns *1119–20*. Income figures for private patients for 1994–95 are provisional, and are set out in the table. The figure for Lothian in 1994–95 includes overseas patients, and can therefore not be compared directly with those for earlier years.

Health Boards	*1994–95* *£000*
Argyll and Clyde	27
Ayrshire and Arran	169
Borders	52
Dumfries and Galloway	35
Fife	0

Health Boards	*1994–95 £000*
Forth Valley	69
Grampian	710
Greater Glasgow	226
Highland	176
Lanarkshire	0
Lothian	1,251
Orkney	0
Shetland	0
Tayside	232
Western Isles	0
Total	2,947

Health Boards (Audited Accounts)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list *(a)* the underspend for the year 1994–95, *(b)* the initial reallocation for the year 1995–96 and *(c)* the revised reallocation for 1995–96 for each health board. [40313]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The audited accounts for health boards for 1994–95 have recently been received and are currently being analysed. Provisional figures for the underspend for each health board based on these accounts are set out in the table. There is only one reallocation which derives from these underspends, subject to parliamentary approval. For the year 1995–96 the reallocation is likely to be the major part of the underspend for 1994–95, but the precise figures have yet to be finalised.

Health Board	*Underspend/ (Overspend) £000*
Argyll and Clyde	85
Ayrshire and Arran	828
Borders	816
Dumfries and Galloway	1,453
Fife	1,197
Forth Valley	1,313
Grampian	1,373
Greater Glasgow	9,880
Highland	971
Lanarkshire	1,272
Lothian	3,057
Orkney	(2)
Shetland	106
Tayside	845
Western Isles	201
Total	23,395

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what *(a)* surpluses and *(b)* deficits were recorded by each district health authority in 1994–95. [40661]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The audited accounts for health boards for 1994–95 have recently been received and are currently being analysed. Provisional figures for the surplus or deficit for each health board are set out in the table.

Health Board	*Underspend/ (Overspend) £000*
Argyll and Clyde	85
Ayrshire and Arran	828
Borders	816
Dumfries and Galloway	1,453
Fife	1,197
Forth Valley	1,313
Grampian	1,373
Greater Glasgow	9,880
Highland	971
Lanarkshire	1,272
Lothian	3,057
Orkney	(2)
Shetland	106
Tayside	845
Western Isles	201
Total	23,395

Barlinnie Prison

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on progress of the procurator fiscal's investigation into the report on prisoners who were allegedly beaten by prison officers in Her Majesty's prison, Barlinnie. [40314]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The procurators fiscal at Glasgow and Hamilton were responsible for the investigation of complaints by prisoners of assaults at, and on the way to, Barlinnie prison, Glasgow, which were the subject of a BBC Scotland television programme "Frontline Scotland" on 12 October 1995. The programme looked at the complaints of three prisoners. The evidence in each of these cases has been considered by Crown counsel in the normal way.

In the case of William McKay, who alleged that he had been assaulted in January 1994, there was insufficient evidence to justify criminal proceedings against any person, and in October 1994 Crown counsel instructed that no criminal proceedings should be taken. The governor and Mr. McKay were told of that decision.

In the case of James McGhee, who complained of assault, it has not as yet been possible to establish who was responsible for his injuries and Crown counsel has given the procurator fiscal instructions to pursue further lines of inquiry. Crown counsel has also given the procurator fiscal instructions concerning the complaint of Thomas Monaghan. It would not be appropriate for any further details to be given at this time in relation to the complaints of Mr. McGhee and Mr. Monaghan.

HEALTH

National Blood Service

15. **Mr. John Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will announce his final decision on the reorganisation of the National Blood Service; and if he will make a statement. [38226]

Mr. Sackville: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will announce the decision as soon as possible. We need to be fully satisfied that any proposals that are adopted set the right direction for the future development of the National Blood Service.

London Initiative Zone

17. **Mr. Robert Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made on implementing London initiative zone projects in the north Thames region. [38228]

Mr. Malone: Since the London initiative zone was set up in 1993, an additional £124 million has been invested in developing primary care services through LIZ projects in north London. A substantial six-year programme is now under way to improve general practitioner surgeries and health centres, to increase the number of staff, and to provide better services for local people.

Trust Chief Executives (Income)

18. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the average income of the top 10 highest paid chief executives. [38229]

Mr. Malone: Information on national health service chief executives' remuneration is published locally in all NHS employing authorities' annual accounts, but is not collated centrally.

Total Purchasing Initiative

19. **Mrs. Lait:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what interest GPs have shown in the Government's total purchasing initiative. [38230]

Mr. Malone: Health authorities and fundholding general practitioners have shown considerable interest in this initiative. That is why we announced that we would extend the number of pilot projects in England from 51 to around 70 in total. We have also decided to extend the formal evaluation programme from two years to three.

Doctors and Dentists

20. **Sir David Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors and dentists undertook national health service work at the most recent count; and what was the comparable figure in 1979. [38231]

Mr. Malone: The number of doctors and dentists undertaking national health service work has risen by 31 per cent., from 72,270 in 1979 to 94,730 in 1994, the most recent year for which figures are available.

Tameside Hospital (Secure Accommodation)

21. **Mr. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about provision of secure accommodation for disturbed patients in Tameside hospital. [38232]

Mr. Bowis: The Tameside development is one of seven high dependency units in the north-west region which, with medium secure units, will provide levels of care according to the security needs of the individual patient.

Frozen Human Embryos

22. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he is taking to safeguard surplus frozen human embryos from destruction. [38233]

Mr. Sackville: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 23 February 1995 *Official Report*, column *325*. A report by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority about the statutory storage period for embryos is under consideration by Ministers.

Nursing Profession

23. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he proposes to improve morale within the nursing profession. [38234]

Mr. Sackville: Well managed trusts and other national health service employers in the United Kingdom are fully aware of the importance of nurse morale in the delivery of high-quality patient care. NHS trusts now have greater freedoms than ever before to develop local pay and working arrangements which reflect more properly the valuable contribution of highly motivated and skilled nurses.

Evidence of the present high nursing morale is reflected in the host of nursing-led initiatives currently in progress. These range from nurse-led clinics and nurse-led out-patient services, nursing beds for the chronically ill, pre-admission clinics, eight nurse prescribing schemes and the expanding range of nurse specialist posts including those of nurse practitioners.

GP Fundholding

24. **Mr. Hoon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about GP fundholding. [38235]

Mr. Malone: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health gave earlier.

Breast Cancer Services

25. **Mr. Chisholm:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the Government's response to the third report of the Health Select Committee on breast cancer services (HC324). [38236]

Mr. Sackville: The Government's response to the Health Select Committee's third report on breast cancer services was laid before Parliament on 18 October 1995, Cm 3007. Copies of the response are also available in the Library.

Berkshire Health Commission

26. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the decision of Berkshire health commission to deny treatments previously made available on the national health service. [38237]

Mr. Malone: Berkshire health commission has issued a public discussion document setting out its proposed health care purchasing priorities for 1996–97. There are no blanket bans on treatments; each case will be considered on the basis of clinical need. Any significant changes in local services arising from the proposals will be the subject of further public consultation.

NHS (Research and Development)

27. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much is now being spent annually on research

and development in the NHS; and what were the comparable figures for the years 1975 to 1979. [38238]

Mr. Malone: In 1994–95, national health service research and research related expenditure, including that of the Department of Health, was estimated to be £385 million.

No comparable figures are available for the years 1975–79.

Waiting Times (City of Leicester)

28. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current waiting time in the city of Leicester for minor surgery. [38239]

Mr. Malone: Information in the form requested is not available centrally. Available data about waiting times for hospitals in Leicester can be found in "Hospital Waiting List Statistics: England", copies of which are available in the Library. The latest published figures are for March 1995.

Private Finance Initiative

29. **Mr. Robert Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from the boards of hospital trusts about the costs incurred preparing and presenting bids under the private finance initiative. [38240]

Mr. Sackville: None. It is for the private sector bidders to prepare and present their bids, and they bear their own costs in doing so. The national health service benefits from more cost-effective projects.

Glaucoma

Mr. Loyden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients are currently receiving treatment for glaucoma. [38157]

Mr. Sackville: More than 25,500 glaucoma patients received hospital in-patient or day care treatment last year, an increase of 48 per cent. since 1989–90. The number of out-patients or patients being treated for glaucoma by their general practitioners is not available centrally.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many ill-health retirement pensions were awarded to NHS staff incapacitated by chronic fatigue syndrome in each of the last five years; and how many of these awards were made within two years of the disease being diagnosed for each of the last five years. [38575]

Mr. Sackville: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the NHS Pensions Agency under its chief executive Mr. A. F. Cowan. I have asked him to reply to the hon. Member.

Letter from A. F. Cowan to Mr. Jon Owen Jones, dated 31 October 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions it falls within my area of responsibility.

The information is not available in the format requested, because the Agency did not maintain separate records about CFS applications before 15 August 1994. Since then the Agency has approved 19 cases as meeting our criteria for permanent incapacity. Of these, 11 awards were made within 2 years of the first diagnosis of CFS.

Departmental Staff Travel

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many return trips during the last 12 months have been taken by his Department's staff between London and Leeds *(a)* per week, *(b)* per month and *(c)* annually; and at what cost. [39004]

Mr. Sackville: The total number of return trips by Department of Health staff between London and Leeds in the 12 months to September 1995 is estimated to be 4,730. The estimated travel costs of these journeys is £665,000. Relocation is expected to produce net savings of around £10 million per year after taking account of travel and other additional expenses.

Angioplasty

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by regional health authority for the latest available year the number of patients who received balloon angioplasty, the initial success rate percentage and the percentage of patients returned to their doctors during the following six months with angina. [39489]

Mr. Sackville: The available information is shown in the table.

The estimated number of finished consultant episodes for transluminal balloon angioplasty of the coronary artery in National Health Service hospitals in England for 1993–94:

Region of treatment	*1993–94*
Northern	372
Yorkshire	1,059
Trent	570
East Anglian	333
North West Thames	943
North East Thames	658
South East Thames	1,364
South West Thames	381
Wessex	632
Oxford	250
South Western	268
West Midlands	769
Mersey	445
North Western	439
SHA's	503
England	8,986

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics.

National Blood Authority

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the National Blood Authority will be expected to demonstrate a 6 per cent. return on capital under the same arrangements as NHS trusts. [39792]

Mr. Sackville: The National Blood Authority is expected to achieve a 6 per cent. return on capital on the same basis as other health authorities.

Dental Services

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide the figures for the number of patients who are registered with dental practices in the Doncaster family health services area on *(a)* 30 June 1992, *(b)* 30 June 1993, *(c)* 30 June 1994 and *(d)* 30 June 1995. [39446]

Mr. Malone: The information is shown in the table.

General Dental Services: Number of patients registered in Doncaster-Family Health Services Authority

Year	*All patients*
30 June 1992	173,328
30 June 1993	191,241
30 June 1994	193,062
30 June 1995	187,940

Private Patients

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 18 July, *Official Report*, columns *1119–20*, if he will now confirm and update the figures on private patient income. [39953]

Mr. Sackville: Figures for 1994–95 are not yet available.

Osteopaths Act 1993

Sir Ivan Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he proposes to give effect to the provisions of the Osteopaths Act 1993. [39908]

Mr. Sackville: Work on establishing the General Osteopathic Council is proceeding well and we expect to be able to announce its membership shortly.

Information Technology Systems

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many different information technology systems are currently in use within the NHS for data storage and retrieval; if standardised software and hardware exist for such information storage and retrieval; and what guidance his Department has issued in relation to common information technology systems. [40696]

Mr. Sackville: Information on the number of information technology systems in use in the national health service is not available centrally. The NHS Executive has developed a standards enforcement in procurement, STEP, process to ensure that information technology systems within the NHS in England conform to agreed IT standards. "NHS IT Standards in Procurement", issued on 1 April 1995 to all chief executives of NHS trusts in England contains statements of policy on standards in different areas of IT. This is the definitive statement of the nationally agreed standards and recommendations relevant to all aspects of IT in the NHS. Within these guidelines, NHS trusts are free to implement systems which best meet their individual needs.

Departmental Cash Limits

Mr. Mark Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes will be made to the cash limits of his Department in 1995–96. [41092]

Mr. Dorrell: The cash limit for class XII vote 1—hospital, community health, family health services and related services, England—will be increased by £3,129,000 from £26,536,835,000 to £26,539,964,000. This allows for an increase of £4,465,000 in respect of a transfer from class XII, vote 2—Department of Health, administration, miscellaneous health services and personal social services, England— for work on publicity campaigns, £2,986,000; for work of the Public Health Laboratory Service relating to immunoglobulin products, £810,000; and for the work of the Medical Devices Agency, £669,000. The overall increase is partially offset by £1,336,000 made up of transfers to class XIV, vote 12—hospital, community health, family health, part, and other health services, Scotland—for the work of the Prescription Pricing Authority, £840,000; and the London post-graduate teaching hospitals services, £246,000; and to class VII, vote 2—regeneration and countryside, England—for the urban programme, £250,000.

The cash limit for class XII, vote 2—Department of Health, administration, miscellaneous health services and personal social services, England—will be reduced by £4,570,000, from £1,283,948,000 to £1,279,378,000. This reduction allows for transfer of £4,465,000 to class XII, vote 1 as mentioned above and £105,000, running costs to class XIX, vote 3—Privy Council Office—for the central drug co-ordinating unit.

The non-voted cash limit for supplementary credit approvals for personal social services—DoH/LACAP—in England is to be increased by £1,305,000 from £26,700,000 to £28,005,000 in respect of the take-up of entitlement to carry forward of underspends from 1994–95 financial year under the end-year flexibility arrangements as announced by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995, *Official Report*, columns *776–82*.

The Department's gross running cost limit will be reduced by £105,000 from £239,455,000 to £239,350,000 as mentioned above.

All increases will either be offset by savings, increased receipts or transfers to or from other votes or charged to the reserve and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

GP Fundholding

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many GPs currently operate a fundholding budget; how many patients and how much money is involved; and if he will make a statement. [38646]

Mr. Malone: More than 10,400 general practitioners in England are currently fundholders. They serve more than 20 million patients—41 per cent. of the population—and control £3.4 billion of national health service resources.

National Breast Cancer Campaign

Mr. Bill Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will meet a delegation from the National Breast Cancer Campaign to discuss increasing funding for research into the disease. [38592]

Mr. Sackville: If the hon. Member writes setting out his proposals, we would be happy to consider such a request.

Dietary Supplements

Mr. Hain: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the policy of the Medicines Control Agency in respect of consultation with consumers of dietary supplements prior to the finalisation and publication of the proposed Medicines Act leaflet, MAL 8; and what consultation has so far been undertaken with such consumers and practitioners organisations, with particular reference to the Society for the Promotion of Nutritional Therapy; [40105]

(2) if he will make it his policy to protect the diversity and availability of vitamin, mineral and other dietary supplements currently available to consumers by ensuring that the proposed Medicines Act leaflet, MAL 8, does not impose new regulatory burdens or systems of compulsory pharmaceutical licensing on manufacturers of such products; and what is the extent to which the provisions of MAL 8 will be consistent with the Government's policy of deregulation; [40106]

(3) if he will make a statement indicating the extent to which the provisions of the proposed Medicines Act leaflet, MAL 8, will limit or otherwise affect the sale of dietary supplements currently sold legally; [40107]

(4) if he will make it his policy that in interpreting article 1 of directive 65/65/EEC *(a)* foods, *(b)* vitamins, *(c)* minerals and *(d)* other products currently lawfully sold as a foodstuff or dietary supplement will not be reclassified as medicinal product by virtue solely of their capacity to restore normality to physiological functions; [40108]

(5) in what circumstances vitamin, mineral and other dietary supplements currently lawfully sold as foodstuffs or dietary supplements will be reclassified as medicinal products requiring pharmaceutical product licences under the provisions of article 1 of directive 65/65/EEC. [40109]

Mr. Sackville: Medicines Act leaflet, MAL 8, provides guidance for industry on what is a medicinal product. It has no status in law. The Medicines Control Agency has discussed its proposals for updating it with the Proprietary Association of Great Britain, the British Herbal Manufacturers' Association, the Natural Medicines Manufacturers Association, the Health Foods Manufacturers' Association and the Cosmetic Toiletry and Perfumery Association. The proposals impose no new regulatory burdens on manufacturers of vitamins, minerals, and other dietary supplements currently sold legally.

Products which are food, or which are foods for particular nutritional purposes, are considered under food safety legislation. Products sold as foodstuffs or dietary supplements are not necessarily considered as products to which the Medicines for Human Use (Marketing Authorisations, Etc) Regulations 1994 apply solely because they have the capacity to restore normality to physiological functions. A product currently sold as a foodstuff or dietary supplement would be considered licensable only if, after careful assembly of all the facts of the individual case, it was considered to be a medicinal product to which the Medicines for Human Use (Marketing Authorisations, Etc) Regulations 1994 applied.

Paracetamol

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps he is taking to promote comethiamol to doctors and pharmacists as a safe alternative to paracetamol; [40402]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of deaths which could be avoided each year if comethiamol were to be sold and prescribed instead of paracetamol; [40401]

(3) what research his Department has done on increasing the safety of paracetamol by adding methionine. [40403]

Mr. Sackville: Paracetamol is an effective pain killer which is safe at the dosage recommended on the labelling. Comethiamol is a combination of paracetamol and methionine and is currently available from pharmacists as Pameton.

It is not appropriate for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health to promote the use of a particular medicine. It is not correct to describe comethiamol as a safe alternative to paracetamol. The methionine component is likely to be of value only if an overdose is taken. People who use paracetamol as recommended would therefore unnecessarily be exposed to any side-effects the methionine might have, without deriving any benefit.

Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the incidence of Creutzfeldt Jakob disease in farmers; [40381]

(2) what recent information he has received from the spongiform encephalopathy advisory committee on the subject of Creutzfeldt Jakob disease in dairy farmers. [40380]

Mr. Sackville: The spongiform encephalopathy advisory committees, SEAC, reviewed the reported suspect case of Creutzfeldt Jakob disease, CJD, in a farmer who has had a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, in his beef suckler herd. Three previous CJD cases have been confirmed in dairy farmers whose herds had had cases of BSE.

The committee concluded that it was difficult to explain this as simply a chance phenomenon. There is a statistical excess of cases in cattle farmers compared with the general population but the absolute risk, even for cattle farmers, is extremely low at about two cases per million per year. There may be other explanations for such an association besides infection with BSE, and the committee noted that there are no reported cases in other occupational groups such as veterinarians who might be expected to be similarly exposed. They also noted that surveillance of CJD elsewhere in Europe has shown a similar incidence of CJD in farmers, including dairy farmers, in countries with no or very few cases of BSE. They therefore felt that it was important to undertake further epidemiological studies to detect any particular risk factors which might be involved, and reiterated their advice that the UK cases of CJD in cattle farmers and the strain of the agent recovered from them should be studied in detail.

The committee has asked for further work to be done, but has not altered its advice to Government on the precautions necessary to protect either the public health, including farmers, or animal health.

NHS Finance

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* surpluses and *(b)* deficits were recorded by each district health authority in 1994–95. [40660]

Mr. Sackville: This information is not yet available.

Market Testing

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 28 March to the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) *Official Report*, column *568*, what were the results of the market tests in the clinical and clinical support services listed; and if he will list the market testing plans. [40624]

Mr. Sackville: The previous plans, as placed in the Library, listed 58 proposals for market testing of 20 separate clinical support services, involving 15 trusts. The National Health Service Executive has been notified that eight of these trusts have completed market testing of a total of 11 such services, the outcome of which is shown in the table.

NHS Trust	*Service*	*Contractor*
Enfield Community Care	Continuing Care-Elderly (Nursing Home)	Haven Healthcare Ltd
Bradford Community	Sterile Services	NHS supplies North East Region
Calderdale Healthcare	Sterile Services	Vernon Carus
Luton and Dunstable Hospital	Prosthetics	Camp Ltd
Mulberry	Pharmacy	Pilgrim Hospital
Heathlands Mental Health Services	Pharmacy	Frimley Park Hospital
Brent and Harrow	Clinical Genetics (coding)	Birmingham Maternity Hospital
Eastman Dental Hospital	Haemotology	National Hospital London
Blackburn Hynburn and Ribble Valley	Medical Photography	Preston Acute Services NHS Trust
Luton and Dunstable	Orthotics	Prostech Ltd
Heathlands Mental Health	Pathology	Frimley Park Hospital

Transplant Surgery

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients received transplant surgery for each organ in each health region for the year ended *(a)* 31 December 1992, *(b)* 1993, *(c)* 1994 and for the latest months for which data are available. [40620]

Mr. Sackville: The number of transplants carried out by organ and health region will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Wallsend (Mr. Byers) of 17 July, *Official Report*, column *432*, on transplant surgery, if he will provide comparable figures for 1992, 1993 and the latest month for which data are available. [40653]

Mr. Sackville: Information will be placed in the Library for the years ending 31 December 1992, 1993 and to 30 September 1995. Heart, lung and liver transplantation are funded supra-regionally. Therefore, many patients appear on waiting lists in regions other than the one in which they are resident. This gives rise to variation between the numbers shown waiting in each region.

Bed Blocking

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to collect data on bed blocking. [40729]

Mr. Sackville: Proposals to collect information routinely about delays in hospital discharge are currently being considered.

Market Testing

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 12 December, *Official Report*, column *432*, on market testing, if he will update the list of contracts awarded to the private sector. [40623]

Mr. Sackville: The following further contracts have been awarded to the private sector.

	Company
NHS Pensions Agency: Information Systems Development	Capita
Storage and distribution of Printed Material	Two-Ten Communications
Security Guarding in Richmond House	Burns International Security Services
Various Minor Accommodation Matters	Ferguson Bucknall Austin

Aggregate information on tender values for the Department's programme to September 1994 were published in a Special Report of the "Market Testing Bulletin" on 9 January 1995.

Residential Care

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the estimated cost in a full year of raising the threshold for contribution to the cost of residential care for the elderly from £8,000 to *(a)* £10,000, *(b)* £12,000, *(c)* £14,000 and *(d)* £16,000. [40769]

Mr. Bowis: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) on 27 October, *Official Report*, column *853*.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Executive Agencies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Attorney-General how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39855]

The Attorney-General: The one agency for which I am responsible is Government Property Lawyers. This agency is supervised by the Treasury Solicitor, who meets the chief executive to discuss the work of the agency on a regular basis. I have not myself met the chief executive this year, but I regularly meet the Treasury Solicitor to discuss the work of his Department and, as necessary, the work of Government Property Lawyers.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

United Kingdom Accreditation Service

Mr. Mans: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what arrangements have been made with respect to transferring pre-paid fees liabilities from the National Measurement Accreditation Service to the United Kingdom Accreditation Service. [40975]

Mr. Ian Taylor: An initial payment was made on 2 August 1995. Under the terms of the business transfer agreement, a second payment will be made on completion of the closing accounts.

Parliamentary approval for this new service will be sought in a winter supplementary estimate for the Department of Trade and Industry's programmes and administration vote—class IV, vote 1. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £1,030,000 is being met by repayable advances from the contingencies fund.

Mr. Mans: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement about the establishment of the United Kingdom Accreditation Service. [40974]

Mr. Taylor: The United Kingdom Accreditation Service became operational on 1 August. UKAS has taken over the work of the National Measurement Accreditation Service— formerly part of an executive agency within the Department of Trade and Industry—and the National Accreditation Council for Certification Bodies, a council of the British Standards Institution. It provides a unified national accreditation service for laboratories performing tests and calibrations as well as bodies undertaking the certification of products, personnel or systems, including environmental management and audit systems.

UKAS has been established as a private sector company limited by guarantee. Its membership comprises bodies which, when taken together, provide a balance of accreditation interests—direct customers, business customers for testing and certification, end-users of products and services and Government. A memorandum of understanding with the Department recognises its unique national role in specified areas of accreditation. UKAS will issue accreditation certificates using the familiar NAMAS and NACCB logos incorporating the Crown, provided that it complies with the terms of a licensing agreement requiring it to operate with integrity and impartiality, and in strict compliance with national and international regulations and standards.

This development follows a public consultation during 1994 on the future provision of accreditation services in the United Kingdom, and the Government's decision in December 1994 to merge NAMAS and NACCB to form a company limited by guarantee in the course of 1995.

Radiocommunications Agency

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will announce the results of the review of the local offices of the Radiocommunications Agency. [40976]

Mr. Ian Taylor: My predecessor accepted the recommendations of an internal review by Coopers and Lybrand not to contract out the enforcement and monitoring work of the agency's local offices. I have recently received, and accepted the findings of, a related efficiency study by PA Consulting Group, which will result in savings of about 2.5 per cent. of the agency's running costs. The PA report proposes a reduction in the number of the agency's representative offices. PA believes that greater concentration of managerial and support staff in fewer locations should improve customers' service levels. The field force of technical staff was found to operate with efficiency comparable to private sector best practice and remain in place throughout the UK and Northern Ireland.

Lloyd's (Resignations)

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will regulate, under the Insurance Companies Act 1982, the insurance affairs of those resigning from membership of Lloyd's. [40977]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: In view of the changes proposed in Lloyd's reconstruction and renewal plan to the reinsurance arrangements that names must enter into before resigning their membership of Lloyd's, I have reviewed the way in which the Insurance Companies Act should apply to those who resign their membership.

Former members of Lloyd's are technically still carrying on insurance business, in that they are potentially liable to meet claims on policies taken out while they were active underwriting members of the society, until all liabilities on those policies have been extinguished. This remains the case even though policies are being handled by agents. In consequence, former names' insurance activities fall to be regulated by the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of part II of the Act, in order to protect the interest of policyholders.

Where names resign having reinsured all their remaining liabilities with Equitas, provided it is authorised and/or with successor syndicates in Lloyd's, the interests of policyholders are fully protected for as long as Equitas and/or Lloyd's, as the case may be, remain solvent and continue to pay policyholders' claims without funds passing through the former names. In the light of the contingent nature of the insurance business being conducted, I should be prepared to make an order under section 68 of the Act which, for as long as these conditions are satisfied, would set the minimum regulatory arrangements consistent with the law. Effectively, these will require only the return of an annual notification of the address of names for communications purposes. Names are, in any case, likely to want to keep in touch with Lloyd's in order to obtain any repayment from surplus funds which might arise in Equitas. I intend to appoint Lloyd's as my agent for the receipt of these returns. In the hypothetical situation of Equitas or Lloyd's ceasing to be solvent, these arrangements will facilitate introduction of such regulation of the former names' insurance activities as I consider will best protect the interests of policyholders at the time.

These arrangements will apply to all those whose resignation from membership of Lloyd's takes effect after today, whether or not they have already given Lloyd's notice of their intention to resign. It would, however, be disproportionate to introduce such arrangements for those who have already effected resignation from Lloyd's, and the requirement to provide annual confirmation of their address will therefore not apply to them. This distinction relates to regulatory requirements only. It does not change the residual contingent responsibilities for insurance of any names, whether or not they have already resigned from Lloyd's.

Natural Engineering Laboratory

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement on the sale of the National Engineering Laboratory. [39781]

Mr. Ian Taylor: The intention to privatise NEL was announced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) on 14 April 1994. An invitation to tender was issued early this year, following which three bids were received.

On 7 August 1995, ASL was selected as the preferred bidder, following extensive evaluation against the Department's objectives for the sale and a wide range of quantitative, technical and financial criteria which demonstrated that its bid represented the best value for money option for the Department. The consideration will be a negative £1.95 million, to be adjusted subsequently in the light of the level of net current assets at completion. All the staff in the undertaking at completion will transfer to ASL.

This represents a highly satisfactory outcome for the Government and for NEL. ASL's strengths complement those of NEL and it proposes to build on all of its activities to enable it to compete successfully in world markets, as well as ensuring that the Department's need for flow measurement under the national measurement system continue to be met.

Employee Fraud

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the total number of cases of all forms of fraud committed by employees of his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies for each year from 1991-92 to 1994-95; and for each these years, what was the total monetary sum (1) misappropriated in such frauds and (2) subsequently recovered. [39129]

Mr. Jonathan Evans *[holding answer 24 October 1995]:* The answer is set out in the table:

	Department	*Agencies*	*NDPBs*
1991–92			
Cases	1	—	—
Value	£100	—	—
Recovered	£100	—	—
1992–93			
Cases	1	1	2
Value	£150	£35	£29.199
Recovered	£150	£130	£4.500
1993–94			
Cases	1	1	2
Value	£396	£2.961	£6.414
Recovered	£nil	£2.961	£1.414
1994–95			
Cases	—	2	—
Value	—	£99	—
Recovered	—	£99	—

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many people used citizens advice bureaux during *(a)* 1992–93, *(b)* 1993–94 and *(c)* 1994–95.

[40246]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: The number of people who visited citizens advice bureaux for each year since 1992–93 is:

Year	*Million*
1992–93	7.748
1993–94	5.689
1994–94	5.388

Source:
National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux (NACAB) annual reports 1992–93 and 1994–95.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what percentage of his Department's total annual budget is spent currently on funding the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux; and what were the figures for *(a)* 1992–93, *(b)* 1993–94 and *(c)* 1994–95. [40244]

Mr. Evans: The percentage of the Department of Trade and Industry's total annual budget spent on funding the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, based on the cash plans table published in Cm 2804, in each year since 1992–93 was:

Year	*Per cent.*
1992–93	0.9
1993–94	1.0
1994–95	0.9
1995–96	0.9

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what proposals he has to increase his Department's annual funding of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux. [40245]

Mr. Evans: It is too early to predict the outcome of the current public expenditure survey so no decisions have yet been taken on the future level of funding of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Illegal European Subsidies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the current situation in respect of the repayment of illegal subsidies to Belgium by Beaulieu and its subsidiary Fabelta since the ruling of the European Court of Justice in February 1990; what level of repayment has been made to date; and if he will make a statement. [39441]

Mr. Page: My Department has been informed by the Commission that, in accordance with the Court of Justice's judgment of 21 February 1990, the Belgian Government took action to recover the state aid awarded to the company, which the Commission had decided was incompatible with the common market. By judgment dated 25 February 1994, the commercial court of Ghent required the company to repay the aid with interest, and to pay the costs of the proceedings. The company has appealed but, pending the outcome of the appeal and as required by the judgment of the commercial court, it has paid the relevant amount—Bfr 1,088,898,853—into a ring-fenced account. The Commission and my Department continue to monitor developments closely.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Veterinary Agencies

Dame Peggy Fenner: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the future of the Central Veterinary Laboratory and the Veterinary Investigation Service. [40973]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In a written reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester (Mr. French) on 4 May, *Official Report,* columns *314-16,* my right hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave) announced the planned merger of the Central Veterinary Laboratory with the Veterinary Investigation Service in England and Wales to create an enlarged and strengthened executive agency. The new agency was launched on 1 October. It will be known as the Veterinary Laboratories Agency.

The VLA is well equipped to provide my Department with a comprehensive range of high-quality veterinary and scientific support and advice, and to meet both strategy and policy objectives in the fields of animal health and welfare, food safety and the environment. The merger will enable the agency to provide a more efficient and integrated service by reducing overheads, providing greater flexibility and exploiting synergies to further research and development, diagnostic services, surveillance and the investigation of new and emerging diseases.

Copies of the agency's framework document have been placed in the Library of the House.

Performance targets for the VLA will be announced at the start of the 1996–97 financial year. The 1995–96 targets announced in April this year for the CVL will continue to apply to the relevant parts of the enlarged agency.

European Fisheries Council

Dame Peggy Fenner: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the European Fisheries Council held on 26 October. [40972]

Mr. Baldry: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and I represented the United Kingdom at the meeting of the Fisheries Council in Luxembourg on 26 October.

The Council agreed new measures to monitor and control fishing effort in western waters from 1 January 1996. Our objectives were to secure arrangements which will be effective in ensuring that fishing activities by all member states in western waters are managed satisfactorily and that fishing effort in these waters is not increased to the detriment of our industry. At the same time, we were concerned to ensure that the arrangements should not impose an excessive burden on the fishing industry. The agreement unanimously approved by the Council of Ministers reflected our concerns and strikes the right balance between the objectives of control and avoidance of excessive regulation. It is the package which I commended to the House on 23 October.

The Council also agreed by qualified majority, with Germany voting against, to continue the provision of Community financial assistance to member states for fisheries enforcement for a further five years when the current arrangements expire at the end of the year. The measures include special assistance for Ireland, as agreed at last December's Fisheries Council, in recognition of the exceptional demands and costs involved in undertaking enforcement in the waters of the Republic of Ireland. These waters include the majority of the Irish box.

Minister welcomed the agreement on straddling and high migratory fish stocks achieved in New York in August. This agreement usefully lays down rules for the effective conservation and management of stocks and I am gratified that the Council endorsed the importance of its early ratification when it opens for signature in December.

The Council discussed the continuing negotiations with Morocco to enable Community fishermen to return to Moroccan waters. Nearly 700 Spanish and Portuguese vessels which formerly fished off Morocco have been confined to port since May. The Council agreed unanimously that payments should be made to the fishermen concerned to offset their losses. This is an exceptional measure applying for a limited period. As it will be funded from within the existing budget, it does not involve new financial provision.

The Council also welcomed a Commission report on progress in implementing the multi-annual guidance programmes and in particular the reductions in fishing capacity that have been achieved. The Commission will now be carrying out wide consultations in preparation for the establishment of the next round of programmes to start in January 1997.

Civil Servants (Travel Allowances)

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what rates of travel allowance may be claimed by civil servants in his Department when using their own vehicles for official business. [36373]

Mr. Boswell: The following standard rates of motor mileage allowance are payable to staff in core MAFF and PSD who use their own vehicles on official business in 1995–96:

	Up to 1,500 cc	*1,501–2,000 cc*	*Over 2,000 cc*
Up to 5,000 miles	36p/mile	45p/mile	48p/mile
Over 5,000 miles	24p/mile	28p/mile	37p/mile

Alternatively, a rate of 24.2p/mile is payable in respect of cars for which only third party insurance is held or where use of the car is not essential for official business. Separate rates are payable to the very small number of staff who ride their own motor cycles on official business.

Agencies have responsibility for these matters and will be replying direct where their position is not covered above.

Letter from T. W. A. Little to Dr. Lynne Jones, dated 31 August 1995:

The Minister has asked me to reply to your question on rates of travel allowance which may be claimed by staff in the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (previously the Central Veterinary Laboratory). [36373]

The following standard rates of motor mileage allowance are payable in 1995/96 to staff in the Veterinary Laboratories Agency who use their own vehicles on official business:

Pence per mile	*Up to 1500 cc*	*1501–2000cc*	*Over 2000 cc*
Up to 5000 miles	36	45	48
Over 5000 miles	24	28	37

Alternatively, a rate of 24.2 pence per mile is payable in respect of cars for which only third party insurance is held or where use of the car is not essential for official business. Separate rates are payable to any staff who ride their own motorcycles on official business.

Letter from Johnston McNeill to Dr. Lynne Jones, dated 31 October 1995:

As Chief Executive of the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS), your questions regarding travel and subsistence costs for civil servants have been passed to me to respond to with regard to this Executive Agency. As you may know, the MHS was established on 1 April this year. Therefore, we have no figures to give you for previous financial years. Any such costs that were incurred in setting up this Agency prior to 1 April will be included in core-MAFF's reply. [36373]

The MHS transferred the majority of its circa 1000 staff from local authorities. These staff brought with them under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) varying conditions of service, including vastly different mileage rates. These are now being standardised into the amounts quoted below.

The rates of allowance for MHS staff are being set for 'casual' users at 35p per mile for the first 5000 miles in a year, and 23p per mile thereafter. We also operate an 'essential' users scheme which we inherited from local authorities for 170 of the staff who transferred to the MHS. These rates for the current financial year are up to 34.7p per mile for the first 11,000 miles, 12.7p thereafter, in England and Wales, less for smaller sized vehicles. In Scotland, the rates are 35.1p per mile in the first instance, 13.2p thereafter. Again there are lower rates for smaller vehicles. Additionally, these employees are at this time paid a lump sum of between £645 and £1158 per annum dependent on the size of vehicle and whether they are in England, Wales or Scotland, to use their cars under this scheme. These amounts will reduce at 1 April 1996 to between £513 and £750.

Letter from Phillip Needham to Dr. Lynne Jones, dated 31 October 1995:

The Minister of Agriculture has asked me to reply direct to you in answer to your question number 1762. In this you asked me what rates of travel allowance may be claimed by Civil Servants in his Department when using their own vehicles for official business. [36373]

ADAS was formed as a Next Steps Agency in April 1992. The Agency employs approximately 1,600 consultants who provide a commercial service to all parts of the land related industries, as well as government customers. Wherever possible, staff are encouraged to use the hire car facilities that the Agency has negotiated.

When staff use their own vehicles they are paid at the rate of 44p for the first 5,000 miles travelled on official business. Thereafter they are paid at the rat of 29p per mile. These payments are taxable.

Letter from Dr. J. M. Rutter to Dr. Lynne Jones, dated 31 October 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to your question about the rates of travel allowance which may be claimed by staff in the Veterinary Medicines Directorate when using their own vehicles on official business as this is an operational matter for which I am responsible. [36373]

In 1995/96, the following rates of motor mileage allowance are payable:

	Up to 1,500 cc	*1,501–2,000 cc*	*Over 2,000 cc*
Up to 15,000 miles (p/mile)	36	45	48
Over 5,000 miles (p/mile)	24	28	37

Where only third party insurance is held or where travel by car is not essential for official business, a rate of 24.2p/mile is payable.

Although no VMD staff have used motorcycles on official business in the past, separate motorcycle rates are payable as follows:

	Engine size up to 125cc	*Engine size over 125 cc*
Up to 4,000 miles		
(a) third party insurance (p/mile)	15.1	23.6
(b) Comprehensive insurance (p/mile)	16.8	27.0
Over 4,000 miles (p/mile)	5,4	9.3

The third party rate also applies when travel by motorcycle is not essential for official business.

Finally, a pedal cycle allowance of 6.3 p/mile is also payable when used for official business, although no VMD staff have claimed such an allowance to date.

Dr. Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the total cost of travel expenses claimed by civil servants using their own vehicles for official business in each of the last five years in his Department; and what would have been the saving in the last year if the maximum rate that could be claimed was set at the lowest rate. [36374]

Mr. Boswell: The total cost of paying motor mileage allowances to those staff who used their own cars on official business in each of the last five years is as follows:

Year	Amount (£000)
1990–91 (i)[1]	6,698.0
1991–92 (i)[1]	6,596.0
1992–93 (ii)[2]	3,426.0
1993–94 (ii)[2]	3,771.0
1994–95 (iii)[3]	3,798.0

[1] Figures include all MAFF Agencies.

[2] Agencies included are the Veterinary Medicines Directorate and Pesticides Safety Directorate (the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service, Veterinary Laboratories Agency and Central Science Laboratory are not included).

[3] Figures are for core-Department and PSD only.

For purposes of comparison, the costs of paying the maximum rates—standard rate mileage allowances for cars of over 2,000 cc—have been compared with the costs that would have been incurred had the standard rates applying to cars of up to 1,500 cc and 1,501 to 2,000 cc been paid instead. On this basis, the savings that would have resulted in 1994–95 are estimated at £106,000 and £47,000 respectively in core MAFF, PSD and VMD. Public transport rate has not been used as a basis for comparison as the conditions attaching to its payment are different from those for standard rates.

Agencies now have responsibility for these matters and where their position is not covered above will be replying direct.

Letter from T. W. A. Little to Dr. Lynne Jones, dated 31 October 1995:

The Minister has asked me to reply to your question on travel expenses claimed by staff in the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (previously the Central Veterinary Laboratory until 30 September 1995), using their own vehicles. [36374]

The total cost of paying motor mileage allowances to those staff in what was then the Central Veterinary Laboratory who used their own cars on official business in each of the last three years is as follows:

Year	Cost £
1992–93	10,710.37
1993–94	14,494.13
1994–95	14,461.62

Previous years included in the reply from core-MAFF. For purposes of comparison, the costs of paying maximum rates (standard rate mileage allowances for cars over 2000 cc) have been compared with the costs that would have been incurred had the standard rates applying to cars of up to 1500 cc and 1501–2000 cc been paid instead. On this basis the savings that would have resulted in 1994–95 are estimated at £688 and £340 respectively for CVL. Public transport rate has not been used as a basis for comparison since the conditions attached to its payment are different from those for standard rates.

Letter from Phillip Needham to Dr. Lynne Jones, dated 31 October 1995:

The Minister of Agriculture has asked me to reply direct to your question number 1768. In this you asked him to list the total cost of travel expenses claimed by Civil Servants using their own vehicles for official business in each of the last five years. You also wished to know the saving in the last year if the maximum rate that could be claimed were set at the lowest rate. [36374]

ADAS was formed as a Next Steps Agency in 1992. Details of claims prior to this period will be contained in the answer from the Core Department. Travel by car is undertaken by staff as part of their work providing commercial consultancy services to a broad range of clients including Government departments. The expenditure on official mileage since that date is as follows:

1992–93: £3,087,973

1993–94: £3,354,264

1994–95: £3,265,352

During the last year, if we had paid the highest rate at the lowest rate (i.e. paying all mileage at the lowest rate currently 29p) there would have been a saving of £113,814. This figure is a total for each of the three bands of vehicle engine size.

Letter from Dr. J. M. Rutter to Dr. Lynne Jones, dated 31 October 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to your question about the total cost of travel expenses claimed by staff in the Veterinary Medicines Directorate in each of the last five years when using their own vehicles on official business, as this is an operational matter for which I am responsible. [36374]

I am afraid information for 1990/91 is not separately identifiable, but the details requested for the four subsequent years is set out below:

1991–92: £5,309.49

1992–93: £8,009.35

1993–94: £6,617.15

1994–95: £9,723,48

You also asked what would have been the saving in the last year if the maximum rate that could be claimed was set at the lowest rate. Unfortunately this cannot be separately identified for the Directorate other than at disproportionate cost, but VMD has been covered in the reply to this part of your question by the Parliamentary Secretary, along with core MAFF and the Pesticides Safety Directorate.

Letter from P. I. Stanley to Dr. Lynne Jones dated 31 October 1995:

TRAVEL EXPENSES OF CIVIL SERVANTS USING THEIR OWN VEHICLES FOR OFFICIAL BUSINESS

You asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food two questions in relation to Civil Servants using their own cars for official business. The Minister has asked me to reply to you as this is an operational matter for which I am responsible. [36373 and 36374]

The Central Science Laboratory (CSL) was first launched as an executive agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) in April 1992. As a result I can only provide annual costs of travel expenses for CSL staff using their own vehicles for official business from 1992–93. Earlier figures are included in the Departmental total. Further, CSL was re-launched as an enlarged agency in April 1994 following its merger with the MAFF Food Science Laboratories. This partly explains the marked increase in the total cost of such travel expenses for 1994–95 over the two earlier years. At the same time CSL's National Bee Unit took on additional responsibility for regional bee work and this significantly increased the number of travel claims.

Total are as follows:

1992–93: £57.88K

1993–94: £71.45K

1994–95: £156.53K

The saving in the last year, if the maximum rate that could be claimed was set at either of the lower rates applying to cars of up to 1,500cc and 1,501–2,000cc, would have been £1,167 or £291 respectively. These figures may appear low, but a relatively low mileage was claimed on vehicles over 2,000cc. Public transport rate has not been used as a basis for comparison as the conditions attaching to its payment are different to those for standard rates.

The current standard mileage allowances for cars, which came into effect on 1 April 1995, is:

	Up to 5,000 miles	*Over 5,000 miles*
Up to 1,500 cc	36 p/mile	24 p/mile
1,501–2,000 cc	45 p/mile	28 p/mile
Over 2,000 cc	48 p/mile	37 p/mile

The public transport rate for all cars is 24.2 pence per mile.

Live Animal Exports

Mr. Heppell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what factors led to the issuing of an export certificate for a consignment of sheep exported on 17 May from Shoreham to Dieppe containing a heavily pregnant ewe; and what action he proposes to take against those involved in allowing the export of the ewe to take place; [38711]

(2) what action his Department proposes to take in respect of those occasions when the Northern Cruiser sailed from Dover in excessively rough conditions with lorries containing livestock; [38710]

(3) what action he proposes to take over the deaths of two sheep that occurred during their export to France from Shoreham on 17 May. [38694]

Mrs Browning: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Newham North-West (Mr. Banks) on 25 October 1995, *Official Report*, columns *697–98*.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what guidance is issued to veterinarians in cases where illness and death in animals could result from infection by a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. [38550]

Mrs. Browning *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* Health and safety guidelines drawn up by the British Veterinary Association and MAFF in consultation with the Health and Safety Executive were distributed to all large animal veterinary practices early in 1990. The advisory note for farmers on BSE, issued by this Department in June 1990, was also made available to all large and mixed animal veterinary practices. Copies of MAFF's booklets "BSE and the protection of human health" and "BSE and the protection of animal health" were also distributed to all local veterinary inspectors involved with animal disease work in late 1994. I have placed copies of all of these in the Library of the House. In addition, the State Veterinary Service's own instructions on BSE are available to the general public from MAFFs Whitehall library.

Veterinary practitioners are also encouraged to seek advice from their local divisional veterinary manager in any unusual or difficult circumstances or on matters outwith their experience.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Wakefield of 15 February, *Official Report*, column *715–16*, if he will make a statement on the nature of treatment of specified bovine offal at rendering plants and their subsequent fate. [38560]

Mr. Browning: The Specified Bovine Offal Order 1995 requires all rendering plants handling specified bovine offal to meet clearly defined structural and hygiene standards and to be capable of processing SBO using one of the time-temperature combination methods described in that order before being approved by the appropriate Minister. The processing methods are defined in Commission decision 94/382 which sets standards for rendering ruminant material.

The operator of an approved rendering plant is required to keep a record of the weight of SBO delivered, the date of delivery and the place from which it was consigned for two years from the date of arrival. The operator of an approved rendering plant is required to ensure that all SBO in the rendering plant is kept and stored separately from all other material, and handled and rendered separately from all other material. Those rendering plants which have indicated their intention to continue to process SBO after 15 February 1996 will have to install dedicated processing lines for SBOs by that date to comply with the Order. These lines must also meet the standards for rendering ruminant material defined in Commission Decision 94/382.

After the SBO has been rendered, the plant operator is required to ensure that the resulting protein and tallow are placed in separate containers labelled as holding SBO. Protein must be disposed of as specified in the renderer's approval or by burial at a land-fill site holding a current waste management licence or by sending to an approved incinerator. Tallow must be sent for purposes not connected with the preparation of food or feedingstuffs, for burial to a registered landfill site holding a current waste management licence or for treatment by thermal hydrolysis.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Wakefield of 31 January, *Official Report*, column *645–46* what is the scientific evidence to show that the great majority of feed cases born after the ban have probably been exposed to ruminant protein in feed; and if he will make a statement. [38561]

Mrs. Browning: The number of animals affected with BSE that were born after the feed ban is relatively small compared with the number born prior to the ban. As at 24 October 1995, there have been 22,946 cases confirmed in animals born after the ban or—BABs—10,689 cases born in July to December 1988, 9,364 born in 1989, 2,425 born in 1990, 461 born in 1991, six in 1992 and one in 1993—compared with the total number of BSE cases confirmed to 24 October 1995 of 154,150. Of cases born after the ban, 87 per cent. are in animals born in 1988 and 1989 when feed manufactured before the ban was still in the animal feed chain.

A number of pieces of evidence together indicate the role of feed in transmitting infection to animals born after the ban. First, the infectivity of cattle brain from animals with BSE has been demonstrated in a pathogenesis study when it is fed to calves. Secondly, the infectivity of rendered ruminant waste which included brain from clinically affected cattle has been demonstrated in experiments looking at various rendering mechanisms and conditions. Thirdly, the case control study of BABs born after 31 October 1988 found no evidence that any methods of transmission, other than feed, which was not included in the study, was occurring at a frequency capable of maintaining the epidemic. In particular, the study found no statistically significant evidence that maternal transmission occurred. Fourthly, analysis of the geographical incidence of BSE in home-bred animals shows that the proportion of cases of BSE in the northern and eastern regions of England, where the ratio of pigs and poultry to cattle is greatest, has increased relative to the rest of Britain. This change is consistent with the contamination of cattle feed stuffs by pig or poultry feed stuffs, or ingredients used to prepare them, having occurred in premises which produce both ruminant and monogastric rations. It was permissible to feed protein derived from specified bovine offals to non-ruminant species until 25 September 1990.

Finally, there is evidence that there have been failings in the handling of SBOs after removal from the carcase which could have resulted in these offals entering the animal feed chain. Details were given by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg) in reply to the hon. and learned Member for Harborough (Mr. Garnier) on 19 July 1995, *Official Report*, column *1467*.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the number of *(a)* confirmed BSE cases and *(b)* BSE cases placed on restriction and slaughtered for the periods (i) 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1990, (ii) 1 April 1990 to 31 March 1991, (iii) 1 April 1991 to 31 March 1992, (iv) 1 April 1992 to 31 March 1993, (v) 1 april 1993 to 31 March 1994 and (vi) 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995; and what compensation was claimed. [38562]

Mrs. Browning: The following table shows the number of BSE suspects placed under restriction and subsequently slaughtered, the number of confirmed cases of BSE and the total BSE compensation paid:

	Number of BSE suspects placed under restriction and subsequently slaughtered	*Of these, number of confirmed BSE cases*	*Total BSE compensation paid £*
1 April 1989–31 March 1990	10,275	9,192	4,027,644
1 April 1990–31 March 1991	18,479	15,805	10,663,129
1 April 1991–31 March 1992	33,805	29,535	20,125,665
1 April 1992–31 March 1993	43,411	37,116	32,366,239
1 April 1993–31 March 1994	38,186	32,051	37,003,654
1 April 1994–31 March 1995	24,163	20,549	19,822,185

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many BSE cases born in each month since July 1988 were subsequently confirmed. [38613]

Mrs. Browning: The following table shows the number of confirmed cases of BSE born in each month since July 1988:

	1988	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*
January	—	878	333	67	2	—
February	—	377	173	26	2	—
March	—	477	154	36	1	—
April	—	312	108	27	—	—
May	—	234	89	27	—	—
June	—	506	140	34	—	1
July	466	868	272	68	—	—
August	2,536	1,710	385	76	1	—
September	3,258	1,765	350	56	—	—
October	2,209	1,115	207	20	—	—
November	1,270	659	112	17	—	—
December	950	463	102	7	—	—

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many *(a)* confirmed and *(b)* suspected but not confirmed BSE cases in each year were born of dams which has subsequently also been confirmed as suffering from BSE. [38563]

Mrs. Browning: The following table shows the number of animals restricted as BSE suspects in each year from 1989 and subsequently slaughtered, which were born of dams which have been confirmed as suffering from BSE:

Year	*BSE confirmed*	*BSE not confirmed*
1989	4	2
1990	30	8
1991	91	20
1992	184	20
1993	281	49
1994	382	41
1985	159	17

Data are not available for years before 1989. The 1995 data are complete to 24 October.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many suspected BSE cases were placed under restrictions in the periods *(a)* 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1990, *(b)* 1 April 1990 to 31 March 1991, *(c)* 1 April 1991 to 31 March 1992, *(d)* 1 April 1992 to 31 March 1993, *(e)* 1 April 1993 to 31 March 1994 and *(f)* 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995; what compensation was claimed; in how many suspect cases in each period the restriction order was subsequently withdrawn following further veterinary inspection; and what compensation was claimed. [38565]

Mrs. Browning: The following table shows the number of suspected BSE cases placed under restriction and the number of restriction orders withdrawn:

	Number of cattle placed under restriction	*Number of restriction orders withdrawn*
1 April 1989–31 March 1990	10,855	461
1 April 1990–31 March 1991	19,418	743
1 April 1991–31 March 1992	35,306	1,142
1 April 1992–31 March 1993	45,569	1,754
1 April 1993–31 March 1994	40,500	1,907
1 April 1994–31 March 1995	25,639	1,244

The total amount of BSE compensation paid in each of the periods is set out in my earlier reply to the hon. Gentleman. No compensation is payable on animals restricted as BSE suspects but subsequently released from that restriction following further veterinary inspection.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of the number of animals infected with BSE which have found their way into the human food chain. [40379]

Mrs. Browning: The Department is aware of 1,104 cases of BSE which occurred prior to 7 August 1988 when the compulsory slaughter and destruction of suspects was instituted. Before that date it was permissible for these cattle—with the exception of the brain, which was used to confirm the clinical diagnosis—to be used for human consumption but we do not know what proportion of that total was used for human consumption. Many of these animals were sent to veterinary investigation centres, and the carcases incinerated; others would have been in such poor condition that they would not have produced meat fit for human consumption. It is not possible to make anything other than extremely speculative estimates of the number of animals which would at some stage in their lives have succumbed to BSE if they had not died for some other reason, or been slaughtered.

From 13 November 1989, in England and Wales and 30 January 1990 in Scotland, specified bovine offals, the tissues considered most likely to contain the infective agent, have been removed from all cattle over six months of age at slaughter.

Farmers (Suicides)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many suicides there have been in each of the three counties of Yorkshire and the Humberside farming community in each of the past four years. [39043]

Mr. Boswell: Deaths from suicide in the Yorkshire and Humberside farming community in each of the past four years for which firm data are available are shown in the table.

	North Yorkshire	*South Yorkshire*	*West Yorkshire*	*Humberside*
1989	1	—	2	3
1990	9	1	—	6
1991	5	2	2	2
1992	2	1	—	—

Suicide codes are ICD9[1] E950-E959 and E980-E989 excluding E988.8

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[1] International Classification of Diseases, 9th revision

Members of the farming community are defined as classification of occupation (1980) codes 107 (farm owners and managers), 166, 169 and 172 (farm workers, agricultural machinery drivers and operatives and all other occupations in farming) for the period 1989–90, and standard occupational classification codes 160 (farm owners and managers), 900, 901 and 902 (farm workers, agricultural machinery drivers and operatives and all other occupations in farming) for the period 1991–1992.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many environmentally sensitive area management agreements have been approved in the lake district environmentally sensitive area involving payments in year 1 of the plan of *(a)* £0–£1,000, *(b)* £1,001–£2,000, *(c)* £2001–£3,000, *(d)* £3,001–£4,000, *(e)* £4,001–£5,000, *(f)* £5,001–£6,000 and *(g)* £6,001 or over. [39834]

Mr. Boswell: The number of payments made in each band is as follows:

Payment band	*Number of first year payments*
£0–£1,000	219
£1,001–£2,000	183
£2,001–£3,000	152
£3,001–£4,000	79
£4,001–£5,000	42
£5,001–£6,000	34
£6,001 and over	114
Total	823

These payments details relate to the first two schemes years of the lake district ESA—1993 and 1994.

Chernobyl

Mr. Cox: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the present effects on farming in the United Kingdom of the Chernobyl disaster; and if he will make a statement. [39757]

Mrs. Browning: Following the Chernobyl accident, affected areas of the United Kingdom—parts of Northern Ireland, Scotland, North Wales and Cumbria—were subjected to statutory restrictions so as to prevent the sale of sheepmeat containing levels of radiocaesium in excess of 1,000 bq/kg. These restrictions were designed to protect the food chain and ensure that normal sheep marketing practices within restricted ares could continue with minimum disruption to farm businesses. They have since been reviewed on a regular basis, and have been progressively removed wherever the monitoring of sheep has revealed residual radioactivity to have declined to within acceptable levels. Further intensive monitoring in the affected areas is nearing completion and an announcement of the results and possible lifting of some restrictions can be expected early in the new year.

Emergency arrangements are in place to ensure that swift action can be taken to protect the food chain, should any accident of this nature occur in future.

Set-aside Land

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the use of set-aside land for the growing of coriander for conservation into bio-diesel fuel. [39534]

Mr. Baldry: It is possible to grow coriander for industrial purposes as well as other oilseed plants on set-aside land under the area arable payment scheme.

However, because of its properties it may be preferable to use coriander oil in the production of specialist industrial oils—for nylons and cosmetics—rather than for biodiesel.

Arable Area Payment Scheme

Dr. Strang: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was expenditure, in ecus, by each EU member state on *(a)* set-aside and *(b)* total arable area payments, for each year in which the arable area payment scheme has been in operation. [40153]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from working papers of the European Commission that the situation was as follows: figures for 1995 are not yet available.

000 ecu

Member State	*Set-aside payments*	*Total arable area payments*
1993		
Belgium	6,399	77,729
Denmark	57,483	309,630
Germany	321,394	1,570,326
Greece	2,683	301,440
Spain	135,908	589,182
France	517,023	2,627,735
Republic of Ireland	—	60,182
Italy	39,973	520,063
Luxembourg	395	4,679
Netherlands	2,754	63,017
Portugal	6,435	28,658
United Kingdom	169,948	906,036
Total	1,260,395	7,058,677
1994		
Belgium	6,448	80,543
Denmark	58,112	378,735
Germany	325,794	2,143,926
Greece	2,642	310,644
Spain	136,244	1,428,319
France	517,093	3,405,271
Republic of Ireland	—	63,512
Italy	45,080	1,000,414
Luxembourg	395	5,331
Netherlands	2,966	63,974
Portugal	6,460	104,596
United Kingdom	188,913	1,114,798
Total	1,290,147	10,130,063

Intervention Stocks

Dr. Strang: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the level of intervention stocks in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the EU, at the latest available date. [40154]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Tables showing levels of all produce held in intervention within the EU, with levels for the UK separately identified, are placed in the House at regular intervals, most recently on 5 October. The information currently held in the House Library goes back to January 1985.

Frogs' Legs

Mr. Morley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture Fisheries and Food what was the volume of frogs' legs imported by the United Kingdom in 1993 and 1994; and what were the countries of origin of those imports. [40265]

Mrs. Browning: Imports into the United Kingdom of frogs legs for 1993 and 1994 were as follows:

Imports of frogs' legs (kgs)	*1993*	*1994*[1]
Total	21,702	20,124
By country of despatch		
Belgium-Luxembourg	13,447	12,036
France	5,999	3,303
Netherlands	2,256	4,785

[1] Provisional.

Spanish Fishermen (Compensation)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is Britain's contribution to the £200 million compensation to be paid by the European Union to Spanish fishermen for loss of fishing opportunities in Moroccan waters. [40603]

Mr. Baldry: On 26 October, the Council of Ministers unanimously agreed that payments should be made to Spanish and Portuguese fishermen who had been unable to fish following the early termination of the EU/Morocco fisheries agreement at the end of April 1995. This was an exceptional measure applying for a limited period. The maximum cost to the Community budget will be 24 mecu, £19.9 million. The cost will be less if the fishermen concerned are able to resume fishing before the end of December. In either event, the cost will be funded from within the existing Community budget for 1995. The United Kingdom's net contribution to the Community budget for this item will be around 5 per cent. after taking account of the Fontainebleau abatement.

Mr. Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much compensation has been paid by the European Union to British fishermen for damage to vessels or nets by Spanish fishing vessels. [40602]

Mr. Baldry: Payments are not available from the Community budget to compensate the fishermen of one member state for damage done to their vessels or nets by the fishermen of another member state.

WALES

Hypothermia

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many deaths from hypothermia took place among *(a)* men aged 65 years and over and *(b)* women aged 60 years and over in each year since 1990, by region. [34168]

Mr. Richards *[holding answer 13 July 1995]:* The numbers of deaths of men aged 65 and over and women aged 60 and over registered by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys with a mention of hypothermia, ICD 991.6, on the death certificate are given in the table.

Area of residence	1990 Male	1990 Female	1991 Male	1991 Female	1992 Male	1992 Female	1993 Male	1993 Female
Clwyd	0	4	2	1	1	0	4	5
East Dyfed	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	3
Pembrokeshire	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Gwent	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2
Gwynedd	0	0	2	5	1	1	0	1
Mid Glamorgan	4	7	0	5	4	3	1	4
Powys	0	1	0	3	0	1	3	0
South Glamorgan	1	0	1	3	0	2	0	5
West Glamorgan	0	2	1	2	0	2	1	5
Wales	6	15	7	23	8	11	9	25

Welsh Development Agency

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will place in the Library copies of the Welsh Development Agency's urban development programmes approved by his Department for 1992–93 and 1993–94; and if he will place in the Library copies of the relevant approval letters for these programmes. [39271]

Mr. Hague *[holding answer 24 October 1995]:* No. The programme documents contain information that remains commercially sensitive; letters of approval relate back to those documents.

General Election (Voting)

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what procedures will be put in place prior to the general election to ensure that those entitled to postal and proxy votes are made aware of their rights as soon as possible by means of public advertising; and if he will make a statement. [39170]

Mr. Hague: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 26 October 1995 by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department *Official Report*, column *761*.

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 6 June, *Official Report*, column *76*, to the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones), which schools in Wales or elsewhere were involved in the assisted places scheme in the last ten years. [40031]

Mr. Richards: Participating schools in Wales over the last 10 years have been:

Christ College, Brecon
Howells School, Cardiff
Howells School, Denbigh
Llandovery College
Monmouth School (Boys)
Monmouth School for Girls
Rydal Penrhos Senior School (Girls), Colwyn Bay
Rydal Penrhos Senior School (Co-educational), Colwyn Bay

Schools outside Wales are a matter for the respective Secretaries of State.

Grant-Maintained Schools

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 24 October, *Official Report*, column *573*, relating to payments for capital works at grant-maintained schools, if he will list for each capital scheme the length of time between the presentation of contractors' bills, the issue of architects' certificates and the payments of the bills. [40656]

Mr. Richards: No central record is kept of when contractors' bills are paid on capital works carried out at grant-maintained schools, as responsibility for this rests with the individual school governing body concerned.

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the dates on which architects' certificates have been issued in respect of capital works carried out at Brynmawr grant-maintained school and the dates on which payments have been made in respect of these architects' certificates. [40652]

Mr. Richards: Responsibility for payments on architects' certificates in respect of capital works at Brynmawr grant-maintained school rests with the school's governing body. No record is kept centrally. The dates on which architects' certificates, known to the Department, were issued for each of the four named capital projects carried out at Brynmawr school since it became grant-maintained are as follows:

School Canteen and Toilets Project

Certificate No. 1: 26 February 1993
Certificate No. 2: 12 March 1993

Science Block Project

Certificate No. 1: 18 August 1993
Certificate No. 2: 15 September 1993
Certificate No. 3: 18 October 1993
Certificate No. 4: 13 December 1993
Certificate No. 5: 10 March 1994
Certificate No. 6: 7 June 1995

Teaching Block Project

Certificate No. 1: 23 November 1993
Certificate No. 2: 15 December 1993
Certificate No. 3: 21 January 1994
Certificate No. 4: 22 February 1994
Certificate No. 5: 10 March 1994
Certificate No. 6: 23 May 1994
Certificate No. 7: 19 August 1994
Certificate No. 8: 2 March 1995
Certificate No. 9: 29 June 1995

Technology Block Project

Certificate No. 1: 14 October 1994
Certificate No. 2: 11 November 1994
Certificate No. 3: 2 December 1994

Certificate No. 4: 9 January 1995

Certificate No. 5: 6 February 1995

Certificate No. 6: 7 March 1995

Certificate No. 7: 4 April 1995

Certificate No. 8: 2 May 1995

Certificate No. 9: 7 June 1995

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 24 October, *Official Report*, column *573*, relating to payments for capital works at grant-maintained schools, if he will make a statement in the case of T. Costelow and Sons Ltd. and payment for their work at Brynmawr grant-maintained school. [40655]

Mr. Richards: I understand that T. Costelow and Sons Ltd. is a sub-contractor on two named capital projects at Brynmawr grant-maintained school. Responsibility for the payment of sub-contractor work rests with the main contractor.

Welsh Health Common Services Authority

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consultations he has had with the European Commission concerning the placing of an advertisement in the contracts supplement of the *Official Journal* of the European Communities for the sale of the Estatecare division of the Welsh Health Common Services Authority; and if he will make a statement. [4022]

Mr. Hague: None. There is no requirement to consult the European Commission.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the progress of the privatisation procedure in respect of the prescription pricing division of the Welsh Health Common Services Authority. [40726]

Mr. Hague: I expect that the Welsh Health Common Services Authority will be able to announce the outcome of its market test of prescription pricing services within the next few weeks.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement concerning the arrangements for the advertisement for sale of the Estatecare division of the Welsh Health Common Services Authority *(a)* within the United Kingdom and *(b)* outside; on what occasions such advertisements have already been published; how many direct approaches to potential trade sale buyers have been made; what consultations he has had with the staff of the Estatecare division concerning their future employment and stake in future arrangements; and if TUPE will apply. [40727]

Mr. Richards: These are matters for the Welsh Health Common Services Authority. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member and will arrange for a copy of his reply to be placed in the Library of the House.

Measles

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has received regarding the numbers of children in Wales who have been reported as possibly suffering physical or psychological trauma as a result of immunisation against measles. [40657]

Mr. Richards: By October 1995 the Medicines Control Agency received 56 physical and two psychological reports concerning children in Wales who received measles and rubella vaccine during the November 1994 measles and rubella (MR) immunisation campaign.

Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine was introduced in 1988. Since 1 January 1988, to date, there have been 34 reports of adverse reactions to MMR vaccine all of which were physical.

The number of children immunised during the MR campaign was larger than the number immunised so far with MMR. The same measles antigen is used in both the MR and MMR vaccine. The increase in reports of adverse reactions could be attributed to circumstances of a mass campaign.

The receipt of a reaction report by the Medicines Control Agency does not necessarily mean that the reaction reported has been caused by the vaccine.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many copies of the leaflet on measles have been distributed by Health Promotion Wales on behalf of his Department in the past year. [40665]

Mr. Richards: None, but 550,000 bilingual—English and Welsh—leaflets were distributed by Health Promotion Authority for Wales to health authorities and schools during September 1994. In addition, translation packs in 10 ethnic minority languages were made available to health authorities for local distribution.

European Regional Fund

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on his recent consultations with the members of the commission responsible for regional development in relation to the co-option of members of local authorities on the monitoring committees for the expenditure of the European regional fund in *(a)* industrial south and *(b)* rural Wales. [40723]

Mr. Hague: I told Commissioner Dr. Wulf-Mathies that I was satisfied with the present arrangements for local authority membership of both the industrial south Wales and rural Wales structural funds monitoring committees.

Market Testing

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the health services that have been market tested by or notified to his Department and won by the private sector indicating *(a)* the location and *(b)* the organisation winning the tender. [40617]

Mr. Hague: I am placing a list of contracts won by the private sector for 1993–94, which is the latest available, in the Library of the House.

Surpluses and Deficits (District Health Authorities)

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what *(a)* surpluses and *(b)* deficits were recorded by each district health authority in 1994–95. [40663]

Mr. Richards: I am arranging for the annual reports of each health authority to be placed in the Library of the House as soon as possible.

OSIRIS

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 24 October, *Official Report*, column *575* if he will make a statement on the main purpose of the OSIRIS office automation system for his departmental offices. [40787]

Mr. Hague: The main purpose of the system is to improve the administrative efficiency of the Welsh Office by enabling speedier and more effective transaction of business and improved internal and external communication. The project will provide a personal computer for most Welsh Office staff equipped with word processing, spreadsheet, database and diary, scheduling packages and an electronic mail facility. These will be underpinned by a communications infrastructure covering all major Welsh Office sites. The estimated cost of the project includes the maintenance and support of the system over the life of the contract as well as the costs of hardware and software.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Sweeney: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what further measures he proposes under the private finance initiative to encourage investment by the private sector in local authority facilities. [40941]

Mr. Hague: I can today announce a further package of measures to encourage and facilitate private sector investment in local authority services in Wales. These change the capital finance rules to allow local authorities to harness private finance and management expertise in the upgrading or replacement of facilities.

The changes will encourage authorities to enter into the "design, build, finance and operate" type contracts for the replacement or upgrading by the private sector of facilities such as schools, libraries and leisure centres; give authorities greater scope for financing the replacement of facilities out of the proceeds from sales of existing assets; ensure that arrangements for joint use of facilities by an authority and the private sector do not trigger financial penalties; and make it easier for authorities to use energy services packages which improve energy efficiency and reduce energy costs.

In addition, more resources for PFI projects will be generated by reducing from 50 per cent. to 25 per cent. the rate of set aside for debt redemption arising from the sale of surplus educational assets during the two years commencing in April 1996. With other elements of the package this opens up exciting opportunities for the upgrading of local authority schools and the rationalisation of school provision.

Draft regulations will be published for consultation within the next few weeks.

I am considering whether there should be a similar relaxation in the rules relating to set aside in the case of receipts from the sale of county farms. A decision will be taken in the context of the rural White Paper to be published later this year.

I hope that the new Welsh unitary authorities will take full advantage of the opportunities offered by these changes when they take up their new responsibilities in April next year.

Cardiff Bay Development Corporation

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his current estimate of the winding up date of the Cardiff Bay development corporation; and what consultations he has had with the relevant local authorities concerning the transfer of its assets and liabilities. [40551]

Mr. Hague: My predecessor informed the House on 7 July 1994, *Official Report*, column *465*, that it was expected to be possible to wind up the Cardiff Bay development corporation by the end of 1999. This remains the position. Consultations with the appropriate unitary local authorities will open after the reorganisation of local government.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Peacekeeping (Low-income Developing Countries)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of Britain's direct peacekeeping expenditure is spent in low-income developing countries; and where it is spent. [40205]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Britain will contribute an estimated £144 million in assessed contributions to UN peacekeeping in 1995–96, of which £85 million relates to former Yugoslavia. The remainder is accounted for by 13 UN operations in middle and low-income countries in Africa, Asia, the middle east, the caribbean and the former soviet union.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British troops have served in the last two years in a peacekeeping capacity in low-income developing countries; and where they have served. [40206]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: In the last two years, British logistics support groups of some 600 troops have served with UN operations in Rwanda and Angola. During 1993 British military observers served with the UN missions in Western Sahara and Cambodia.

Common Agricultural Policy

Ms Eagle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer of 25 October at column *1002*, if he will list all of those areas of the CAP which are subject to qualified majority voting. [40310]

Mr. David Davis: The legal base of the CAP is article 43 of the treaty, which is subject to qualified majority voting. Food legislation is on a legal base of article 100a, which is also subject to qualified majority voting.

UNSCOM

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received from UNSCOM about the involvement of Iraqi spies in its investigations. [40257]

Mr. David Davis: It would not be appropriate to comment on the details of our co-operation with UNSCOM. We deplore all instances of Iraqi failure to co-operate with UNSCOM as required under the terms of UN Security Council resolution.

European Union (Forthcoming Business)

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on forthcoming business in the Council of the European Union. [41048]

Mr. David Davis: The information is as follows:

SUBJECT: MONTHLY FORECAST OF BUSINESS FOR NOVEMBER 1995

1. The following Councils are scheduled:

November 6: Industry Council
November 7: Industry Council
November 9: Consumers Council
November 13: Agriculture Council
November 14: Agriculture Council
November 15: Fisheries Council
November 17: Budget Council
November 20: FAC, Culture Council
November 21: FAC
November 23: International Market Council, Justice Council
November 24: Justice Council
November 27: ECOFIN Council, Telecoms Council
November 30: Health Council

2. The following items are likely to be discussed:

MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER, INDUSTRY COUNCIL AGENDA

SME policy: oral presentation by Commission of

(a) Communication on EU strategy for SMEs.

(b) Communication on European secondary capital market for SMEs.

SMEs and innovation technology—Council resolution.

Community action programme for competitiveness of EU industry: Council decision.

Services to business and industrial competitiveness: Council resolution.

Industrial aspects of the Information Society: Council resolution.

Industrial cooperation with other regions and third countries—Council conclusions.

Competitiveness of European machine construction industry—Council resolution.

Effect of Uruguay round on textile industry—(possible) Council conclusions.

European policy for promotion of quality—oral Commission report.

Industry and research—oral Commission report on task-forces.

TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER, INDUSTRY COUNCIL AGENDA

Competition policy and industrial competitiveness: Commission presentation on aspects of competition policy which affect industry.

State Aid for shipbuilding—proposal for Council regulation implementing OECD rules.

Steel: monitoring report and opinions on Irish Steel and Austrian iron ore mines.

THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER, CONSUMER COUNCIL AGENDA

Proposed Directive on the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs.

Amended proposal for a directive on comparative advertising: possible common position.

Proposed directive on unit pricing: orientation debate.

Proposed directive on markings appearing on the labelling of foodstuffs.

Proposed directive on guarantees for consumer goods: Commission presentation.

Access to justice: Commission presentation.

Consumer education: Council resolution.

Commission action plan on consumer protection and information 1995–1999: Commission presentation.

Commission report on the implementation of the Council Directive on consumer credit: Council conclusions.

Advertising products and services attributing health benefits (miracle products): Council resolution.

MONDAY/TUESDAY 13–14 NOVEMBER, AGRICULTURE COUNCIL AGENDA

Legislative changes to maximum residue limit Directives (possible).

Feeding stuffs (possible).

Meat products (possible).

Set-aside.

Reform of the fruit and vegetable regime.

Reform of the rice regime.

WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER, FISHERIES COUNCIL

Likelihood that it will be cancelled but if it goes ahead it will deal with the annual price and market regime proposals.

FRIDAY 17 NOVEMBER, BUDGET COUNCIL AGENDA

Second reading of the 1996 draft budget.

MONDAY 20 NOVEMBER, CULTURE COUNCIL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Agendas not yet available.

THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER, INTERNAL MARKET COUNCIL

Agenda not yet available but likely to include *inter alia*:

Functioning of the internal market (Commission report).

Citizens First (open debate).

Molitor Report (follow up).

Joint meeting with Central and Eastern Europeans (over lunch).

Pressure equipment (common position—possible A point).

Customs 2000 (common position).

Public procurement (state of progress/orientation debate).

Tourism statistics directive (adoption).

Motorcycle multichapter directive (common position—possible A point).

Flavourings.

Food for particular nutritional uses (PARNUTS).

Minerals waters.

Amendment to labelling Directive (poss).

THURSDAY/FRIDAY 23–24 NOVEMBER, JUSTICE COUNCIL

Agenda not yet available.

MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER, ECOFIN COUNCIL AGENDA

Cross Border Credit Transfers (probable A point).

Preparation of Stage 3 of EMU.

Employment policy—preparation of Madrid European Council.

Multilateral surveillance.

Fraud: reports from Member States—preparation of Madrid European Council.

Loan Guarantee Fund (possible).

Bank Winding Up Directive (possible).

MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER, TELECOMS COUNCIL AGENDA

Expected Agenda:

Directive on Interconnection—orientation debate.

Draft Article 90 Commission Directives amending Directive 90/388/EEC (a) with regard to mobile and personal communications

and (b) regarding the implementation of full competition in telecoms markets—debate and possible Council conclusions.
Directive on application of ONP (Open Network Provision) to voice telephony—final adoption (possible).

Directive on Data Protection in telecoms sector—common position (possible).

Decision on Data Protection in telecoms sector—common position (possible).

Decision on a series of guidelines for trans-European telecommunications networks—common position.

Decision on INFO 2000 programme concerning multimedia content—common position (possible).

Directive on development of Community postal services—orientation debate or political agreement.

WTO discussions—Commission oral report.

THURSDAY 30 NOVEMBER, HEALTH COUNCIL
Agenda not yet available.

Nuclear Tests, Pitcairn Islands

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* health and *(b)* environmental studies have been carried out on the residents of the Pitcairn islands and their habitat to assess potential radiological impact from atmospheric and underground nuclear testing in the Pacific region. [40199]

Mr. David Davis: No specific studies have been carried out. The resident nurse has reported that the Pitcairn islanders are in good health. The Sir Peter Scott commemorative expedition, which visited the Pitcairn islands in 1991–92, reported no environmental problems as a result of nuclear testing. We do not believe that the current programme of French nuclear tests, which are being carried out underground, should cause any danger to the inhabitants of Pitcairn.

French Nuclear Tests

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consideration he has given to invoking article 142 of the Euratom treaty in order to bring infringement proceedings before the European Court of Justice against the government of France in respect of its nuclear testing programme. [40201]

Mr. David Davis: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Smith) on 20 October 1995 *Official Report*, column *264*.

Mr. Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government *(a)* have taken and *(b)* are considering taking to protect the residents of the Pitcairn islands from the potential environmental effects of French nuclear testing at Mururoa and Fangatafau. [40196]

Mr. Davis: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) on 16 October 1995 *Official Report*, column *18*.

Mr. Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consultation has taken place with the residents of the Pitcairn islands on French nuclear testing in the Pacific. [40198]

Mr. Davis: The governor's office in Wellington is in regular contact with the Pitcairn island council on a range of matters. The council has not expressed any concern about French nuclear testing.

Mr. Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what scientific analysis has been carried out by his Department on the environmental effects of the French nuclear testing programme in the Pacific. [40200]

Mr. Davis: None. The French Government have given an assurance that the tests will cause no harm to the environment, and have invited experts to visit the area in order to verify this for themselves.

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are Her Majesty's Government's priorities at the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. [40023]

Mr. Hanley: The Government's priorities are: to promote the fulfilment of the principles embodied in the Harare declaration, including a return to civilian democratic rule in all member states; to promote good government; to support reform of the United Nations and international financial institutions; and to secure a commitment for increased collective Commonwealth action against serious crime, in particular drug trafficking and money laundering.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what priority Her Majesty's Government give to strengthening the Harare declaration at the Auckland Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. [40025]

Mr. Hanley: The Harare declaration has become a reference point for good government principles in the Commonwealth. High priority will be given at Auckland to encouraging all member states to adhere to the principles it embodies.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a copy of the letter from the Prime Minister to the Prime Minister of New Zealand setting out Her Majesty's Government's priorities for the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. [40024]

Mr. Hanley: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has not written to the Prime Minister of New Zealand setting out the Government's priorities for the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting.

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals he has for Commonwealth initiatives to support human rights and democracy. [40028]

Mr. Hanley: The Commonwealth Secretary-General has proposed that within the theme for the Auckland Heads of Government meeting in November—"Fulfilling the Harare Declaration"—a prime focus should be "Advancing Fundamental Political Values". My right hon.

Friend the Prime Minister will take an active role in formulating practical proposals under this heading.

Human Rights (Zimbabwe)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made recently to the Zimbabwean Government regarding human rights abuses in that country. [39924]

Mr. Hanley: We have not made any such representations recently to the Government of Zimbabwe.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Travel Services

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the total cost of travel administered through DSS travel services in the last three financial years; which company is currently operating the DSS travel service; and what target savings for the current year the present operator has been asked to meet. [39332]

Mr. Burt: The information is in the table:

Year	*Amount* £
1993–94	3,895,339
1994–95	4,764,841

Information for earlier periods is not available.

Carlson Wagonlit is contracted to deliver travel services. The contract does not provide for specific savings targets. All travel costs are discounted under its terms, with the contractor required always to offer the lowest published fare.

Departmental Work

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement on the work of his Department since 1990. [38072]

Mr. Burt: We have a clear strategy for social security. The principal objectives are to focus benefit on the most needy, to encourage personal responsibility, to improve incentives to work and save, to bear down on fraud and abuse and to ensure that the system does not outstrip the nation's ability to pay. Social security has cost £440 billion in real terms since 1990 and provides one of the most comprehensive safety nets in the EU.

The Department has focused benefit on those who need it most. Disability living allowance was introduced in April 1992. Expenditure on help for customers below pension age with care and mobility needs has increased by more than 50 per cent. in real terms since 1992. In addition, the Disability Discrimination Bill will ensure that disabled people are not discriminated against in the workplace or when seeking access to goods and services.

Incapacity benefit, which replaced sickness benefit and invalidity benefit on 13 April this year, provides a better targeted and more affordable system of provision. A more objective medical test will focus help on those genuinely incapable of work because of their medical condition.

The Department has encouraged personal responsibility and the Pensions Act 1995 encourages increased self-provision. Pensioners in all income groups have seen their income rise since 1979 and on average are 50 per cent. better off. About 88 per cent. of recently retired pensioners have incomes other than state benefits. The UK is the largest investor in private pensions in the EU, with more assets invested in pension funds than the rest of the EU put together.

In 1993, the Child Support Agency was launched to implement the Child Support Act 1991 and to operate the new system of child maintenance for parents who live apart. The new Child Support Act 1995 includes wide-ranging improvements to the scheme which will be fairer, improve service and ensure maintenance is paid regularly. This year the Child Support Agency is on track to collect or arrange £300 million in maintenance and achieve a reduction in the bill to the taxpayer of £1.4 billion since its launch.

The Department has improved incentives to work and save. Reforms since 1988 have significantly alleviated the unemployment trap, where people are better off unemployed than working, and the poverty trap, where net income falls even though wages go up. We will reinforce incentives as result of the Jobseekers Act 1995. This country has pioneered the use of in-work benefits. Family credit expenditure has helped to boost earnings for families on low income, and over 5.2 million awards have been made since 1990. We have announced plans for the first ever pilot of a benefit, earnings top-up, for low-earning single people and couples without children.

To bear down on fraud and abuse the Benefits Agency has developed a security strategy ensuring that the right money is paid to the right person at the right time and has delivered fraud savings of record £706.8 million in 1994–95 against a target of £654 million.

The Department has a proud record of efficiency, particularly following the establishment of agencies, where 97 per cent. of our staff now work. Agencies have consistently met or exceeded efficiency targets, resulting in savings of over £500 million being made over the last five years. In the Benefits Agency, output per member of staff has increased by 26.4 per cent. since 1989–90. Further efficiencies will be delivered through the Department's plan to apply an extensive and innovative range of efficiency techniques over the next three years.

The Department is at the forefront of public sector management and service delivery. Nineteen offices of the Benefits Agency have been awarded the charter mark. The Benefits Agency achieved an 84 per cent. satisfaction level of an independent and comprehensive customer survey in 1993–94, an increase on the previous year. The Information Technology Services Agency achieved the international standard for quality accreditation for the whole of its business in 1994. ITSA was one of the first next steps agencies to achieve such recognition for all areas of its business.

Under the Government's private finance initiative, the Contributions Agency has awarded the contract for the development and operation of the replacement national insurance recording system. This was the first major IT contract to be awarded under PFI. Work is also progressing on plans to automate payment of benefit at post offices. The Benefits Agency aims to start issuing benefit payment cards during 1996. Full roll-out of the card will take two to three years and will be funded under PFI; a procurement exercise is now under way.

Over the last several years we have undertaken many measures that have reduced the burdens on business. These include simplifying the rules and requirements of statutory sick pay and introducing from April 1996 a national insurance holiday to encourage employers to take on employees who have been unemployed for two years or more.

We have taken steps to align the tax and national insurance schemes wherever possible. The Contributions Agency, Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise have also established an extensive programme of work which will deliver real benefits for business in practical terms by reducing bureaucracy and duplicate handling.

By focusing help on those in need and encouraging personal responsibility we will achieve savings reaching £4 billion a year during the next Parliament, and more than three times that amount next century.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will consider holding centrally records of the number of applications for disability living allowance for babies, by Benefits Agency district area; and if he will make a statement. [39024]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The information is not available in the format referred to. However, figures are available on claims made for disability living allowance for children under the age of two. This information is held nationally. In addition, it is possible to provide details of awards made in these cases broken down by Benefits Agency district.

Statutory Pay

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what was the annual was the annual cost of statutory sick pay for 1979–80; and what has been the cost in each subsequent year including 1994–95; [40090]

(2) what was the annual cost of statutory maternity pay for 1979–80; and what has been the cost in each subsequent year including 1994–95. [40089]

Mr. Heald: The information is in the table. The statutory sick pay and statutory maternity pay schemes were introduced in April 1983 and April 1987 respectively.

Statutory sick pay and statutory maternity pay: government expenditure

£ million

	Statutory sick pay	*Statutory maternity pay*
1983–84	500	0
1984–85	508	0
1985–86	545	0
1986–87	757	0
1987–88	840	193
1988–89	898	250
1989–90	949	286
1990–91	941	314
1991–92	700	345
1992–93	683	398
1993–94	689	420
1994–95	25	443

Source:

Figures have been taken from the Social Security Departmental Report March 1995 and earlier equivalents.

Notes:

(a) Expenditure is at cash price.

(b) 1994–95 figures are estimates.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many recipients of invalidity benefit have been found fit for work under the provisions of the Incapacity for Work Act 1994 since its implementation; how many new claimants for incapacity benefit have been found fit for work; how many medical tests to determine incapacity for work have been carried out; and how many appeals against the decision that a claimant is fit for work have *(a)* been heard and *(b)* are outstanding. [39288]

Mr. Burt: Information is not available in the format requested. It is not possible to provide separate figures for the number of ex-invalidity benefit recipients and new incapacity benefit claimants who have been found incapable for work under the provisions of the Incapacity for Work Act 1994. Available information is in the table.

	Numbers
Medical examinations	[1]116,349
Found capable of work	[1]19,188
Appeals heard	89
Appeals outstanding	6,520

[1] This includes both all work test examinations and own occupation test examinations. All data is up to 30 September.

Family Credit

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security on what evidence the estimate, in the explanatory memorandum on the Social Security (Persons from Abroad) Miscellaneous Amendment Regulations, that about 5,000 claims for family credit, disability benefits and invalid care allowance are made annually by persons from abroad, is based; and how many claims he estimates are made for each of the benefits. [40616]

Mr. Roger Evans: No systematic record is kept of claims made for benefits by persons from abroad. The estimate is based on an extrapolation across the relevant benefits of an analysis of child benefits claimants who came to the United Kingdom from abroad in 1994.

Invalid Care Allowance

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security on what grounds he proposes to abolish the entitlement to invalid care allowance for carers who are persons from abroad; and what effect he expects this to have on persons cared for by them. [40606]

Mr. Burt: We believe that those who enter the United Kingdom with limited leave, on the understanding that they have no recourse to public funds, should be held to that understanding for the duration of their stay here. People who have overstayed their leave or who entered the country illegally should similarly not receive Government funding through the benefits system. In all cases, person from abroad who take on roles as carers will continue to be subject to the usual understanding regarding public funds.

Income Support

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what is the current position in respect of entitlement to income support for relatives admitted to the United Kingdom as sponsored immigrants where the sponsor is no longer able to support the immigrants through unemployment or other unexpected loss of income; [40442]

(2) if he will list for each of the last three years for which figures are available, the number of relatives who were admitted to the United Kingdom as sponsored immigrants following an undertaking by the sponsor that they would be fully maintained without recourse to public funds; in how many cases a written undertaking was required and why in other cases this was not so required; in respect of how many relatives there were claims made for income support under part V of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 and what was the total cost of this to his Department; and how much money was recovered through the liable relative procedures. [40441]

Mr. Roger Evans: People given unlimited leave to enter or remain in the UK as dependent relatives, including sponsored immigrants, currently have the same entitlement to benefits as any UK citizen. However, where a sponsorship undertaking has been signed, the Department may take appropriate steps to recover from the sponsor any income support paid to the sponsored immigrant. There is no provision to reclaim any other benefits paid.

The immigration authorities inform the Benefits Agency of all agreements which have been undertaken. The number of formal undertakings received are set out in the table.

	Number
1993	2,121
1994	1,925
1995 (January–June)	1,348

No information is recorded centrally of the number of sponsored immigrants who claim benefit or of how much money was recovered through the liable relative procedures.

The criteria for requiring written undertakings is a matter for the Home Office.

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the percentage of pensioners drawing income support or supplementary benefit in each year since 1978–79. [40377]

Mr. Evans: The information is set out in the table.

Number of pensioners in receipt of supplementary benefit/income support 1978–79 to 1994

Year	*(Column A) Number of pensioners in receipt of supplementary benefit/income support*	*(Column B) Number of pensioners in Great Britain*	*Column (A) as a percentage of column (B)*
1978	1,593,000	9,534,600	16.7
1979	1,599,000	9,559,700	16.7
1980	1,576,000	9,712,800	16.2
1981	1,624,000	9,810,156	16.6
1982	1,683,000	9,866,590	17.1
1983	1,549,000	9,882,301	15.7
1984	1,565,000	9,909,715	15.8
1985	—	10,021,410	—
1986	1,592,000	10,101,729	15.8
1987	1,610,000	10,172,700	15.9
1988	1,431,000	10,220,998	14.0
1989	1,314,000	10,278,565	12.8
1990	1,385,000	10,309,949	13.4
1991	1,272,000	10,355,887	12.3
1992	1,318,000	10,379,538	12.7
1993	1,426,000	10,391,426	13.7
1994	1,568,000	10,384,000	15.1

Notes:

1. Source: Supplementary Benefit/Income Support Statistics Annual and Quarterly Enquiries. Office of Population Censuses and Survey mid-year estimates.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand. Percentages rounded to one decimal place.
3. Income support replaced Supplementary Benefit in 1988.
4. Figures are not available for 1985.
5. Pensioners are defined as men over 65 and women over 60.
6. Figures in column A are for claimants only and do not include partners who may be of pensionable age.

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the estimated cost of ending the capital and notional income testing rules for *(a)* housing benefits and *(b)* income support for retired people while retaining unchanged the present tests for actual income. [40378]

Mr. Evans: The estimated cost of removing the lower and upper capital limits and tariff income rule for pensioners is £390 million in income support and £340 million in housing benefit. This assumes that actual income from capital would be taken into account.

Notes:

1. Although the question refers to retired people, it has been interpreted to refer to people over 60 years of age and living in the community. The cost for those in residential or nursing care is not available because the base data used excludes those cases.
2. Estimates are rounded to the nearest £10 million.
3. The estimate is based on data from the 1991, 1992 and 1993 Family Expenditure Survey, adjusted to be consistent with reported data from the May 1994 quarterly statistical enquiry for Income Support and the 1994 management information system dataset for Housing Benefit.
4. All figures are uprated to 1995–96 prices and benefit levels.

5. Given the tenuous nature of the data and the methodology used to arrive at this estimate, the figures are broad orders of magnitude as opposed to robust estimates.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what difficulties have been encountered in recovering income support paid to sponsored immigrants; what methods of overcoming such difficulties have been considered or adopted; and with what results; [40613]

(2) how the proposed changes in the benefit entitlement of sponsored immigrants will affect those whose sponsors are unable to support them because of a fall in their income due to sickness, unemployment or old age. [40615]

Mr. Evans: Sponsorship undertakings have been unenforceable and sponsors un-cooperative.

We referred proposals affecting the entitlement of sponsored immigrants and other persons from abroad to the Social Security Advisory Committee on 11 October. We expect to receive the committee's report and recommendations during December. These proposals are based on the premise that people whose leave to remain in the United Kingdom is on the understanding that they will not be maintained by the taxpayer should be kept to that understanding.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if, under his recent new proposals, an asylum seeker will be entitled to claim benefits between the initial refusal of the asylum application and any appeal against refusal to grant asylum before a special adjudicator; and if he will make a statement. [40445]

Mr. Roger Evans: Under the proposals, a person who claims asylum immediately upon arrival in the UK will be eligible to claim income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit from the point when their asylum claim is recorded to the point when they receive an initial refusal. A person who claims asylum after arrival in the UK will not normally be entitled to any benefits. However, nationals of countries which have undergone a significant upheaval since their arrival in the UK will be eligible for benefit up to the point of an initial refusal of their asylum claim. In all cases no benefit will be payable during the appeals process.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if, under the proposed new rules regarding benefits for refugees, a genuine refugee who successfully claims asylum after entering the United Kingdom will have his or her entitlement to income support backdated to the date the claim for asylum; [40614]

(2) if the proposed protection of the benefit entitlements of nationals of countries affected by significant upheavals will be extended to other persons claiming asylum because of a well-founded fear of persecution arising from events occurring after their arrival in the United Kingdom not amounting to a significant upheaval but affecting their families or other groups of which they are or were members. [40611]

Mr. Evans: We referred proposals affecting the benefit entitlement of asylum seekers and other persons from abroad to the Social Security Advisory Committee on 11 October. We will consider the position fully once the committee has reported on its consultation exercise.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps he proposes to take to ensure that, when a country has undergone events giving rise to a well-founded fear of persecution among its nationals, people who may, as a result, become entitled to benefits as asylum seekers are aware of their potential entitlement. [40608]

Mr. Evans: The Secretary of State will be advised by the Home Secretary when a country has been listed as having undergone an upheaval, such as to give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution of its nationals. The Benefits Agency will therefore advise claimants accordingly. The Home Secretary will inform relevant asylum interest groups and asylum law organisations that the country has been so listed.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will amend the Income Support (General) Regulations so as to make income support payable to asylum seekers as from 8 January 1996 at the full rate rather than 90 per cent. [40609]

Mr. Evans: I have no plans to do so.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what research has been carried out into the reasons for persons claiming asylum after arrival in the United Kingdom; and what were the main findings relevant to the proposal to remove their entitlement to benefits. [40610]

Mr. Evans: I am not aware of any specific research project on this subject. However, according to Home Office figures, about 70 per cent. of asylum seekers claim in country having entered the UK as visitors, tourists or students. Only 4 per cent. of asylum decisions result in recognition as a refugee. Regardless of the reasons for persons claiming asylum after arrival, the Government believe that it cannot be right to pay benefits to this group. Those who claim asylum on entry to the UK will still have access to the benefits system while their asylum application is considered.

Child Support Agency

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many employees of the Child Support Agency since 1993 have been *(a)* dismissed, and *(b)* faced other disciplinary action for the improper use of confidential information. [39930]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Ann Chant. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Miss Ann Chant to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 31 October 1995:

I am replying to your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Social Security on the improper use of confidential information.

You requested details regarding the number of employees of the Child Support Agency, since 1993, who have either been dismissed from employment or faced other disciplinary action for the improper use of confidential information.

The figures are as follows:

(a) 8 dismissals

(b) 10 other disciplinary action

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 1 November 1995

LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT

Mr. Ernest Saunders

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what is the latest estimate of the cost to the legal aid fund for Mr. Ernest Saunders' appeal to the appeal court; and what income Mr. Saunders disclosed in his application. [39611]

Mr. John M. Taylor: I do not consider it appropriate for me to speculate on the likely cost of this case while it is in progress. Because of the confidentiality provisions of the Legal Aid Act 1988, I cannot disclose any details of the application.

Mr. Marshall: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary Lord Chancellor's Department if Mr. Ernest Saunders received legal aid in his case before the European Court. [39612]

Mr. David Davis: I have been asked to reply.

No. UK legal aid is not available for applications under the European convention on human rights and Mr. Saunders is not legally aided by the Council of Europe.

Court Circuits

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what plans he has to reorganise the Wales and Chester circuits, causing north Wales to be attached to the north-west circuit, and south Wales to be attached to a south-west of England circuit. [39872]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The question concerns a specific operational matter on which the chief executive of the Court Service is best placed to provide an answer and I have accordingly asked him to reply direct.

Letter from M. D. Huebner to Mr. Paul Boateng, dated 1 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to your question about plans to reorganise the Wales and Chester Circuit.

There are no plans to reorganise the Wales and Chester Circuit in the way described or to create a North West Circuit or a South West of England Circuit.

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what plans he has to carry out public consultation on the future of the current circuits of England and Wales; which circuits are involved; and when the consultation will take place. [39867]

Mr. Taylor: The question concerns a specific operational matter on which the chief executive of the Court Service is best placed to provide an answer and I have accordingly asked him to reply direct.

Letter from M. D. Huebner to Mr. Paul Boateng, dated 1 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to your question about public consultation on the future of the current Circuits in England and Wales.

At the beginning of this year I commissioned a review of the internal management structure of the Court service. As part of this review, I am consulting interested parties about whether they would favour any marginal changes to current Circuit boundaries. The review of the management structure is being carried out in full consultation with the judiciary, the Bar, the Law Society and other agencies. A questionnaire will also shortly be circulated to major court user groups. Further consultation will be carried out during November and December, and again in the New Year, after the review team has reported to me.

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what review has been carried out on the future of the Wales and Chester circuit; if he will make a statement. [39868]

Mr. Taylor: The question concerns a specific operational matter on which the chief executive of the Court Service is best placed to provide an answer and I have accordingly asked him to reply direct.

Letter from M. D. Huebner to Mr. Paul Boateng, dated 1 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to your question about a review of the future of the Wales and Chester Circuit.

A review of the internal management structure of the Court Service was commissioned at the beginning of the year. The review, which is due to report by Christmas, is considering the future role of Circuit Administrators, as well as all other management tiers in the Court Service. However, no review of Circuits themselves is contemplated.

Illegal Immigration (Employer Sanctions)

Mr. Straw: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what estimate has been made of the possible impact on the costs to the court system from the introduction of employer sanctions in respect of unlawful employment of illegal or other immigrants. [40230]

Mr. John M. Taylor: Discussions are under way with the immigration and nationality department on the likely number of cases which would enter the court system as a result of proposed measures to prevent illegal working. Such cases would be dealt with in magistrates courts, with appeals going to the Crown court.

Legal Aid

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how much to date has been paid in legal aid to each of the lawyers representing the Maxwell brothers. [39566]

Mr. John M. Taylor: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave the hon. Member for Wallsend (Mr. Byers) on 24 October, *Official Report*, column *506*.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which his office makes appointments in the county of South Yorkshire, with the total annul budget for each body and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years. [39433]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The non-judicial non-departmental public bodies for which my Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire, and the appointments made to them in each of the last four years are as follows:

	1991	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*
Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace					
Barnsley	2	0	0	[1]6(1)	0
Doncaster	0	0	3	0	1
Rotherham	3	0	1	[1]6(2)	0
Sheffield	6	1	0	[1]6(1)	0
Advisory Committee on General Commissioners of Income Tax					
South Yorkshire	2	0	[1]3(3)	0	0

[1] Figures in brackets show the number of renewed appointments in the preceding figure.

The bodies do not have separate budgets.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how many times in each month of the current calendar year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39858]

Mr. John Taylor: The Lord Chancellor is responsible for four agencies. In the current year, the Lord Chancellor and I met the chief executive of Her Majesty's Land Registry in January; the chief executive of the Public Record Office in January and in July; the chief executive of the Public Trust Office in February and in June; and the chief executive of the Court Service in July. There was a meeting between the Lord Chancellor and the chief executive of Her Majesty's Land Registry in June, which I was unable to attend. I have had no separate meetings with the agency chief executives to discuss the work of the agencies, but I attended the headquarters of Her Majesty's Land Registry in January in my capacity as the Lord Chancellor's Minister responsible for environmental issues, to witness the signing by the chief executive of the agency's declaration of corporate commitment on energy management.

Public Appointments (South Yorkshire)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list the public appointments for which his Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating in each case the duration of the appointment, the date when a new appointment is due and the salary. [39429]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The non-judicial public appointments for which my Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire are those made to the following bodies:

The South Yorkshire Advisory Committee on General Commissioners of Income Tax

The Barnsley Advisory Committee on Justices of the Peace

The Doncaster Advisory Committee on Justices of the Peace

The Rotherham Advisory Committee on Justices of the Peace

The Sheffield Advisory Committee on Justices of the Peace

Appointment terms are variable but are generally for a period of six years. Roughly half the members are replaced every three years. Salaries are not paid.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40518]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The information requested is not held centrally. According to the best information available, no such proceedings have been begun by the Department in the past five years.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39492]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The Lord Chancellor is responsible for four executive agencies—the Court Service, the Public Trust Office, Her Majesty's Land Registry and the Public Record Office. The question concerns a specific matter on which the chief executives of the agencies are best placed to provide the answer and I have accordingly asked them to reply direct.

Letter from M. D. Huebner to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 1 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department has asked me to reply to your Question about Court Service staff numbers and cost.

The Court Service was established on 3 April 1995. There are therefore no figures for staff numbers or cost before this date.

Numbers of staff in the Court Service by grade as of 26 October 1995 are as follows:

	Number
Grade 2	1
Grade 3	2
Grade 4	3
Grade 5	12
Grade 6	44
Grade 7	121
SEO	246
HEO	783
EO	1,951
AO	4,922
AA	494
Support Grades	2,045

This makes a total staff complement of 10,624, including part-time staff and those staff on maternity leave or other career breaks.

The current projected paybill for the Court Service for the financial year 1995–96 is £180 million. To divide this further by grade would take up disproportionate time and cost.

Letter from John Manthorpe to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 1 November 1995:

I have been asked by the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department, to reply to your recent question requesting a list, by grade, of the numbers of staff in HM Land Registry and their costs for *(a)* 1994–95 and *(b)* estimated figures for 1995–96.

I can provide the following information:

	1994–95	*1995–96 (estimated)*
Staff numbers (average number—Civil Service full time equivalents	8,585	8,221
Staff costs (including Social Security and other pension costs)	£146,278,000	£144,352,000

A breakdown by grade could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Letter from Sarah Tyacke to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 1 November 1995:

I have been asked by the Lord Chancellor's Parliamentary Secretary to reply, in respect of the Public Record Office, to your question about the numbers and cost by grade of staff of executive agencies for which he is responsible.

Estimated outturn for 1994–95 and plans for 1995–96 for Public Record Office staff numbers and paybill are set out in the Departmental Report of The Lord Chancellor's and Law Officer's Departments (Cm 2809), copies of which are in the Libraries of the House. A breakdown by grade could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Letter from Julia C. Lomas to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 1 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to you as part of the Lord Chancellor's Department response to your Parliamentary Question, listed on 24 October, regarding the numbers of staff and their cost for the financial year 1994–5 and the estimated figure for the current financial year.

The estimated outturn for 1994–5 and plans for 1995–6 for this Agency's manpower and paybill are set out in my annual report, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House. A breakdown by grade could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department (ii) agencies (iii) non-departmental bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40818]

Mr. John M. Taylor: In addition to the headquarters of the Lord Chancellor's Department and associated offices, the Lord Chancellor has responsibility for four agencies: the Court Service, HM Land Registry, the Public Record Office and the Public Trust Office. He also has responsibility for the Legal Aid Board and the Northern Ireland Court Service. As the question concerns a specific operational matter, the chief executives of the Land Registry and the Public Record Office have been asked to reply direct. This answer is, however, given on behalf of headquarters and the remaining agencies, the Legal Aid Board and the Northern Ireland Court Service.

It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the highest salary in payment in the Lord Chancellor's Department's headquarters falls within the £95,000 to £99,999 band in both 1994–95 and 1995–96.

In the Court Service, which did not become an agency until April 1995, the highest salary in payment in 1995–96 falls within the £75,000 to £79,999 band.

In the Public Trust Office the highest salary in payment in both 1994–95 and 1995–96 falls within the £55,000 to £59,999 band.

It has not been possible in the time available to identify the lowest salaries actually in payment either in LCD headquarters or the agencies. But the lowest starting pay of the most junior grade at age 16 falls in band £4,000 to £9,999. There has been no increase in these rates of pay since April 1994.

The highest salary in payment to staff of the Northern Ireland Court Service in both 1994–95 and 1995–96 falls within the £60,000 to £64,999 band: the lowest salary which has been in payment for both years falls within the £5,000 to £9,999 band.

In the Legal Aid Board, the lowest salary in payment in both 1994–95 and 1995–96 fell within the £5,000 to £9,999 band. The highest annual salary in 1994–95 fell within the £75,000 to £79,999 band. In 1995–96, the highest salary in payment falls within the band £65,000 to £69,999, with a possible additional bonus payable at the end of the year.

Letter from John Manthorpe to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 1 November 1995:

I have been asked by the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department, to reply to your recent question on the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in the Land Registry in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96.

It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time salary fell within the band:

1994–95: £5,000 – £9,999

1995–96: £5,000 – £9,999

The highest full-time salary fell within the band:

1994–95: £65,000 – £69,999

1995–96: £65,000 – £69,999

I do hope that this answers the points raised with the Parliamentary Secretary but please contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Letter from Sarah Tyacke to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 1 November 1995:

I have been asked by the Lord Chancellor's Parliamentary Secretary to reply in respect of the Public Record Office, to your question about the lowest and highest full-time salaries paid to employees in 1994–95 and 1995–96.

It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time salary fell within the band:

1994–95: £10,000–£14,999

1995–96: £10,000–£14,999

The highest full-time salary fell within the band:

1994–95: £60,000–£64,999

1995–96: £60,000–£64,999

The Keeper of Public Records' salary is published in the Public Record Office's Annual Report, a copy of which is deposited in the Library of the House.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will estimate the number of individuals in his *(a)* Department and *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental bodies whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeded (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in (1) 1985–86, (2) 1990–91, (3) 1992–93, (4) 1994–95 and (5) 1995–96. [40817]

Mr. John M. Taylor: In addition to the headquarters of the Lord Chancellor's Department and associated offices, the Lord Chancellor has responsibility for four agencies: the Court Service, HM Land Registry, the Public Record Office and the Public Trust Office. He also has responsibility for the Legal Aid Board and the Northern Ireland Court Service. As the question concerns a specific operational matter, the chief executives of the Land Registry and the Public Record Office have been asked to reply direct. This answer is, however, given on behalf of headquarters, the remaining agencies, the Legal Aid Board and the Northern Ireland Court Service.

Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the department, agencies and non-departmental bodies. As members of the principal civil service pension scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules, which have been deposited in the Library of the House. There are no individuals in the headquarters of the Department, the Court Service, the Public Trust Office, the Legal Aid Board or the Northern Ireland Court Service whose total remuneration packages in the years in question exceeded £100,000, excluding pension benefits.

Letter from John Manthorpe to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 1 November 1995:

I have been asked by the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department, to reply to your recent question on the number of individuals in the Land Registry whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeded (i) £100,000 (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in (1) 1985–86, (2) 1990–91, (3) 1992–93, (4) 1994–95 and (5) 1995–96.

Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in HM Land Registry. As members of the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the Scheme rules which have been deposited in the Library of the House. There were no individuals within the Land Registry whose annual remuneration, excluding pension benefits, has exceeded £100,000 in the years mentioned.

I do hope that this answers the points raised with the Parliamentary Secretary but please contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Letter from Sarah Tyacke to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 1 November 1995:

I have been asked by the Lord Chancellor's Parliamentary Secretary to reply, in respect of the Public Record Office, to your question about the number of individuals whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeded (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000.

Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Public Record Office. As members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the Scheme rules which have been deposited in the Library of the House. The number receiving annual remuneration above the sums specified, excluding pension benefits in the years in question was (i) Nil, (ii) Nil, (iii) Nil.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Know-how Funding

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the total sum spent by the know-how funds in *(a)* Estonia, *(b)* Latvia and *(c)* Lithuania and *(d)* Georgia in each of the last five years; and what is the expected total in the next two years. [40667]

Mr. Hanley: Know-how fund expenditure to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Georgia was as follows:

£ million

	1990–91	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96 (planned)*
Estonia	0	0.008	0.359	0.310	0.691	0.695
Latvia	0	0	0.326	0.259	0.915	0.695
Lithuania	0	0.006	0.404	1.058	0.900	0.695
Pan Baltic	0	0.036	0.360	0.627	0.603	0.625
Georgia	0	0	0.026	0.071	0.496	0.600
Total	0	0.050	1.475	3.800	3.605	3.310

Discussions about future spending are currently under way.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Lobbies

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Chairman of the Administration Committee for what reasons microphones are not allowed to be used at lobbies held in Westminster Hall by speakers, and what considerations underlie permission to use microphones as granted to the House authorities. [40372]

Mr. Michael J. Martin: Lobbying is normally carried out in Central Lobby, but in view of the problems posed for disabled lobbyists, the authorities controlling Westminster Hall have agreed that mass lobbies by disabled people may take place there. This is designed to replicate the facilities offered in the Central Lobby, not a meeting room. The microphones and loudspeakers are for the House authorities to let lobbyists know which hon. Members are present and which part of the Hall they will be in.

Air Travel Costs

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Chairman of the Administration Committee what rebate agreements with airlines have been reached in respect of air travel costs. [41059]

Mr. Michael J. Martin: I am pleased to announce that on 13 June, following negotiations between the House and British Airways, the Administration Committee endorsed a proposed agreement, whereby BA is willing to assist the House in reducing its air travel costs, in return for the House dealing with BA as a preferred airline, and subject to a certain minimum flown revenue.

Most BA flights on parliamentary business booked through the Palace of Westminster travel office since 1 April by hon. Members, their staff or Officers or staff of the House will count towards a percentage rebate on a sliding scale—the greater the flown revenue, the greater the percentage—as well as actual—rebate. All BA worldwide scheduled services in certain classes are covered, including club world, eurobudget, shuttle services and full economy class UK domestic fares. A complete list of eligible fares is available from the travel office.

It is important to stress that there is no element of "exclusivity" about this agreement. Individual hon. Members or Select Committees who, for example, prefer to deal with other carriers or travel agents, or who wish to take advantage of a group deal with another carrier are, of course, still perfectly free to do so. However, I would hope that all hon. Members will bear in mind that if they do book a BA flight through the travel office, it could now assist the House in being able to keep its air travel costs down.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39485]

The Attorney-General: The chief executive of the executive agency for which I am responsible, the Government Property Lawyers, will write direct to the hon. Member.

Letter from P. Horner to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 31 October 1995:

The Attorney-General has asked me to reply to your question about Executive Agency Staff. I am pleased to provide the details below for the Government Property Lawyers Agency:

Grade	*Number*	*Cost* £
a) Financial Year 1994–95		
3	1	78,028.67
4–7	45.15	1,998,153.06
Executive Grades	37.12	713,190.47
Support Grades	22.75	293,048.37
Typing and Messengerial Grades	21.83	286,130.40
Total	127.85	3,368,550.97
b) Financial Year 1995–96 (estimated)		
3	1	70,963.64
5–7	41.97	1,892,336.76
Executive Grades	36.65	735,750.24
Support Grades	23.6	323,552.37
Typing and Messengerial Grades	21.17	297,171.01
Totals	124.39	3,319,774.02

The information has been given in the above form to avoid identification of individuals.

Late Payments (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Attorney General how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40533]

The Attorney-General: The Departments for which I am responsible make every effort to settle invoices promptly, including those payable to small businesses. The specific information requested is not available except at disproportionate cost.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Attorney-General how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40534]

The Attorney-General: No such petitions have been presented by the Law Officers' Departments in their own behalf.

The Treasury Solicitor's Department has presented bankruptcy petitions on behalf of other Departments for which it acts. Information as to the number of employees affected is not maintained in the Treasury Solicitor's Department's records.

TREASURY

Value Added Tax

Ms Primarolo: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue would be raised by increasing the standard rate of VAT to *(a)* 19 per cent. and *(b)* 20 per cent. per year. [40666]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Figures published in the Treasury's "Tax Ready Reckoner and Tax Reliefs" indicate that increasing the standard rate of VAT by one percentage point is estimated to raise £2,540 million. This implies the following:

New tax rate percentage	*Estimated extra revenue £ million*
19	3,810
20	6,350

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the cost in 1996–97 and a full year of raising the threshold for registration for VAT for small businesses by *(a)* £10,000, *(b)* £20,000, *(c)* £30,000, *(d)* £40,000, *(e)* £50,000 and *(f)* £60,000.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Costs have not been calculated for the exact thresholds specified. Calculations have been done for the full-year revenue effects of raising the VAT registration threshold to the following levels:

	VAT registration threshold		
	£60,000	£75,000	£100,000
Revenue effect (£ million)	–£120	–£245	–£425

It should also be noted that the EC sixth VAT directive restricts increases in the VAT threshold to those which "maintain its value in real terms".

Windfall Taxes

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement in his Department's policy in respect of windfall taxes; and if he will make a statement. [40827]

Mr. Jack: It would be inappropriate to comment on tax matters at this stage in the Budget cycle.

Beer Duty

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research has been undertaken on the revenue effect of lowering the level of excise duty on beer, on sources of tax revenue other than excise duty and directly associated VAT. [38476]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Government costings of a cut in beer duty, published in the tax ready reckoner, allow for the direct effects on indirect tax revenues when consumers switch expenditure from other goods to beer. These calculations make use of a model developed by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, based on detailed data on how demand for individual goods and services has responded to price changes in the past.

Following through the impact on other sources of tax revenue would require assumptions about the stance of fiscal and monetary policy. It is that overall policy stance that is the prime determinant of the effect on receipts, which would require simulation on a macro-economic model, such as that of the Treasury.

The Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association has published its own estimates of the effect on government revenues of a reduction in beer duty, most recently in "A New Deal: A Memorandum to HM Treasury", June 1995.

Mr. William O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimate of income from taxes on beers, wines, spirits, tobacco and cigarettes for the current year. [40604]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The summer economic forecast published in June estimated revenues for the current year to be as follows:

	£ billion
Beers (and ciders)	2.7
Wines	1.2
Spirits	1.9
Tobacco	7.3

Tax Avoidance

Mr. Hain: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the amount of corporate taxation avoidance for each year since 1979; [38865]

(2) what assessment he has made of the amount of capital gains taxation avoidance for each year since 1979. [38866]

Mr. Jack: We continue to monitor examples of the exploitation of tax regulations which result in tax loss. Analysis of these is one of the key factors in determining each year new policies designed to counter avoidance.

Income Tax

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers on PAYE have gross incomes *(a)* under £10,00, *(b)* £25,000 *(c)* £50,000, *(d)* £75,000, *(e)* £100,000, *(f)* £125,000, *(g)* £150,000, *(h)* £175,000, *(i)* £200,000 and *(j)* over £250,000, specifying in each case the average amount of income subject to PAYE. [39113]

Mr. Jack: Available estimates for 1995–95 are given in the table.

Range of Gross Income[1]	*Taxpayers with a source of income subject to PAYE Thousands*	*Gross Income*[1] *£ million*	*Average PAYE income £*[2]
£0–£10,000	8,000	54,800	5,780
£10,000–£25,000	11,200	179,000	15,100
£25,000–£50,000	2,400	77,800	30,200
£50,000–£75,000	240	14,500	54,000
£75,000–£100,000	70	5,610	72,300
£100,000 and over	80	14,800	147,000
Total	22,000	346,000	14,400

[1] Gross income is defined as total income for income tax purposes. It excludes income from certain social security benefits and some investment income such as national savings certificates.

[2] Main and subsidiary source schedule E income, occupational pensions, other schedule E income and taxable expenses and benefits.

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer by how much the basic rate of income tax would be increased to raise an additional £1,000 million in revenue; how much the basic rate of income tax would be increased to raise this sum if the spread of all taxation was consistent with that on 1 June; and if he will make a statement. [39293]

Mr. Jack: The basic rate of income tax would need to be raised by about ½p.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost in 1996–97 and a full year of widening the 20p band of tax to the degree necessary to make half of all taxpayers liable at the 20p rate of tax; and if he will indicate the upper limit of the 20p rate that would be necessary to achieve this. [40775]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The lower rate band would need to be widened to £8,500. The direct revenue cost would be about £4.1 billion in a full year at 1996–97 income levels. This estimate includes consequential effects on the yield of capital gains.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide figures for *(a)* the number of higher rate taxpayers and *(b)* the total number of taxpayers on gross incomes of between £31,000 and £40,000 in £1,000 bands. [40786]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Provisional estimates for 1995–96 are given in the table.

Range of gross income[1] *£*	*Number of taxpayers in 1995–96 Thousands*	*Higher rate taxpayers in 1995–96*
£31,000–£32,000	170	160
£32,000–£33,000	120	120
£33,000–£34,000	120	120
£34,000–£35,000	110	110
£35,000–£36,000	120	120
£36,000–£37,000	90	90
£37,000–£38,000	80	80
£38,000–£39,000	70	70
£39,000–£40,000	60	60

[1] Gross income is defined as total income for income tax purposes. It excludes income from certain social security benefits and some investment income such as national savings certificates.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost in 1996–97 and a full year of reducing the number of people paying tax at the higher rate to *(a)* 2 million, *(b)* 1.5 million, *(c)* 1 million, *(d)* 0.75 million and *(e)* 0.5 million indicating in each case the upper limit for the 25p rate. [40776]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Estimated full-year costs at 1996–97 income levels are given in the table.

Reduction in the number of higher rate taxpayers to	*Full year revenue cost at 1996–97 levels £ billion*	*Basic rate limit assumed*
2 million	0.4	26,500
1.5 million	1.3	29,800
1 million	2.3	35,300
0.75 million	3.0	40,300
0.5 million	3.6	46,300

Allowances and Reliefs

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will update his answer of 11 February 1992 to the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke), *Official Report,* column *429,* on the effect on Treasury revenues of introducing limits on allowances and reliefs, including in the calculation only those allowances and reliefs taken at the marginal rate. [39099]

Mr. Jack: It is estimated that at 1995–96 levels of income the introduction of the upper limits specified would yield the following:

Upper limit for total allowances and reliefs[1] *£*	*Yield in full year £ million*
9,000	560
10,000	490
11,000	430
12,000	380
13,000	340
14,000	310
15,000	290
16,000	260

[1] Including only allowances and reliefs given at marginal rates.

The number of people who would be affected are as follows:

£ Thousands

Upper limit for total allowances and reliefs[1] *£*	*Basic rate taxpayers, lower rate taxpayers and non taxpayers*	*Higher rate taxpayers*
9,000	50	180
10,000	30	140
11,000	30	110
12,000	20	90
13,000	10	80
14,000	10	70
15,000	10	60
16,000	10	50

[1] Including only allowances and reliefs given at marginal rates.

Fewer than 10,000 basic rate taxpayers would become higher rate taxpayers.

The estimates do not take account of any behavioural effects which might result from the introduction of such a limit.

Capital Gains and Inheritance Tax

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the full-year cost of abolition of *(a)* capital gains tax and *(b)* inheritance tax. [39103]

Mr. Jack: Receipts from capital gains tax, excluding tax on gains of companies, and inheritance tax are forecast to be £1.1 billion and £1.6 billion respectively in 1996–97.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current estimate of the amount of public sector capital investment which will have been approved under the private finance initiative by the end of 1995; to what extent the estimate has changed; and if he will make a statement. [39345]

Mr. Jack: Information on private finance projects is assembled in the form of total contract values rather than specifically public sector capital investment. Information on the numerous smaller contracts is not kept centrally, but at the last Budget the Chancellor announced that contracts with a capital value of £5 billion were due to be signed in this financial year. We are on target.

Excise Verification Officers

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many excise verification officers were deployed by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in *(a)* 1993, *(b)* 1994 and *(c)* 1995. [40208]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The information is not available in the format requested. In the financial year 1993–94 and 1994–95 some 250 staff years were assigned to single market excise work; the majority of these were specially trained excise verification officers. In the financial year 1995–96 an additional 12 staff years were designated to counter excise offences.

National Grid Flotation

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the agreements reached between the Inland Revenue and the regional electricity companies over tax liabilities in relation to the flotation of the National Grid, with particular reference to letters of comfort issued by the Inland Revenue. [40571]

Mr. Jack: The tax affairs of particular companies are a confidential matter between those companies and the Inland Revenue.

Termination of Employment Payments

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the cost in 1994–95 of tax relief given at a rate of *(a)* 40 per cent. and *(b)* 25 per cent. on the first £30,000 of payments made on termination of employment. [39142]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 24 October 1995]:* The total cost of tax relief on the first £30,000 of payments made on termination of employment is estimated to be about £1,600 million in 1994–95. A breakdown of this figure at each marginal tax rate is given in the following table:

Cost of tax relief	*£ million*
Lower rate of 20 per cent.	50
Basic rate of 25 per cent.	800
Higher rate of 40 per cent.	750
Total	1,600

Private Finance Panel

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the names, declared interests, date of appointment and reason for selection of the members of the Private Finance Panel [39381]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* The current members and main interests of the Private Finance Panel are:

Sir Christopher Bland

Chairman, NFC Plc, Life Sciences International plc and Hammersmith Hospitals Trust.

Mr. Malcolm R. Bates

Deputy Managing Director, GEC; Non-executive Director, Enterprise Oil.

Mr. Allan Gormly CBE

Chairman, Royal Insurance Holdings plc; Joint Deputy Chairman, Trafalgar House plc; Director, National Grid Co. plc, BPB Industries plc, Brixton Estate plc, Eurorail Ltd.

Mr. Hugh R. Jenkins

Chief Executive, Prudential Portfolio Managers; Director, Prudential Corporation; Member, DoE Property Advisory Group.

Mr. Pen Kent

Director, Bank of England.

Ms Sheila V. Masters

Partner, KPMG Peat Marwick; Non-executive Director, Bank of England; Non-executive Member, Inland Revenue Management Board and NHS Policy Board.

Sir Brian Pearse

Chairman, The Housing Corporation, Lucas Industries, British Invisibles and Young Enterprise. Director, Smith and Nephew plc, Financial Reporting Council, BOTB, London First Centre.

Mr. Neville Simms

Group Chief Executive, Tarmac plc; Non-executive Director, Courtaulds plc.

Mr. Alastair Ross Goobey

Chief Executive, PosTel Investment Management; Non-executive Director Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society; Non-executive Director, TR Property Investment Trust.

Mr. Murray Stuart

Chairman, Scottish Power; Deputy Chairman, Audit Commission; Director, Hill Samuel.

Mr. Steve Robson

Director (Finance, Regulation and Industry), HM Treasury.

All the members were appointed in November 1993, with the exceptions of Sir Christopher Bland (November 1994), Mr. Ross Goobey (September 1995) and Mr. Stuart (October 1995).

The panel was selected, in discussions between both the previous and present chairmen and myself, in order to bring a mixture of experience and expertise to the task of promoting the progress of the private finance initiative.

Private Medical Insurance

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what discussions have taken place, and with whom, about extending private medical insurance tax relief to those policies specifically designed to cover long-term care needs; [39383]

(2) what representations have been made to his Department concerning extending private medical insurance tax relief to those policies specifically designed to cover long-term care needs. [39384]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* The Treasury receives representations from, and has discussions with, many individuals and organisations with regard to taxation issues including tax relief for policies covering long-term care.

Taxation

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give his best estimate at 1995–96 prices and in cash terms for the total amount of *(a)* direct and *(b)* indirect tax paid since 1945 by (i) a married man on average earnings with two children where only the man is working and (ii) a single person on three quarters of average earnings. [40781]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Tables showing the burden of direct taxes and indirect taxes on various specimen households since 1978–79 are shown in the tax-benefit reference manual, copies of which are held in the House of Commons Library. Comparable figures for both direct and indirect taxes are not available for earlier years.

Corporation Tax

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the number of companies receiving corporation tax repayments in excess of £250 million in 1994–95 or the latest available year. [40785]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Information held centrally shows that no repayment of corporation tax exceeded £250 million in 1994–95, the latest available year.

Company Dividends

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he proposes to take on the use of special dividends in relation to takeovers and mergers. [40779]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Dividend policy is a matter for the private sector companies concerned.

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give for the latest available year for estates valued at over *(a)* £2 million, *(b)* £3 million, *(c)* £4 million, *(d)* £5 million and *(e)* £6 million, (i) the number of estates notified for probate, (ii) the inheritance tax raised and (iii) the value of exemptions. [40784]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Provisional estimates for estates applying for grants of representation where death occurred in the financial year 1991–92, and where the net estate was valued at £2 million or over, are given. Figures for more recent years are not available.

	1991-92
(i) Number of estates applying for grants of representations	217
(ii) Inheritance tax liabilities	£140 million
(iii) Total capital value of exemptions and reliefs[1]	£390 million

[1] Including value of IHT threshold.

A further breakdown of estates over £2 million cannot be reliably estimated and, in any case, the numbers involved may be too small to give adequate protection to the confidentiality of individual estates.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Former Yugoslavia

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy on the recognition of states and boundaries following policy decisions taken in respect of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia. [40703]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The United Kingdom recognised the Republics of Croatia and Slovenia on 15 January 1992, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina on 7 April 1992 and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 8 April 1993. The United Kingdom does not recognise the statehood of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia—Serbia and Montenegro. Succession issues, such as the division of assets and liabilities, will be resolved after the conclusion of the peace process.

United States of America

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has received regarding United Kingdom citizens refused entry or re-entry into the United States of America at United States' ports of entry in the last five years; and how many of these involved United Kingdom citizens seeking to return to the United States of America after a visit to Canada. [40692]

Mr. Hanley: Eleven and none respectively.

Foreign Affairs Council

Ms Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the EU Foreign Affairs Council of 2 and 3 October. [40111]

Mr. David Davis: The outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council of 2 October was recorded in a letter from the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs the hon. Member for Boothferry, to the Chairman of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. Copies of the letter have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Bankruptcy Petition

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40524]

Mr. Hanley: The information requested will take some time to obtain. I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Late Payments (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40523]

Mr. Hanley: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office—diplomatic wing and Overseas Development Administration—is committed to the CBI prompt payment code. This requires all invoices to be paid within the agreed credit period, or within 30 days of receipt where no credit period has been agreed. The following table shows the percentage of all invoices not paid on time by the diplomatic wing, the Overseas Development Administration, and the executive agencies Wilton Park and the Natural Resources Institute. Separate figures for small businesses' invoices are not available.

Per cent.

	DW	*ODA*	*WP*	*NRI*
1991–92	14	n/a	n/a	n/a
1992–93	9	n/a	0	n/a
1993–94	5	13	12	n/a
1994–95	8	13	5	4
1995–96	[1]8	[2]7	[1]0	[2]8

[1] April–September.

[2] April–late October.

British Citizens Overseas

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list in descending order the estimates he has available of *(a)* the number of British citizens resident in each overseas country, *(b)* the number of such citizens registered to vote in United Kingdom elections and *(c)* the percentage which this is of *(a)*, with overall totals. [40227]

Mr. Hanley: The estimated number of Britons resident abroad as at end December 1994 in descending order by country is below.

In 1994 18,552 overseas electors were registered to vote in United Kingdom elections, representing 0.017 per cent. of the total number of Britons resident abroad.

Estimated number of Britons resident abroad as at end December 1994

	Number
Australia	3,400,000
Canada	3,000,000
USA	1,448,000
South Africa	1,080,000
New Zealand	400,000
Spain	300,500
Irish Republic	200,000
Germany	152,088
Italy	91,000
France	65,901
Kenya	49,073
Netherlands	44,672
Greece	40,530
Israel	38,500
Saudi Arabia	32,500
India	30,110
Zimbabwe	30,000
Portugal	25,600
Belgium	25,000
Cyprus	20,000
Denmark	18,573
United Arab Emirates	18,500
Japan	17,000
Norway	14,000
Tanzania	12,000
Sweden	10,927
Zambia	10,000
Switzerland	9,079
Brazil	9,050
Malaysia	8,600
Nigeria	8,400
Antigua and Barbuda	7,676
Barbados	7,500
Philippines	7,500
Indonesia	7,000
Singapore	7,000
Austria	6,500
Oman	6,500
Bahrain	6,331
Bahamas	6,000
Botswana	6,000
Brunei	6,000
Chile	6,000
Swaziland	6,000
Argentina	5,800
Thailand	5,600
Malawi	5,500
Jerusalem	5,000
Poland	5,000
Trinidad and Tobago	5,000
Turkey	4,200
Egypt	4,000
Kuwait	4,000
Libya	4,000
Luxembourg	4,000
Malta	4,000
Mexico	4,000
Jamaica	3,600
Qatar	3,500
Lebanon	3,482
China	2,850
Colombia	2,500
Czech Republic	2,500
Romania	2,500
Russian Federation	2,500
Hungary	2,300
Ivory Coast	2,000
Venezuela	2,000
Peru	1,962
Ghana	1,700
Uganda	1,700
Finland	1,600

Estimated number of Britons resident abroad as at end December 1994

	Number
Pakistan	1,600
Mauritius	1,500
Papua New Guinea	1,500
Sri Lanka	1,500
Sierra Leone	1,350
Cuba	1,275
Jordan	1,200
Namibia	1,200
Uruguay	1,100
Morocco	1,054
Belize	1,000
Costa Rica	1,000
Grenada	1,000
Korea	1,000
Mozambique	1,000
Nepal	850
Yugoslavia	814
Ecuador	800
Guyana	800
Iceland	800
Ukraine	800
Vietnam	700
Zaire	700
Croatia	694
Seychelles	650
Bolivia	600
St. Lucia	600
Syria	600
Fiji	550
Gambia	550
Lesotho	550
Bangladesh	540
Sudan	500
Ethiopia	450
Tunisia	450
Yemen	425
Angola	400
Iran	400
Guatemala	390
Cambodia	338
Panama	334
Honduras	250
Algeria	247
Solomon Islands	230
Senegal	206
Cameroon	200
Madagascar	200
Paraguay	200
Slovakia	200
Slovenia	200
Vanuatu	200
Nicaragua	177
El Salvador	172
Bulgaria	150
Kazakhstan	150
Burma	123
Albania	120
Estonia	75
Lithuania	75
Tonga	74
Mongolia	70
Uzbekistan	56
Azerbaijan	50
Latvia	40
Macedonia	40
Belarus	30
Total	10,829,503

French Nuclear Testing Programme

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between French and British officials on the environmental effects of the French nuclear testing programme. [40197]

Mr. David Davis *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* British officials have discussed with French counterparts a number of aspects relating to the resumption of French nuclear testing, including the environmental effects.

Ken Saro-Wiwa

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Nigerian military Government about the case of Ken Saro-Wiwa; and what representations he has received about the case. [40622]

Mr. Hanley *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* We and our European Union partners have raised this case with the Nigerian Government many times. We deplore the death sentences passed on Ken Saro-Wiwa and his co-defendants following a flawed judicial process and urge the Nigerian authorities to commute these sentences. We have received a large number of representations on the case, from Members of both Houses and members of the public.

NATIONAL HERITAGE

Digital Broadcasting

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will place in the Library a copy of the Oftel submission which she has received and which relates to digital broadcasting. [39925]

Mr. Sproat: Oftel has agreed that the contents of its submission in response to digital terrestrial broadcasting (Cm 2946) may be made public and I have today placed copies in the Libraries of the House.

National Lottery

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what allocation of national lottery funds has been made to date to organisations and projects in the Cannock Chase district council area. [40203]

Mr. Sproat: Figures for national lottery funds broken down by district council areas are not currently available.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what plans she has to allow the Library Association access to national lottery funding. [40252]

Mr. Sproat: All bodies, including the Library Association, can apply for national lottery funding. All applications are judged against the criteria of the distributing bodies and decisions about awards are for them to make.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what is the European Union legislation that applies to the capping of public expenditure grants to organisations which are in receipt of national lottery money; and if she will make a statement. [39070]

Mr. Sproat: I am not aware of any such legislation.

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list the projects which have received lottery funds and have consequently been excluded from receiving public funds for which they would normally be eligible. [38345]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 24 October 1995]:* I know of no such projects.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what representations she has received from Wales concerning the operation of the national lottery. [39576]

Mr. Sproat: The national lottery is an outstanding success and has become the focus of a great deal of attention. Bearing this in mind, a large number of representations concerning the operation of the national lottery have been received from all of the United Kingdom. The Government have always stated that they will be keeping all aspects of the lottery under review and such representations as I have received are a useful contribution to this process.

Late Payments (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how often her Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40515]

Mr. Sproat: My Department is committed to the payment of invoices within agreed contractual provisions or within 30 days of the presentation of a valid invoice or delivery, if later. While the information requested is not available, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost, the following has been produced on the basis of a sample of invoices received by the Department of National Heritage:

Year	*Invoices received*	*Payment delayed*	*Percentage paid on time*
1993–94	291	42	85.6
1994–95	1,323	124	90.6
1995–96	243	12	95.1

Our records cannot be used to determine "small businesses". There are no comparable departmental figures for earlier years as the Department's payment system was not in place until 1993, following the establishment of DNH in April 1992.

The Royal Parks agency and Historic Royal Palaces agency do not currently hold records that could provide the information requested, it could only be provided at disproportionate cost. An examination of invoices for goods and services paid by the Royal Parks agency during October 1994 indicated that 96 per cent. were paid within the 30-day credit period allowed.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by her Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40516]

Mr. Sproat: Since the establishment of the Department of National Heritage in April 1992 no such petitions have been raised.

Mediaeval Boat Hull, Bedwin Sands

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what assistance her Department has given to the archaeologists' attempts to raise a mediaeval boat hull from the Bedwin Sands in the Severn estuary; and if she will make a statement. [39572]

Mr. Sproat: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Wales on 30 October 1995, *Official Report*, on 30 October 1995, column *95*.

Libraries

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what proposals she has to connect libraries to the Internet; and if she will provide funding to ensure that customers have free access to the service. [40253]

Mr. Sproat: I am considering the use of new technology in public libraries as part of the on-going public library review, and this topic will be covered in a ministerial statement on the outcome of the review, later this year. However, connection to the Internet, and policy on whether to charge for public access, is a matter for individual library authorities.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many libraries in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the west midlands have been closed over the past five years. [40249]

Mr. Sproat: I do not hold this information for England. Questions about public libraries in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are for their respective Secretaries of State.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what recent representations she has received in respect of the future of the libraries in the United Kingdom. [40255]

Mr. Sproat: We have received representations on both the Aslib report, which is a key element in the public library review, and the KPMG/capital planning information report on the scope for contracting out in public libraries. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State plans to make a further statement to Parliament on these by the end of the year. We have also received a number of representations relating to the Library Association's current campaign. Questions about public libraries in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are for their respective Secretaries of State.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will make a statement on the impact of the collapse of the net book agreement on the range of books library suppliers are able to offer libraries. [40251]

Mr. Sproat: The net book agreement was a voluntary arrangement in which the Government played no part. It is to early to tell what effect the removal of the agreement will have on the book market and on the range of books offered by library suppliers.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage (1) how many mobile libraries operated in *(a)* the United Kingdom *(b)* the west midlands during (i) 1992–93, (ii) 1993–94 and (iii) 1994–95; and what are the projected figures for each of the next two years; [40254]

(2) how many libraries in the United Kingdom now open for more than 60 hours per week; and how many opened for more than 60 hours per week during *(a)* 1992–93 and *(b)* 1993–94. [40248]

Mr. Sproat: Such information is contained in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's public library statistics, copies of which are available in the Library of the House. The latest actual information is for 1993–94, but estimates are available for 1994–95.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many libraries in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the west midlands she expects to (i) close or (ii) reduce the service they provide over the next two years. [40250]

Mr. Sproat: In England such matters are for local authorities to decide. Questions about public libraries in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are for their respective Secretaries of State.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Illegal Immigration (Employer Sanctions)

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list employers' organisations and other bodies which have made representations about his proposals for the introduction of employer sanctions to deter the employment of illegal immigrants or of those legally here but with a prohibition against working; and if he will place in the Library copies of the representations. [40228]

Mr. Kirkhope: I have received written representations from the Institute of Directors and from the St. Albans branch of Amnesty International. It would not be appropriate for me to place copies of these letters in the Library.

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimates he has available as to the scale of the problem of employers taking on illegal workers. [40229]

Mr. Kirkhope: No such estimates are available, but in 1994 over 10,000 people were detected by the immigration service working while either here illegally or here legally but prohibited from taking work.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department fo businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40520]

Mr. Howard: Information is not recorded in the form requested.

Late Payment (Small Business)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40519]

Mr. Howard: The information is not available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Departments and their agencies are required to provide details of their payment performance in their annual reports. In its 1995 annual report the Home Office reported that 92 per cent. of all valid invoices were paid within 30 days. There is no reason to believe that analysis of payments made to small businesses would show a different percentage.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40811]

Mr. Howard: It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. This provides the following information:

	1994–95 £	*1995–96* £
Lowest bands		
Home Office	5,000–10,000	5,000–10,000
Agencies	5,000–10,000	5,000–10,000
NDPBs	5,000–10,000[1]	5,000–10,000[1]
Highest bands		
Home Office	95,000–99,999	100,000–105,000
Agencies	125,000–130,000	130,000–135,000
NDPBs	95,000–99,999	95,000–99,999

[1] The figure for NDPBs is an estimate.

Travel Document Section

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the main recommendations of the recent efficiency review of the travel document section; when those recommendations are to be implemented; and if he will make a statement. [40852]

Mr. Kirkhope: The following main recommendations of the efficiency review of the travel document section have been accepted and take effect from today: that cases should be allocated on arrival to dedicated teams within the section which should retain responsibility for processing the application from start to finish. Applications should be acknowledged and an indication given of the time likely to be needed to process them. Mandatory issues should be given priority and completed with the minimum of delay. Management information systems should be improved.

Two other main recommendations will be implemented as soon as the preparatory work, including consultation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has been completed. These were: to introduce an improved travel document; in connection with the improved travel document, to review and redesign the application form.

The travel document section must retain its responsibility to consider applications for documents carefully and to check for signs of abuse, but I am satisfied that these recommendations will produce a better service for applicants entitled to a Home Office travel document.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the number of individuals in his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeded (i) 100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in (1) 1985–86, (2) 1990–91, (3) 1992–93, (4) 1994–95 and (5) 1995–96. [40810]

Mr. Howard: Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies or non-departmental public bodies. As members of the principal civil service pensions scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules which had been deposited in the Library.

There are only a few exceptions in my Department. One person was paid at a total rate of more than £100,000 in 1992–93, and two actually received more than £100,000 in 1994–95. Five people will have in effect been paid over £100,000 by the end of the financial year 1995–96, and one further person was paid at a rate of more than £100,000 for part of the year.

No individual has earned or will earn in excess of £200,000 or £300,000 in the period specified.

Police National Computer

Sir Ivan Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for recording cautions on the police national computer. [41372]

Mr. Maclean: From 1 November, the police service will record all cautions administered for reportable offences on the Phoenix database of the police national computer. This will ensure for the first time that police will have access to records of cautions administered by other forces as well as those issued by their own force.

Police Stations

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many new police stations have opened in each year since 1979. [40468]

Mr. Maclean: The information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police stations in each English county *(a)* are open 24 hours per day and *(b)* have restricted opening times. [40467]

Mr. Maclean: The information is not collected centrally.

Prison Overcrowding

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what contractual provisions exist for overcrowding in *(a)* Her Majesty's prison Wolds, *(b)* Her Majesty's prison Blakenhurst and *(c)* Her Majesty's prison Doncaster; and if he will list in each case (i) the occasions on which they were overcrowded and (ii) details of any additional payments made to the contractors. [40465]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. George Howarth, dated 2 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about overcrowding in the contractually-managed prisons.

There is no contractual provision for overcrowding in Wolds or Blakenhurst prisons. In the contract for Doncaster prison, there is provision for the Prison Service to ask the contractor to accommodate 1,169 prisoners.

Hitherto, it has not been Prison Service policy to overcrowd new prisons. In line with this policy none of these prisons have been overcrowded, although all prisons, whether in the public sector or the private sector, occasionally hold small numbers of prisoners above their normal capacity for operational reasons.

No additional payments to cover overcrowding have been made to any of the contractors.

Police Recruitment

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assumptions he has made about the number of policemen and women who are to be recruited into the service as a result of the Prime Minister's announcement at the Conservative party conference being out on foot patrol at any given point in time. [40475]

Mr. Maclean: None. There will be extra funding available to enable chief constables to recruit an additional 5,000 officers over the next three years. The deployment of officers is an operational matter for chief constables.

Sheehy Reforms

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the benefits and disbenefits of the Sheehy reforms. [40473]

Mr. Maclean: The Government's decision on police pay and conditions of service, following the inquiry into police responsibilities and rewards, was informed by detailed recommendations by the police negotiating board, whose careful consideration of each of the proposed reforms took account of their implications for the efficiency management of the police service.

Some of the immediate benefits of the Government's reforms were a more streamlined management structure, new pay structures, a rationalisation of an outdated system of allowances, new arrangements for the management of the payment of overtime and a reform of the rules governing pay while on sick leave.

Doncaster Prison

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what penalty he has imposed on the contractors of Her Majesty's prison Doncaster for exceeding the number of assaults allowed for in the contract. [40464]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. George Howarth, dated 1 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about assaults at Doncaster prison.

No penalty has been imposed on Premier Prison Services Ltd in relation to the number of assaults at Doncaster prison. The total number of assaults on prisoners and staff in the first year of operation did not exceed a level which would be consistent with the population mix and the likely incidence of assaults in a newly opened prison.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* convicted and *(b)* remand prisoners there were in Doncaster prison in each of the past 12 months. [39563]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 81 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking how many *(a)* convicted and *(b)* remand prisoners there were in Doncaster prison in each of the past 12 months.

The information requested (for the last day of the month) is given in the attached table.

Population in Doncaster prison on the last day of the month by type of custody, October 1994–September 1995

	Type of custody				
Last day of month	*Untried*	*Convicted unsentenced*	*Sentenced*	*Fine defaulters*	*Total*
1994					
October	366	158	197	14	735
November	379	151	232	9	771
December	366	134	208	4	712
1995					
January	404	150	203	5	762
February	397	159	218	4	778
March	391	151	228	6	776
April	346	132	265	7	750
May	354	134	269	9	766
June	303	162	257	11	733
July	338	133	281	12	764
August	376	143	231	5	755
September	340	162	227	15	744

Prison Population Estimates

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are his estimates for the prison population for each of the next five years following his recent announcement; and what are the previous projections. [40460]

Mr. Maclean: The most recent projections of long-term trends in the prison population to 2002 were published in Home Office statistical bulletin 4/95, a copy of which is in the Library. A White Paper will be published early in 1996 setting out full details of the Government's proposals and an assessment of their implications.

Prison Health Services

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy of his department in regard to supporting and encouraging the working of local community health councils with hospital services within the prison department; and if he will make a statement. [39755]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 1 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about policy on the support of local community health councils working with health care services in the Prison Service.

The local community health councils are groups of lay people who operate in the National Health Service. They have a wide remit which involves among other things, inspection of hospital services and patient advocacy.

A similar function is carried out within prisons by Boards of Visitors, which are appointed by and report directly to the Home Secretary. All aspects of prison life including prison health care centres are open to Boards of Visitors and they fulfil the same role as the local community health councils with regard to prisoners.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39565]

Mr. Howard: The chief executives of the United Kingdom Passport Agency and the Fire Service College, the Director General of the Forensic Science Service and the temporary Director General of the Prison Service have advised me that the information available is as shown in the tables.

United Kingdom Passport Agency

Grades	*1994–95* *Number of staff*[1]	*Total cost*[2] £	*1995–96* *Number of staff*[1]	*Total cost*[2] £
Grade 5	1	73,000	1	75,000
Grade 6	3	156,000	3	161,000
Grade 7	10	400,000	10	41,200
Senior Executive Officer	16.66	502,000	16.66	517,000
Higher Executive Officer	54.54	1,463,000	54.54	1,507,000
Executive Officer	170.17	3,556,000	170.17	3,663,000
Administrative Officer	650.13	10,156,000	650.13	10,461,000
Administrative Assistant	557.42	5,444,000	[3]737.88	[3]7,423,000
Personal Secretary	7.04	137,000	7.04	141,000
Typing Manager	2	45,000	2	46,000
Typist	22.92	347,000	22.92	357,000
Support Grade Band 1	18.46	316,000	18.46	325,000
Support Grade Band 2	78.33	928,000	78.33	956,000
Total	1,591.67	23,533,000	1,772.13	26,044,000

[1] Staff figures are average full-time equivalents. The figures for 1994–95 are actual, and those for 1995–96 projected.

[2] Total cost includes NI and Superannuation.

[3] The increase in numbers and resources at the AA Grade is due to a projected 16 per cent. increase in passport demand from 1994–95 to 1995–96.

Fire Service College

Grades	*1994–95* *Number ofstaff*[1]	*Total cost*[2] £	*1995–96* *Number of staff*[1]	*Total cost*[2] £
Grade 5	1	61,099	1	61,099
Grade 6	1	48,266	1	48,266
Grade 7	4	157,090	2.5	98,181
Senior Executive Officer	2	55,964	3	83,947
Higher Executive Officer	6	143,195	6	143,195
Executive Officer	16	283,943	15	266,196
Administrative Officer	33	412,152	33.5	418,397
Administrative Assistant	8.5	85,135	9.5	95,150
Deputy Commandant	1	69,960	1	69,960
Assistant Chief Officer	2	84,769	2	84,769
Senior Divisional Officer	1	41,090	1	41,090
Divisional Officer II	5	145,813	3	87,488
Assistant Divisional Officer	2	54,235	2	54,235
Fire Superintendent	1	25,934	1	25,934
Support Grade Band 2	5	57,338	5	57,338
Professional and Technical Officer	3	57,811	3	57,811
Graphics Officer	1	21,341	1	21,341
Technical Officer 1	2	33,231	2	33,231
Technical Officer 2	3	37,881	3	37,881
Personal Secretary	4	61,948	4	61,948
Typist	6	83,268	5	69,380
Messenger Manager	0.5	6,813	0.5	6,813
Occupational Health Adviser	1	28,369	1	28,369
Senior Information Officer	1	23,905	1	23,905
Higher Information Officer	1	22,947	1	22,947
Information Officer 2	2	34,038	2	34,038
Librarian	1	23,538	1	23,538
Assistant Librarian	4	68,513	4	68,513
Nurse Manager	1	14,230	1	14,230
Nurse	1	12,893	1	12,893
Assistant Nurse	1	9,404	1	9,404
Shop Manager	1	13,963	1	13.963
Shop Assistant	2	19,178	2	19,178
Principal Lecturer	2	82,325	3	123,472
Senior Lecturer	4	142,119	2	71,060
Lecturer	20	610,443	19	579,921
Head of Department 6	1	52,101	1	52,101
Head of Department 5	1	41,697	1	41.697
Head of Department 4	1	45,137	1	45,137
Head of Department 3	1	41,157	1	41,157
Deputy Chief Fire Officer[3]	1	122,922	1	122,922

Fire Service College

Grades	1994–95 Number of staff[1]	1994–95 Total cost[2] £	1995–96 Number of staff[1]	1995–96 Total cost[2] £
Group Fire Control Officer[3]	1	40,378	1	40,378
Station Officer[3]	16	655,559	16.5	676,045
Divisional Officer I[3]	5	278,576	3	167,148
Divisional Officer II[3]	12	622,912	13	674,822
Assistant Divisional Officer[3]	36	1,598,290	25	1,109,923
Sub Officer[3]	1	36,262	1	36,262
Grade 7 (CS)	1	44,809	1	44,809
Industrial Staff	41.5	463,815	40.5	452,639
Station Officer	0	0	2	59,799
Total	268.5	7,177,540	253	6,473,932

[1] Staff figures are full-time equivalents.

[2] Total cost for 1994–95 assumes that the 2.2 per cent. increment for 1994 has been consolidated, therefore irrespective of any other increase for 1995–96 the cost figures are the same. Total cost includes NI and Superannuation.

[3] Staff seconded from UK Fire Brigades but included in overall Fire Service College paybill.

Forensic Science Service

Grades	1994–95 Number of staff[1]	1994–95 Total cost[2]	1995–96 Number of staff[1]	1995–96 Total cost[2]
Grade 3	1	n/a	1	n/a
Grade 5	5	n/a	5	n/a
Grade 6	9	n/a	9	n/a
A3 Senior Forensic Scie4ntist	18	n/a	17.8	n/a
A2 Senior Forensic Scientist	37.5	n/a	47.5	n/a
A1 Senior Forensic Scientist	137.5	n/a	130.9	n/a
B2 Forensic Scientist	55.1	n/a	77.7	n/a
B1 Forensic Scientist	92.8	n/a	75.4	n/a
C2 Assistant Forensic Scientist	102.3	n/a	104.4	n/a
C1 Assistant Forensic Scientist	65.6	n/a	145.4	n/a
Senior Executive Officer	4	n/a	4	n/a
Higher Executive Officer	3.5	n/a	4	n/a
Executive Officer	12.2	n/a	10.6	n/a
Administrative Officer	34.4	n/a	33.8	n/a
Administrative Assistant	27	n/a	25.7	n/a
Senior Personal Secretary	1	n/a	1	n/a
Personal Secretary	21.8	n/a	19.6	n/a
Typist	13.7	n/a	13.9	n/a
Support Grade Band 2	24	n/a	28.7	n/a
Support Grade Band 1	3	n/a	3.3	n/a
Students	6	n/a	10	n/a
Casuals	8.5	n/a	14.5	n/a
Total	682.7	16,525,000	783.2	£18,080,000

[1] Staff numbers are full-time equivalents at 20 March 1995.

[2] Total cost include NI and Superannuation.

Her Majesty's Prison Service

Grade types	1994–95 Number of staff[1]	1994–95 Total cost[2] £	1995–96 Number of staff[1]	1995–96 Total cost[2] £
Prison Service grades[3]	27,980	532,200,000	28,520	542,100,000
Non-industrial grades[4]	7,750	129,400,000	8,000	133,600,000
Industrial grades[5]	2,880	40,500,000	2,930	41,300,000
Other costs[6]	n/a	2,600,000	n/a	2,600,000

[1] Staff numbers are expressed as full-time equivalents. 1995–96 staff averages are subject to revision in the light of additional security requirements.

[2] Total cost include pay, allowances and overtime (where applicable) but not indirect staff costs or employer's contributions to NI and superannuation. 1995–96 costs are exclusive of 1995 pay awards, which are not yet completed.

[3] Prison Officers, governors and operational support staff.

[4] Executive, administrative, office support and specialist staff.

[5] Includes Farms and Gardens (agricultural) staff.

[6] Other costs includes advances of salary and early retirement.

Council Tax (Non-payment)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were serving a sentence of imprisonment for the non-payment of their council tax as at 10 October. [39753]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 1 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking how many people were serving a sentence of imprisonment for the non-payment of their council tax as at 10 October.

The latest available information is for 30 September 1995. On that date there were no prisoners in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales for non-payment of council tax.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the Immigration Advisory Service calling for detained asylum seekers to be entitled for their detention to be reviewed on a weekly basis by adjudicators of the

Independent Appellate Authority; what has been his response to such representations; and if he will make a statement. [40443]

Mr. Kirkhope *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* There is no record of any representations from the Immigration Advisory Service calling for a change in policy on the review of detention.

Director General of the Prison Service

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the post of Director General of the Prison Service is to go out to open advertisement; and what qualities he will seek in the successful applicant. [39841]

Mr. Howard: I hope to make an announcement shortly.

Custody Statistics

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners now held in custody have currently served *(a)* at least 30 years, *(b)* at least 25 years and *(c)* at least 20 years continuously in custody. [39813]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. William Powell, dated 1 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking, how many prisoners now held in custody have currently served *(a)* at least 30 years, *(b)* at least 25 years and *(c)* at least 20 years continuously in custody.

The information is not available in the form requested as detailed information about a prisoner's movements is not available centrally. The available information relates to those prisoners whose date of sentence was 20, 25 or 30 years ago. Provisional information for 30 September 1995 shows that two hundred prisoners were sentenced more than 20 years ago, eighty four of whom were sentenced more than 25 years ago and twenty five more than 30 years ago.

Rapists

Ms Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many male prisoners are currently serving life sentences for rape; and how many of this group are repeat offenders. [39601]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Ms Janet Anderson, dated 1 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking, how many male prisoners are currently serving life sentences for rape; and how many of this group are repeat offenders.

The latest available information is for 31 December 1994. On that date there were 188 males in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales serving a life sentence for rape. Information on the number of repeat offenders is not immediately available. I will write to you again with this information as soon as possible.

Temazepam

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what is his latest estimate of the number of people who have had one or more limbs amputated as a result of injecting the gel formulation of the drug Temazepam during each of the past five years; [39184]

(2) what is his latest estimate of the number of deaths in each of the past five years which were related to the abuse of the drug Temazepam; what estimate he has made of the percentage of these which involved the gel formulation; and if he will make a statement. [39196]

Mr. Maclean: I refer the hon. Member to the replies given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health on 27 October *Official Report,* column *849.*

Crime Prevention Agency

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what will be the structure of the new Crime Prevention Agency announced in his speech of 12 October; what type of body will be in charge of it; from which institutions or bodies staff will be recruited or seconded; and which existing organisation will become part of the agency or have staff transferred to it. [39961]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* I will announce the details shortly.

Prostitution

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has commissioned into how other EC countries deal with prostitution, kerb crawling and soliciting. [40577]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* We have not commissioned any research into how other EC countries deal with prostitution, kerb crawling and soliciting.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were prosecuted for *(a)* soliciting, *(b)* prostitution and *(c)* kerb crawling in each of the last five years. [40578]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The information is given in the table:

Number of persons prosecuted for certain offences 1990–1994[1]

England and Wales

Offence description	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*[1]
Persistent soliciting of women for the purpose of prostitution (Sexual Offences Act 1985 Sec	21	90	71	70	6946
Common prostitute loitering or soliciting for the purpose of prostitution (Street Offences Act 1959 Sec 1)	10,612	10,262	9,584	8,094	7,177
Kerb-crawling (Sexual Offences Act 1959 Sec 1)	1,377	1,323	1,005	777	1,113

[1] Provisional.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to make kerb crawling and soliciting recordable offences. [40580]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Loitering and soliciting for the purposes of prostitution is already a recordable offence. Kerb crawling currently is not, but I am considering whether it should be.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the effectiveness of the Street Offences Act 1959 and other relevant legislation in relation to soliciting, prostitution and kerb crawling. [40581]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* We believe that the law in relation to soliciting, prostitution and kerb crawling is generally effective, and we have no plans to review it.

ENVIRONMENT

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment for what grant-givings funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38599]

Sir Paul Beresford: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him yesterday by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of National Heritage.

Local Government Finance

Sir Peter Hordern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the shire counties' budgets for 1994–95, ranking them in order from the largest increase from the previous year to the lowest. [38580]

Mr. Curry: The requested information is as follows:

Budgeted net revenue expenditure

£ thousand

	1993–94	*1994–95*	*Percentage increase*
Essex	916,746	982,211	7.14
Surrey	535,000	572,750	7.06
Hampshire	875,167	935,579	6.90
Durham	365,992	389,621	6.46
Cleveland	403,791	426,835	5.71
Devon	594,059	627,715	5.67
West Sussex	403,140	425,376	5.52
Hertfordshire	597,422	630,259	5.50
Hereford and Worcester	372,435	392,602	5.41
Derbyshire	557,568	587,507	5.37
Humberside	575,933	606,678	5.34
Norfolk	437,460	460,128	5.18
Cambridgeshire	389,192	408,758	5.03
Dorset	353,565	371,071	4.95
Avon	568,892	596,863	4.92
East Sussex	416,519	436,567	4.81
Isle of Wight	78,453	82,192	4.77
Cornwall	288,045	301,500	4.67
Cheshire	587,400	614,817	4.67
Kent	964,833	1,009,770	4.66
Berkshire	462,846	484,287	4.63
North Yorkshire	398,478	416,497	4.52
Somerset	271,355	283,277	4.39
Gloucestershire	306,610	319,546	4.22
Lincolnshire	363,829	378,808	4.12
Wiltshire	324,509	337,855	4.11
Oxfordshire	326,569	339,789	4.05
Lancashire	922,071	958,568	3.96
Shropshire	243,991	252,945	3.67
Staffordshire	598,753	620,712	3.67
Bedfordshire	352,922	364,872	3.39
Northamptonshire	365,499	377,582	3.31
Warwickshire	288,276	297,600	3.23
Cumbria	310,634	319,506	2.86
Buckinghamshire	417,377	428,000	2.55
Leicestershire	554,101	567,888	2.49
Nottinghamshire	675,158	690,281	2.24
Suffolk	371,517	378,750	1.95
Northumberland	189,168	191,127	1.04
Total	18,025,275	18,866,689	4.67

Source:

Revenue account returns (RA94 and RA95).

Note:

Net revenue expenditure is financed through revenue support grant, redistributed non-domestic rates, council taxes and withdrawals from financial reserves. Much of the increase in net revenue expenditure in shire counties between 1993–94 and 1994–95 can be attributed to the increased responsibilities associated with care in community.

Sir Peter Hordern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the amount of revenue support grant paid to each shire county in 1994–95, indicating the percentage movement from the previous year. [38577]

Mr. Curry: The requested information is as follows:

Revenue support grant

£ thousand

	1993–94	*1994–95*	*Percentage Movement*
Avon	210,349	231,066	9.85
Bedfordshire	164,372	177,975	8.28
Berkshire	184,157	201,220	9.27
Buckinghamshire	174,081	192,144	10.38
Cambridgeshire	150,499	170,425	13.24
Cheshire	222,981	250,838	12.49
Cleveland	211,432	224,906	6.37
Cornwall	111,153	126,130	13.47
Cumbria	127,558	140,367	10.04
Derbyshire	211,990	241,693	14.01
Devon	223,173	252,314	13.06
Dorset	114,032	129,889	13.91
Durham	164,275	190,899	16.21
East Sussex	152,910	171,660	12.26
Essex	386,223	442,710	14.63
Gloucestershire	111,708	122,009	9.22
Hampshire	336,625	379,960	12.87
Hereford and Worcester	130,194	147,936	13.63
Hertfordshire	229,600	264,788	15.33
Humberside	265,891	284,832	7.12
Isle of Wight	31,407	36,160	15.13
Kent	412,997	464,268	12.41
Lancashire	395,532	434,853	9.94
Leicestershire	249,061	263,909	5.96
Lincolnshire	151,147	166,940	10.45
Norfolk	161,305	183,904	14.01
Northamptonshire	160,797	168,255	4.64
Northumberland	80,335	93,093	15.88
North Yorkshire	135,319	154,182	13.94
Nottinghamshire	275,171	295,627	7.43

Revenue support grant

£ thousand

	1993–94	*1994–95*	*Percentage Movement*
Oxfordshire	106,485	124,175	16.61
Shropshire	97,225	107,978	11.06
Somerset	97,912	110,209	12.56
Staffordshire	245,106	273.345	11.52
Suffolk	140,224	154,330	10.06
Surrey	147,217	178,522	21.26
Warwickshire	94,198	106,115	12.65
West Sussex	126,131	153,329	21.56
Wiltshire	117,024	129,615	10.76
Total	7,107,796	7,942,570	11.74

Source:

Revenue account (RA95) return.

Note:

Revenue support grant is calculated as the difference between an authority's standard spending assessment and the sum of the income from its council tax, assuming that its tax was set at the council tax for standard spending, and its share of the distributable amount of non-domestic rates. At national level, the change in the amount of RSG reflects changes in each of these elements. The differential increases in RSG between authorities will reflect changes in assessed need function and in the size of their own taxbase. Between 1993–94 and 1994–95 in particular, total RSG increased through the fall in the yield of the NDR, and the increase in SSA necessitated by increased responsibilities for local authorities associated with care in the community. In shire counties, the latter amounted to some £350 million.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he is taking to ensure that counties that become unitary local authorities in 1997 do not lose the financial contributions they currently receive in respect of their sites and ancient monuments record; and if he will make a statement. [40008]

Sir Paul Beresford: Revenue support grant allocations are made using a formula to assess relative expenditure need for each authority to provide its services to a standard level. It will therefore continue to be applied to authorities affected by an order for structural change taking account of their provision of both "county" and "district" functions.

Health and Safety Appeals

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to create an appeals tribunal to hear appeals for environmental information and health and safety information. [39361]

Sir Paul Beresford: Under current plans, proposals for a tribunal will be included in the Government's legislative proposals to create a new access right to health and safety information. I cannot anticipate when parliamentary time will be available to create the new right, as I advised the hon. Member in Committee on 13 June.

Rental Accommodation

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many homes in London for rent in the *(a)* public and *(b)* private sectors are currently unoccupied. [39614]

Mr. Clappison: The numbers of local authority and housing association dwellings in London that were vacant on 1 April 1994, the latest date for which figures are available, were as follows:

	Number (per cent. of stock)
Local authority dwellings[1]	
All vacants	18,675 (2.9)
of which management vacants[2]	10,485 (1.6)
Housing association dwellings[3]	
All vacants	7,896 (4.3)
of which management vacants[2]	3,193 (1.7)

Source:

[1] Annual Housing Investment Programme (HIP1) returns.

[2] Available for letting immediately or after minor repairs.

[3] Annual Housing Corporation HAR10/1 returns. The figures are not grossed up to take account of the small number of associations which did not submit a return.

The information which is available on private sector vacant dwellings, other than those of housing associations, does not identify separately those which are for rent.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39851]

Mr. Gummer: In the current year I have met the head of the Building Research Establishment once, the head of the Planning Inspectorate twice and the head of the Security Facilities Executive once. I have not met the heads of the two other next steps agencies for which my Department is responsible in the current year—the Buying Agency and the QE II Conference Centre.

Pollution

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the level of *(a)* nitrogen oxide, *(b)* carbon monoxide, *(c)* volatile organic compounds and *(d)* black smoke emissions in the atmosphere in 1983 and 1993. [39889]

Mr. Clappison: National emissions of nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, non-methane volatile organic compounds and black smoke in 1983 and 1993 are presented in the table.

Thousand tonnes

	National Emissions	
Pollutants	*1983*	*1993*
Nitrogen Oxides	2,331	2,347
Carbon Monoxide	5,065	5,641
Volatile Organic Compounds	2,384	2,418
Black Smoke	511	444

Source:

National Environmental Technology Centre, Culham, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3DB.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he had to simplify and clarify the measures of carbon dioxide and oxides of nitrogen used in the United Kingdom. [39899]

Mr. Clappison: My Department publishes data on UK emissions of carbon dioxide and oxides of nitrogen annually in accordance with international guidelines set out by the intergovernmental panel on climate change and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. A simple interpretation of the carbon dioxide data is given every six months in the Department's climate change newsletter.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy on siting pollution monitoring sites in order to register typical readings. [39900]

Mr. Clappison: Monitoring stations are sited taking into account independent expert advice in order to provide a comprehensive picture of air pollution across the country. Sites are selected according to the following criteria:

—urban background sites give information on the exposure of large numbers of people over significant periods of time;

—kerbside sites give information on the highest, albeit transient, levels of traffic-related pollution to which the public are exposed;

—hot spot sites are selected to find locations where the highest levels of pollution may occur after rigorous screening exercises using diffusion tubes.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment what representations he has received from local authorities asking him to use his powers as set out in the Environment Act 1995 to enable them to stop vehicles and test their emissions. [40363]

Mr. Clappison: I have received a number of representations from local authorities concerning powers to stop vehicles and test their emissions. There are no plans to change the law which only permits police officers to stop vehicles. However, enabling regulations could be made under section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 to permit local authorities, with police support, to carry our emissions checks on vehicles using the road. We are currently consulting with interested parties on how this might be done in practice.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment what proposals he has to introduce air quality standards to allow him to use powers contained in the Environment Act 1995 to set up air quality management areas. [40362]

Mr. Clappison: The national air quality strategy will include proposals for air quality standards. The strategy will be published for consultation under section 80 of the Environment Act 1995 within the next few months.

Canals

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the result of the Government's efforts to encourage greater use of canals. [39980]

Mr. Robert B. Jones: The management and operation of canals rests with the British Waterways Board and a range of other public and private bodies. One of the board's objectives is to promote the maximum use of the waterways for leisure, recreation and amenity, and where appropriate for freight transport.

There are over 150 million visits each year to the country's canals for boating, walking, angling and other pursuits. Last year, there were around 250,000 boating holidays on canals, a further increase of nearly 5 per cent. to 29,767 in the number of private pleasure boats licensed for canals, and BWB opened its second national waterway walk on the Kennet and Avon Canal.

There are also a number of Government programmes, including the single regeneration budget challenge fund, city challenge and urban development corporations, which encourage canal-side and related development. These programmes have contributed to the creation of jobs in the communities served by canals.

Pleasure Boats (Speed Limits)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policies towards speed limits for pleasure boats and holiday cruisers on inland waterways and rivers. [40030]

Mr. Robert B. Jones: Navigation authorities use their byelaw-making powers to determine speed limits for pleasure boats and holiday cruisers on their waterways. The limits are set at levels which suit local circumstances, following consultation with user groups.

Planning Application

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those planning applications since 1987 which he has chosen not to call in for his own decision despite being urged to do so by the Countryside Commission. [40477]

Sir Paul Beresford: This information is not held centrally.

Noise Disturbances

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information his Department has with regard to which local authorities have environmental health departments operating a 24-hour service in respect of noise disturbances. [40485]

Mr. Clappison: Of 328 local authorities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland which responded to a survey by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health in December 1994, 117 operate a 24-hour noise service. A further 134 operate a range of partial "out of hours" services, including responding to complaints on certain nights of the week and following up complaints received during normal working hours. The ability to respond will depend on staff resources in relation to the number and nature of complaints. The same survey indicated that target response times for domestic noise complaints were as follows:

	Authorities	*(Per cent.)*
Immediate response	9	(2.7)
Within 24 hours	51	(15.5)
Within 2-7 days	206	(62.8)
Longer than 7 days	9	(2.7)
Prioritised response service	49	(14.9)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the current position regarding proposals to introduce a fine for noise disturbances during the night and to empower environmental health officers to confiscate equipment; and if he will make a statement. [40486]

Mr. Clappison: The proposal to introduce a new night noise offence, punishable either by a fixed penalty or prosecution, was one of nine recommendations of a working party set up last year to review the effectiveness of the current neighbour noise controls. A further recommendation was to clarify current legislation by providing a specific power to enable temporary confiscation of noise-making equipment which would give a stronger legal basis for existing practice. The recommendations and conclusions of the working party were published in a consultation paper in March.

We are currently considering both the written responses to the recommendations in the consultation paper and the results of recent trials of the proposed new night noise offence. We hope to announce shortly how we propose to take forward the recommendations.

Swinden Quarry

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the organisations that urged him to call in for his own decision the application by Tilcon Ltd. to continue quarrying at Swinden in the Yorkshire Dales national park. [40476]

Sir Paul Beresford: The following organisations wrote to the Secretary of State requesting him to call in for his own determination the planning application to extend Swinden quarry.

The Countryside Commission

The Council for the Protection of Rural England

The Council for National Parks

Skipton Civic Society

The Open Spaces Society

The Ramblers Association

The Craven Green Party

The Yorkshire Dales Society

CRATER (Craven Residents against Tilcon's Extension Request).

Water, Doncaster

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the Servern Trent Water company's utilities programme for water metering in that part of the Doncaster metropolitan borough council area served by company; and if he will make a statement. [40215]

Mr. Clappison: Severn Trent Water does not supply water in any part of Doncaster metropolitan borough council's area. The company does, however, provide sewerage services, which are not metered, in a small part of the council's area.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the Yorkshire Water company's utilities programme for water metering in that part of the Doncaster metropolitan borough council area served by the company; and if he will make a statement. [40216]

Mr. Clappison: Yorkshire Water has a programme of metering new or substantially converted domestic properties and extending metering to all commercial premises in that part of Doncaster metropolitan borough council's area served by the company. Yorkshire Water also offers a voluntary meter option scheme. This policy applies throughout the area served by the company.

Living over Shops Schemes

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the environment if he will publish a list of all living over shops schemes so far approved together with the planned and outturn expenditure on LOTS grants for each year the scheme has operated. [40490]

Mr. Clappison: My Department allocated £25 million to its three-year flats over shops programme—£5 million in 1992–93, £10 million in 1993–94 and £10 million in 1994–95. Outturn expenditure was £4.021 million, £9.456 million and £8.729 million, estimated, respectively.

Details of individual schemes are not held centrally. However, an estimated 1,500 additional housing units have been created by the programme in over 150 local authority areas.

Thirty-eight schemes to bring empty property over commercial premises back into use are being funded by the Department's housing partnership funds in 1995–96.

Coal Mines

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what comparisons he has made of health and safety procedures and monitoring between the present privately owned collieries and those formerly state owned. [38683]

Sir Paul Beresford: None. The Health and Safety Executive inspectorate of mines makes regular inspections of coal mines. All mine operators are subject to the Mines and Quarries Act 1954, the Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act 1969 and the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974. These Acts apply to mines irrespective of ownership arrangements.

Environment Council

Ms Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of the EU Environment Council of 6 October. [40110]

Mr. Clappison: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Cheadle (Mr. Day) by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment on 24 October 1995, *Official Report*, columns *523–34*.

Small Businesses

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years; [40525]

(2) how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40526]

Sir Paul Beresford: Departmental payment records do not identify the size of businesses paid. However, latest records show that 92 per cent. of all bills have been paid within the agreed credit period, or within 30 days where no credit period was agreed. The Department has no record of beginning any petitions for bankruptcy against businesses of any size in the last five years.

Planning Guidance

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will extend the application of the Sandford principle into regional planning guidance. [40414]

Sir Paul Beresford: This principle is already reflected in regional planning guidance for those regions which contain national parks.

Habitats Directive

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will revise PPG17, sport and recreation, in order to take PPG9 and the European habitats directive into account; and if he will make a statement. [40415]

Sir Paul Beresford: PPG9 on *Nature Conservation* gives guidance on planning and nature conservation, including advice on the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, which transpose into domestic law the requirements of the EC directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Although we see no need to revise PPG17 in this connection, we intend shortly to commission research into its effectiveness.

American Bullfrogs

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he plans to take to prevent American bullfrogs from entering British waterways. [40413]

Mr. Clappison: The north American bullfrog is covered by the provisions of section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to release, or allow to escape into the wild, any animal which is not ordinarily resident in, and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain. A person found guilty of an offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £5,000; or on conviction on indictment to a potentially unlimited fine.

We are consulting English Nature, our statutory scientific advisers, about recent reports of small numbers seen in the wild.

Enterprise Zone Scheme

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will update his answer to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) of 14 April 1993, *Official Report*, column *530*, on the total cost of the enterprise zone scheme. [40767]

Sir Paul Beresford *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Approximate costs in 1995–96 prices are given in the table.

£ million

Year	*Capital allowances*[1][2]	*Rates relief*[3]
1981–82	28	11
1982–83	26	22
1983–84	21	26
1984–85	34	35
1985–86	88	45
1986–87	81	61
1987–88	50	78
1988–89	134	88
1989–90	95	114
1990–91	104	107
1991–92	17	78
1992–93	16	37
1993–94	—	26

Notes:

All figures are adjusted to 1995–96 prices.

[1] The method of calculating capital allowance costs has been revised by the Inland Revenue and is subject to continuing review. The estimated costs incurred in 1993–94 are not yet known.

[2] The basis for estimating capital allowances has been substantially revised by the Inland Revenue. This has required an updating of the data in the earlier answer.

[3] The cost of rates relief from 1990–91 is based on estimates following the introduction of the uniform business rate.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40822]

Sir Paul Beresford: It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands.

	1994–95 £	*1995–96* £
Lowest salary		
Departments	6,000–6,500	6,000–6,500
Agencies	6,000–6,500	6,000–6,500
Highest salary		
Departments	95,000–99,000	[1]95,000–99,000
Agencies	70,000–74,000	70,000–74,000

[1] 1995–96 salary dependant on the Government who are expected to implement the recommendations of the Remuneration Committee.

The remuneration of the highest paid employees of non-departmental public bodies include a performance bonus awarded retrospectively, so it is not possible to provide an accurate figure for 1995–96. The highest paid employee in 1994–95 received £117,000 inclusive of a performance-related element. Information on the lowest pay rates is not held centrally.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the number of individuals in his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and non-departmental public bodies whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeded (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in (1) 1985–96, (2) 1990–91, (3) 1992–93, (4) 1994–95 and (5) 1995–96. [40821]

Sir Paul Beresford: Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies and NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pensions scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules which have been deposited in the Library of the House. No one in the Department or its agencies received annual remuneration above the sums specified, excluding pension benefits, in the years in question.

It is estimated that two individuals in non-departmental public bodies earned in excess of £100,000—but less than £200,000—in 1994–95 and 1995–96. No individuals earned in excess of the specified sums in other years.

Ministerial Information Systems

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the steps taken in each Government Department to establish a MINIS system or its equivalent. [40364]

Mr. Horam: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 30 October 1995 to his previous question on the subject of Government's management information systems, *Official Report*, column 5.

WALES

Holt's Field

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy on the protection of residents in conservation areas for which planning consent has been refused and who are faced with eviction by prospective developers, with particular reference to the case of Holt's Field, near Swansea; and if he will make a statement. [40147]

Mr. Hague: Control of demolition within a conservation area is provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. There are no powers under the Act to give protection to residents who are faced with a court order for their eviction. Eviction of the residents of Holt's Field is a matter between the owner of the land and the residents and is ultimately one for the courts to decide. It is not an issue in which I can intervene. Under legislation contained in part III of the Housing Act 1985, a local authority has a duty to secure accommodation for all households accepted as unintentionally homeless, or threatened with homelessness, and in priority need of accommodation.

Private Patients (Income)

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list, by trust in each region, details of income from private patients for 1993–94 and 1994–95 *(a)* as a total and *(b)* as a percentage of total trust income. [39950]

Mr. Richards: The information requested is as follows:

Private patients income[1]

	1993–94		*1994–95*[2]	
NHS Trust	*Private patients £000*	*Private patients as a percentage of total income*	*Private patients £000*	*Private patients as a percentage of total income*
Glan Clwyd District General Hospital NHS Trust	234	0.423	265	0.457
Clwydian Community NHS Trust[4]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wrexham Maelor NHS Trust	538	1.096	547	1.030
North Wales Ambulance Trust[3]	n/a	n/a	20	0.164
Gwynedd Community NHS Trust[3] [4]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Gwynedd Hospital NHS Trust[3]	n/a	n/a	191	0.316
Powys Healthcare NHS Trust	1	0.002	1	0.002
Carmarthen and District NHS Trust	85	0.230	115	0.299
Ceredigion and Mid Wales NHS Trust	81	0.357	99	0.428
Derwen NHS Trust[3] [4]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Llanelli/Dinefwr NHS Trust	62	0.205	64	0.206
Pembrokeshire NHS Trust	96	0.231	83	0.198
Morriston Hospital/Ysbyty Treforys NHS Trust[3]	n/a	n/a	293	0.471
Swansea NHS Trust	201	0.385	147	0.271
Bridgend and District NHS Trust	220	0.362	373	0.583
Glan Hafren NHS Trust	201	0.221	211	0.226
Nevill Hall NHS Trust[3]	n/a	n/a	171	0.420
Gwent Community Health NHS Trust[4]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Llandough NHS Trust	44	0.096	34	0.067
Velindre NHS Trust[3]	n/a	n/a	113	1.068
Rhondda NHS Trust[3]	n/a	n/a	17	0.058

Private patients income[1]

NHS Trust	1993–94 Private patients £000	1993–94 Private patients as a percentage of total income	1994–95[2] Private patients £000	1994–95[2] Private patients as a percentage of total income
East Glamorgan NHS Trust[3]	n/a	n/a	106	0.223
South East Wales Ambulance Trust[4]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mid Glamorgan Ambulance Trust[3] [4]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

[1] Consists of money received from NHS patients paying for accommodation in single rooms or small wards (Section 63 NHS Act), private in-patients (Section 65), private non-resident patients (Section 66) and accommodation and services provided under Section 58 of the NHS Act 1977. Overseas visitors (Section 121, not eligible for free treatment have been excluded (as they are charged NHS patients).

[2] 1994–95 figures are provisional.

[3] These Trusts did not become operational until 1 April 1994.

[4] These Trusts do not provide private patient services.

Measles Immunisation

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the current known rate of the occurrence of measles in Wales. [40646]

Mr. Richards: There were 16 notifications of measles during September 1995 and 10 during the first three weeks of October 1995—the latest date for which information is available. In the same months during 1994, the number of measles notifications were 57 and 78 respectively.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40502]

Mr. Hague: This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, such petitions would be initiated only in exceptional circumstances and the number of cases is therefore likely to be small.

Nurse Training (Gwynedd)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was allocated to the training of nurses in Gwynedd for the last year for which figures are available. [40382]

Mr. Richards: In 1994–95 £2,552,010 was allocated to the centrally planned and funded training of nurses in Gwynedd under "Towards 2000" arrangements. Figures relating to costs of locally funded training are not available centrally.

Postgraduate Nurses

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many nurses are currently receiving grants for the full cost of training in postgraduate courses and what was the equivalent figure for 1990. [40383]

Mr. Richards: The information requested is not held centrally.

Hospital Opening Ceremonies (Gwynedd)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the cost of each opening ceremony for new hospitals or new facilities for hospitals in Gwynedd during the last three years; and what was the total cost. [40384]

Mr. Richards: The information requested is not held centrally.

Re-admitted Patients

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many patients were re-admitted to hospital within one month of their discharge in the last year for which figures are available. [40385]

Mr. Richards: Information for 1994–95 is not available centrally. Data on the rates of unplanned re-admission to hospital are being collected for the first time in 1995–96. The data will be published in future, provided the information is of sufficient reliability.

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40501]

Mr. Hague: The information is not available in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Departments are required, however, to provide details of their overall annual payment performance in their departmental reports. For 1994–95, the Welsh Office, including its agency Cadw, paid 95 per cent. of its bills in accordance with agreed contractual conditions or, where no such contractual conditions existed, within 30 days of receipt of goods and services or the presentation of a valid invoice. The Department's published figures for the three preceding years were 87 per cent. 76 per cent. and 65 per cent. respectively.

Forestry

Mrs. Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list all Forestry Commission woods currently for sale in Wales; and if he will make a statement on the targets for the disposal of land by *(a)* area and *(b)* projected income. [40672]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Scotland gave the hon. Member for Sherwood (Mr. Tipping) on 25 October at columns *685–87*. As set out in the Government's expenditure plans 1995–96 to 1997–98, the Forestry Commission plans to sell about 15,000 hectares of forest land in each of the next three years, and expects to receive about £60 million from the sale of forest land and surplus properties during that period. The Commission expects about 15 per cent. of these sales to be in Wales.

National Health Service

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list *(a)* the number of NHS nurses, *(b)* the number of NHS general and senior managers, *(c)* expenditure on administration, *(d)* the number of patients on the waiting list, *(e)* the number of operations cancelled on the day of or day after admission to hospital, *(f)* the number of patients treated privately in NHS facilities as in-patients/day-patients/out-patients, *(g)* the number of hospital beds by category and *(h)* the number of hospitals (i) for 1990–91 and (ii) at present for (A) the Welsh health authority areas and (B) Wales. [40795]

Mr. Richards: The available information is given in the table. Figures for NHS trusts are included in the health authority areas in which they are situated.

Information on the number of operations cancelled on the day or of day-after admission to hospital is not available centrally.

	Clwyd	*East Dyfed*	*Gwent*	*Gwynedd*	*Mid Glamorgan*	*Pembrokeshire*
Nursing and Midwifery staff[1]:						
30 September 1990	3,174	2,043	4,014	1,912	4,777	677
30 June 1995	3,239	1,997	3,440	2,011	4,768	711
NHS general and senior managers[2]						
30 September 1990	49	34	54	21	32	16
30 June 1995[3]	151	125	165	61	196	17
Expenditure on administration[4]:						
1990–91 (£000)	9,821	6,793	11,503	6,117	12,504	2,412
1994–95 (£000)[5]	16,792	11,658	17,220	9,984	20,091	3,973
Number of patients on the waiting list[6]						
In-patients:						
30 September 1990	5,941	4,288	9,714	3,360	7,913	2,224
30 September 1995	6,185	3,500	6,252	2,486	6,165	1,717
Day cases:						
30 September 1990	1,435	824	1,221	313	550	803
30 September 1995	2,788	3,148	2,814	756	2,747	1,212
Out-patients:						
30 September 1990	10,607	5,480	11,949	5,033	18,385	3,318
30 September 1995	13,300	9,486	16,393	7,482	19,040	2,616
Number of patients treated privately in NHS facilities:						
In-patients:						
1990–91	419	348	106	244	173	159
1994–95[5]	403	152	149	132	199	35
Day cases:						
1990–91	129	151	105	117	126	85
1994–95[5]	118	102	114	148	191	41
Out-patient attendances:						
1990–91	3,167	1,839	78	367	692	1,489
1994–95[5]	2,190	1,308	149	231	294	1,008
Hospital beds by category[7]:						
Acute:						
1990–91	1,234	669	1,395	648	1,739	263
1993–94	1,244	694	1,332	597	1,448	263
Geriatric:						
1990–91	509	377	601	382	709	126
1993–94	457	337	553	348	768	114
Maternity:						
1990–91	115	48	144	80	192	40
1993–94	106	48	118	70	174	40
Psychiatric:						
1990–91	496	466	980	442	1,319	31
1993–94	361	374	627	406	1,087	21
Other:						
1990–91	7	1	—	—	—	—
1993–94	—	—	—	—	22	—
Total:						
1990–91	2,362	1,562	3,120	1,552	3,959	460
1993–94	2,168	1,454	2,630	1,420	3,499	438
Number of hospitals:						
31 March 1991	24	12	18	18	30	3
31 March 1995	22	12	15	14	26	3

	Powys	South Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	WHCSA[8]	Wales
Nursing and Midwifery staff[1]*:*					
30 September 1990	1,059	4,309	3,043	10	25,017
30 June 1995	928	4,399	3,501	74	25,068
NHS general and senior managers[2]*:*					
30 September 1990	26	92	67	46	436
30 June 1995[3]	53	290	107	153	1,357
Expenditure and administration[4]*:*					
1990–91 (£000)	2,850	18,006	9,934	7,370	87,310
1994–95 (£000)[5]	4,265	29,766	15,535	18,473	147,757
Numbers of patients on the waiting list[6]*:*					
In-patients:					
30 September 1990	40	8,567	7,188	—	49,235
30 September 1995	325	7,316	6,680	—	40,626
Day cases:					
30 September 1990	17	2,070	208	—	7,441
30 September 1995	—	4,296	848	—	18,609
Out-patients:					
30 September 1990	1,385	19,410	15,836	—	91,403
30 September 1995	1,591	21,724	16,700	—	108,332
Number of patients treated privately in NHS facilities:					
In-patients:					
1990–91	—	118	193	—	1,760
1994–95[5]	—	246	47	—	1,363
Day cases:					
1990–91	—	8	504	—	1,225
1994–95[5]	1	602	72	—	1,389
Out-patient attendances:					
1990–91	—	1,163	917	—	9,712
1994–95[5]	1	1,184	235	—	6,600
Hospital beds by category[7]*:*					
Acute:					
1990–91	194	1,672	1,241	—	9,056
1993–94	201	1,486	1,177	—	8,441
Geriatric:					
1990–91	193	443	471	—	3,811
1993–94	187	432	404	—	3,600
Maternity:					
1990–91	35	137	125	—	916
1993–94	32	113	104	—	806
Psychiatric:					
1990–91	475	951	463	—	5,623
1993–94	395	803	510	—	4,584
Other:					
1990–91	—	—	—	—	8
1993–94	—	—	22	—	44
Total:					
1990–91	896	3,203	2,300	—	19,415
1993–94	815	2,834	2,217	—	17,475
Number of hospitals:					
31 March 1991	14	16	16	—	151
31 March 1995	13	14	14	—	133

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[1] Whole-time equivalents. Excluding pre-registration learner nurses.

[2] General managers, senior managers and health authority managers. due to the extension of terms and conditions of service a number of staff from within the administrative and clerical and other staff groups have been reclassified as managers. Managers from all disciplines may be included.

[3] Whole-time equivalents (Wte). Figures for East Dyfed include staff who worked for Pembrokeshire Health Authority and Dyfed FHSA. Total includes 39 Wte staff in NHS Ambulance Trusts who cannot be assigned to individual health authority areas.

[4] Senior managers and administration/clerical staff costs. Data for East Dyfed includes Dyfed FHSA expenditure.

[5] Provisional.

[6] By area of intended treatment.

[7] Average daily available beds.

[8] Welsh Health Common Services Authority.

Dental Services (Wales)

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many patients have been deregistered from NHS dentists since July 1982. [40796]

Mr. Richards: Information supplied by the family health services authorities shows that 52,781 patients in Wales have been deregistered since 1 August 1992.

This is a cumulative total and does not indicate how many of those patients subsequently registered with another dentist. Statistics published by the Dental Practice Board indicate that, at the end of June 1995, the number of registered patients in Wales was 35,891 higher than at 30 June 1992.

Fundholding

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what have been the costs of introducing fundholding since 1991. [40797]

Mr. Richards: Reimbursement to general practitioner fundholders in respect of expenses covered by management allowances totalled £8.9 million for the financial years 1990–91 to 1994–95.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40857]

Mr. Hague: It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. The figures are:

	1994–95 £	*1995–96* £
Welsh Office		
Highest salary	95,000–99,999	95,000–99,999
Lowest salary	4,000–4,999	4,000–4,999
Agency		
Highest salary	45,000–49,999	45,000–49,999
Lowest salary	5,000–9,999	5,000–9,999
NDPBs		
Highest salary	75,000–79,999	80,000–84,999

Information on the lowest salary is not held centrally.

Disabled Drivers Assessment Centre

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to come to a decision on the application by the Wales Disabled Drivers Assessment Centre to develop a purpose-built new centre at Rookwood hospital on land adjourning the artificial limb and application centre. [40853]

Mr. Hague: The location of the Wales Disabled Drivers Assessment Centre is a matter for that organisation. The use of the Rookwood hospital site is a matter for the University Hospital of Wales Healthcare NHS trust.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many individuals in *(a)* his Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies received annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeding (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in each year since 1985–86. [40856]

Mr. Hague: Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies and NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pensions scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme, rules, which have been deposited in the Library of the House. No staff in the bodies in question received annual remuneration excluding pension benefits above £100,000.

Local Government Reorganisation

Mr. Sweeney: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what decision has been reached as a result of the consultation on the "prescribed period" for Wales in part III of the Local Government (Compensation for Redundancy) Regulations 1994. [41353]

Mr. Hague: I have carefully considered the responses which I received. All of them argued that the period should end after 31 March 1997, but there were different views about what the end date should be. I have had particular regard to the views of the new councils that will have to operate the regulations.

Having consulted my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, we have decided that the period should end on 30 September 1997 and my right hon. Friend will amend the regulations accordingly.

Simultaneously, I have considered the responses to a separate consultation exercise on the Local Government Reorganisation (Compensation for Loss of Remuneration) Regulations which will be made in due course by my right hon. Friend. Here, too, our decision is that the prescribed period in Wales should end on 30 September 1997.

The changes I have announced will give Welsh councils more time to implement redundancies which result from local government reorganisation and to harmonise terms and conditions. I would not expect this additional time to mean that there would be an increase in the number of redundancies attributable to the reorganisation or that more staff would suffer a reduction in salary because of the reorganisation. Accordingly, the additional funding which I provide during 1996–97 and 1997–98 will not go beyond the bids which the new councils have recently submitted to me.

I shall announce my decisions on funding for transitional costs in 1996–97 and subsequent years after the Chancellor's Budget statement.

Pembrokeshire National Park

Mr. Sweeney: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will announce his decision on the Pembrokeshire coast national park variation order submitted to him by the Countryside Commission. [41354]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales has today confirmed, with modifications, the order to vary the boundaries of the Pembrokeshire coast national park.

In 1989, the Countryside Commission, predecessors of the Countryside Council for Wales, submitted an order to the Secretary of State recommending that the boundary of the national park should be revised at 23 sites. It was proposed that at 15 sites land would be added to the park and at eight sites land would be removed.

The modifications made to the order following a public inquiry mean that 10 new ares will be added to the national park including land at Pencelly Forest, Castlemartin and Brandy Brook valley and its tributaries. Seven areas of land will be removed, including the Texaco and Elf refineries. At six sites, including Marros and Gelliswick bay, the existing boundary will remain.

Copies of the decision letter to the chief executive of the Countryside Council for Wales and the inspector's report have been placed in the Library of the House.

SCOTLAND

Scottish Nuclear

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy that the management structure of Scottish Nuclear should include a director whose sole responsibility is nuclear safety. [38751]

Mr. Kynoch: The safety procedures and management structure of all nuclear undertakings in the United Kingdom are subject to scrutiny by the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate under the terms of nuclear site licences. It would be inappropriate for my right hon. Friend to intervene in these matters.

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38607]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of National Heritage, on 31 October 1995, c. *186–87*.

Special Needs and Sheltered Housing

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) when he next plans to meet the chairman or chief executive of Scottish Homes to review its policy of exclusion against the funding of new-build special needs and sheltered housing in peripheral housing estates where no such provision exists; if he will commission a study into the effects of elderly and disabled people having to move away from their own communities to obtain suitable accommodation; and if he will make a statement; [39172]

(2) when he next plans to meet the chairman or chief executive of Scottish Homes to discuss the need for sheltered and special needs housing in large peripheral housing estates with particular reference to Foxbar, Paisley; and if he will make a statement; [39178]

(3) when he next plans to meet the chairman or chief executive of Scottish Homes to discuss its policy on sheltered housing; and if he will make a statement. [39177]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman and chief executive of Scottish Homes regularly and I shall be meeting the board again early in the next year.

As Scottish Homes made clear in its May 1995 policy statement "Removing the Barriers—Housing for Older People", its policy is to focus resources primarily on the provision of accommodation capable of being adapted for a range of changing needs. This policy was significantly influenced by the many responses received to Scottish Homes' May 1993 consultation paper, "Housing for the Elderly in the 1990s". The decision at a local level on what priority to give to the provision of special needs and sheltered housing is made in the light of local needs and demand, working with community care strategic planners such as local housing and social work authorities, and health boards, and taking account of the views of elderly people themselves on whether they wish to remain within their communities.

Orlit Housing

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what special assistance is currently available to the *(a)* landlords or *(b)* owner-occupiers of Orlit-type houses which have major structural defects; and if he will make a statement. [39200]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: In 1984 a scheme under the Housing Defects Act 1984 was introduced to help owners of defective homes, such as the Orlit, bought from a public sector authority before 26 April 1984. The scheme, which provided for assistance by way of repurchase or reinstatement grant, ended on 30 November 1994.

Assistance for owner-occupiers remains available in the form of discretionary improvement grant from the local authority if the house has become unstable and various conditions of the grant scheme are met. Landlords are responsible for carrying out any necessary works to their own stock from within the resources available to them.

Flooding, Paisley

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will visit the Collier street, Johnstone, Park avenue and South End, Paisley, to discuss the effect of the 1994 floods with tenants and residents; and if he will make a statement. [39181]

Mr. Kynoch: My right hon. Friend recently visited Paisley on other matters, but he has no plans to visit Collier street, Johnstone or the Park avenue and South End areas of Paisley.

The hon. Member will be aware that the Secretary of State will be meeting him and other members of the Paisley South End flood action committee on Wednesday 1 November to discuss matters arising out of the 1994 floods.

Fuel Bills

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next plans to meet representatives of Scottish Power and Hydro-Electric to discuss the abolition of standing charges on fuel bills; and if he will make a statement. [39203]

Mr. Kynoch: My right hon. Friend meets representatives of the two Scottish electricity supply companies from time to time. The level of standing charges is a matter for the companies and the Office for Electricity Regulation.

Drug Rehabilitation Services

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the detailed arrangements for drugs rehabilitation services which have been put in place in mandatory drugs testing prisons in Scotland referred to by the Minister of State in his statement of 18 October, *Official Report*, column 302; and what measurements of efficiency are being made. [39812]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The subject of the question relates to matters undertaken by the Scottish Prison Service. I have asked its chief executive, Mr. E. W. Frizzell, to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from E. W. Frizzell to Mr. Timothy Rathbone, dated 1 November 1995:

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton has asked me to reply to your Question about the arrangements for drug rehabilitation services in those Scottish prisons involved in the first phase of mandatory drug testing.

Mandatory drug testing will be introduced in Scottish prisons on a phased basis as and when each establishment is ready to begin and has the appropriate programmes in place to assist those prisoners with drugs problems. The first phase of testing will begin in Edinburgh and Cornton Vale prisons early next year.

Edinburgh Prison operates a drug reduction programme consisting of education and counselling and offers detoxification under medical supervision. A multi-disciplinary approach has been adopted, and the treatment offered reflects best practice in the wider community, consistent with the constraints of a prison setting. The programme was evaluated by Glasgow Caledonian University which found that it was effective in reducing the amount and frequency of drug misuse, resulting in harm reduction and the promotion of healthier lifestyles. The programme also won the Scottish Health Management Efficiency Group's "Partnership in Health Care Award" in 1993–94. Prisoners also receive a comprehensive information and training programme on HIV and AIDS within 2 weeks of admission.

Cornton Vale Prison (for women) currently has a drug education programme in place for all prisoners which reinforces the work of the full-time addiction worker, trained prison staff and community-based workers who deliver individual and group counselling. Plans are being taken forward to develop further support programmes, including drug reduction and detoxification, to meet a wide range of the women's needs, prior to the introduction of mandatory drug testing.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39861]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My ministerial colleagues and I meet the chief executives of the agencies for which I am responsible as and when it is necessary for the efficient discharge of business.

Late Payment (Small Business)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40512]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My Department has carried out an annual check of payment performance since 1991–92 but does not distinguish between small and large firms.

The overall results for the last four years show a steady improvement in the percentage of supplier payments made within the period stipulated in the contract, normally 30 days:

Year	*Percentage of payments paid on time*
1991–92	82
1992–93	85
1993–94	89
1994–95	96

The figures for the larger agencies of the Scottish Office for the last two years are:

Agency	*Percentage 1993–94*	*1994–95*
Scottish Agriculture and Science Agency	92	97
Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency	93	99
Historic Scotland	94	100
Scottish Prison Service	86	89

Forestry

Mrs. Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all Forestry Commission woods currently for sale in Scotland; and if he will make a statement on the targets for the disposal of land by *(a)* area and *(b)* projected income. [40674]

Mr. Kynoch: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Sherwood (Mr. Tipping) on 25 October, *Official Report*, columns *685–87*. As set out in the Government's expenditure plans 1995–96 to 1997–99, the Forestry Commission plans to sell about 15,000 hectares of forest land in each of the next three years, and expects to receive a total of about £60 million from the sale of forest land and surplus properties during that period. The Commission expects about 70 per cent. of these sales to be in Scotland, as most of the Forestry Commission's land is in Scotland.

Mrs. Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much income has been accrued; and how much land has been sold under the Government's forestry disposal programme in each year since 1992–93 and in the current year to date. [40669]

Mr. Kynoch: The information is as follows:

Year ended 31 March	*Area sold hectares*	*Income £ million*
1993	10,589	9.9
1994	14,950	17.4
1995	10,808	12.1
1996 (to date)	5,364	6.6

Scottish Office Employees

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list *(a)* the number of (i) male and (ii) female employees, *(b)* the number of officials employed at each of the principal grades and the number and percentages of women employed at these grades and *(c)* the number of staff employed at administrative grades and the number and percentage of those staff that are women in his Department and for each of its executive agencies for each year since 1985. [39394]

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* As the information requested is lengthy, I shall arrange for copies of the figures to be placed in the House Library.

Scottish Office Energy Division

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people are employed with the Scottish Office Energy Division on *(a)* a full-time basis and *(b)* a part-time basis. [39664]

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* At 25 October 1995, there were 22 permanent staff in the Scottish Office energy division. Twenty-one of these were employed on a full-time basis and one on a part-time basis.

Local Enterprise Companies

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the chief executives of local enterprise companies who sit on the boards of such companies, indicating their incomes. [38444]

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 25 October 1995]:* Relationships with the local enterprise companies are an operational matter for Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Scottish Enterprise. I have asked their chairmen to write to the hon. Member.

TRANSPORT

Oil Slicks

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many oil slicks have been reported in seas around the British Isles, annually, for the last five years. [40405]

Mr. Norris: This is an operational matter for the Coastguard agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from C. J. Harris to Mr. David Hinchliffe, dated 1 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question as the question deals with an operational matter, for which I have responsibility as Chief Executive.

The number of reports of oil pollution in the seas and around the shores of the UK, as compiled by the Advisory Committee on Pollution of the Sea (ACOPS), is as follows:

Year	*Total reports*
1990	791
1991	705
1992	611
1993	676
1994	540
Total	3,323

Ship Discharges

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will increase air surveillance resources to combat illegal discharges at sea; [40411]

(2) how he will improve the policing of vessels at sea to combat illegal discharges. [40407]

Mr. Norris: We are working closely with other states which are party to the Bonn agreement to make aerial surveillance an even more effective deterrent against illegal discharges by ships. The number of hours flown this year—1995–96—by Coastguard agency aircraft has been increased from 800 to 925 on a trial basis, and the benefits will have to be assessed.

The Marine Safety Agency is taking forward work on transponders which identify a vessel automatically. We are also working with our Bonn agreement partners to find other ways of making it easier to identify and prosecute offenders.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many prosecutions have been brought in each of the last five years in respect of illegal discharges of oil or other pollutants in United Kingdom waters; and how many were successful; [39767]

(2) whether his Department has yet located the container of toxic lindane which was lost in the channel several years ago; and if he will make a statement. [39618]

Mr. Norris: These are operational matters for the Coastguard agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from C. J. Harris to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 1 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions as these deal with operational matters, for which I have responsibility as Chief Executive.

MV PERINTIS, a Panamanian registered and Indonesian owned general cargo container vessel, capsized and sank in UK waters in the English Channel on 13 March, 1989. The lindane container had been stowed on the upper deck and its contents of 5.8 tonnes was packaged in 50 kilogramme sealed polythene bags inside fibre board drums.

The container was located in French waters during this early afternoon of 15 March, and by early evening, a French tug took it in town bound for Cherbourg. From that moment, it became the responsibility of the French authorities. At 11.45 on 16 March, the French authorities reported that the lindane container had been lost under tow some 15 nautical miles north of Cherbourg. It was never relocated.

Over the next few weeks, the French Navy carried out very extensive surface and sub-sea searches for the lindane container but without success. In addition, seawater monitoring was conducted over a much longer period, however, only normal background levels of lindane were ever detected.

There have been 38 prosecutions brought in respect of illegal discharges by vessels in UK waters since 1990, these were brought by MPCU and Port and Harbour authorities, 36 were successful. There were 16 in 1990, 2 in 1991, 5 in 1992, 2 in 1993, and 11 in 1994.

During this period the MPCU referred 23 cases to the Treasury Solicitor for prosecution action if appropriate. Of these, 8 are still open.

Since 1990 55 cases have been referred to vessels' flag states for further action. Of these 9 were prosecuted and fined and 32 are still open. Of the 9 prosecuted 3 had been referred to their flag state before 1990.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on British reception facilities within ports and their operations within the Marpol convention; [40409]

(2) if ships failing to discharge waste at British ports will be notified to the next port of call with details of waste volume at time of departure; and if he will introduce penalties for discrepancies which occur between the ports; [40404]

(3) if he will include reception facility fees within harbour dues; [40410]

(4) if he will place a statutory duty on port authorities to develop waste management plans, certified by the Marine Safety Agency. [40408]

Mr. Norris: My Department is undertaking a consultation exercise to consider these and a number of other initiatives to reduce the amounts of waste discharged into the sea from ships and to increase the amounts discharged into port waste reception facilities. We will announce our conclusions shortly.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will increase penalties for illegal discharge by ships in British waters. [40406]

Mr. Norris: The penalties for illegal discharges by ships are a matter for the courts. The level of fines is not restricted by statute, except on summary conviction in magistrates courts or their equivalent, where the maximum is kept under review. In 1994, we introduced legislation imposing strict liability on all shipowners for pollution damage caused by persistent oils in United Kingdom waters.

Trains (Bicycles)

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies he has commissioned, undertaken or been informed about on the effect on cycle carriage of the £3 per journey charge for bicycles on regional railways; and if he will make a statement. [40499]

Mr. Watts: None. The carriage of bicycles on trains, and any charges made, are operational matters for individual train operators. The franchising director will require franchisees, through the franchise agreement, to carry bicycles where practicable and to ensure that any charges made are reasonable.

Night Flights

Mr. Deva: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the number of respondents in respect of each of the public consultations in relation to the current night flights regulations, in January 1993, October 1993, November 1993, March 1995 and June 1995, in relation to Heathrow airport; in each case how many respondents were *(a)* seeking an increase, *(b)* seeking a reduction and *(c)* supporting the night noise levels proposed in the consultation papers concerned; and if he will subdivide the totals in each category according to number of airlines, number of air transport bodies, number of hon. Members, number of local authorities, number of resident associations and environmental groups, number of members of the public and others. [39346]

Mr. Norris: The total number of responses received to each of the consultations, analysed by category of respondent, is set out in the table. These do not relate only to Heathrow. The consultations concerned proposals for a regime of new restrictions on night flights at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports which included a number of discrete elements. Many of the comments in the responses related to more than one of these airports without necessarily focusing on the night noise levels at Heathrow as an issue separate from the other elements of the proposals.

It is not normal departmental practice to provide any form of written summary or statistical analysis of responses to a consultation when the responses are publicly available. All the responses to the November 1993 consultation paper, the March 1995 consultation paper and to the supplementary paper of June 1995, other than those where the author has requested confidentiality, are so available.

Responses to the January and October 1993 consultations have not been made available as the respondents were not given the opportunity to state whether they would object to their responses being copied or otherwise disclosed. An analysis of the responses to the January 1993 consultation in relation to "night noise levels" at Heathrow as requested would not seem appropriate as the consultation, and the responses, were concerned with the whole night restrictions regime, many aspects of which are interrelated—for example, the size of the noise quota is related to both the length of the night quota period and to the QC classification of aircraft. The main points raised in the responses to the January 1993 consultation and the decisions of my right hon. Friend in the light of these responses were announced on 6 July 1993, *Official Report*, columns *71–73*. The October 1993 consultation was limited in time and extent: it was primarily focused on the proposal to specify the maximum number of movements for the winter season 1993–94 in the light of the judgment given on 29 September 1993.

Responses received

	Main January 1993 consultation	*W 1993–94 October 1993*[1]	*S 1994*	*W 1994–95 to S 1998*	*W 1995–96 to S 1998 March 1995 consultation*	*W 1995–96 to S 1998 June 1995 supplement*
			Two phases of November 1993 consultation			
Members of Parliament and MEPs (other than letters covering constituents views)	19	—	1	3	2	6
Airport consultative committees.	3	3	[2]4	[2]4	3	2
Local authorities, Parish and Town Councils, and local authority associations.	69	19	43	[2]54	[2]62	34
Environmental and other local groups	59	5	18	28	43	29
Aviation and acoustical consultants.	2	—	1	1	1	—
Airlines	63	4	14	27	38	14
Airport and aviation bodies.	5	2	5	4	[2]5	2
Airlines and airport users and other aviation interests.	17	5	10	13	10	7
Responses from people living around Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted	[3]1,823	—	[3]149	[3]279	[3]308	[3]661
Responses from people living elsewhere	99	—	—	—	—	—
Petitions (and signatures lodged in bulk)	[4]2,762	—	—	[4]1,029	[4]421	135

[1] Short consultation.

[2] One from outside London area.

[3] Number of letters not number of signatories.

[4] Not verified.

[Excludes late responses]

Railtrack (Fly Tipping)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the duties of Railtrack in respect of fly tipping on its land; and if he will make a statement. [39814]

Mr. Watts: The Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 contain provisions to control fly-tipping. Railtrack's duties in respect of fly-tipping on its land are no different from any other landowner, in that there is no general obligation to remove fly-tipped material. However, if the nature on location of fly-tipped material posed a risk to the safe operation of the railway or to public health and safety, appropriate measures would be taken by Railtrack.

Regarding the case of litter more generally, we are considering whether an order is needed to clarify duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, following transfer to Railtrack of operational railway land. As a contractual matter, station leases granted by Railtrack already include a provision requiring the train operators to clean the stations for which they are responsible.

Eurotunnel

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met representatives of Eurotunnel to discuss its future; and if he will make a statement. [40165]

Sir George Young: I met representatives from Eurotunnel on 23 October.

Accidents

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people were *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured (i) in road accidents in the United Kingdom, (ii) at sea in United kingdom territorial waters and (iii) in aircraft crashes in United Kingdom airspace in each year since 1979. [39977]

Mr. Norris: Available information is shown in the following table.

Year	*Road accidents*		*Accidents at sea*[1]		*Aircraft crashes in UK airspace*	
	Killed	*Injured*	*Killed*	*Injured*	*Killed*	*Injured*
1979	6,645	335,7789	—	—	48	36
1980	6,239	329,625	—	—	32	44
1981	6,069	326,551	—	—	57	73
1982	6,150	336,285	—	—	26	28
1983	5,618	310,679	—	—	71	37
1984	5,788	327,276	—	—	41	44
1985	5,342	320,819	—	—	77	111
1986	5,618	325,275	—	—	69	59
1987	5,339	316,070	—	—	49	27
1988	5,230	328,042	—	—	286	58
1989	5,554	347,649	—	—	72	130
1990	5,402	347,500	—	—	42	101

Year	*Road accidents* *Killed*	*Injured*	*Accidents at sea*[1] *Killed*	*Injured*	*Aircraft crashes in UK airspace* *Killed*	*Injured*
1991	4,753	316,830	53	816	21	75
1992	4,379	317,558	21	862	41	81
1993	3,957	313,163	21	656	24	67
1994	3,807	323,476	27	640	37	45

[1] The sea figures include all deaths and injuries on UK registered vessels at sea, whether or not in UK territorial waters. They also include casualties in foreign vessel incidents in UK territorial waters, though this element may be incomplete. No information is available on foreign flag vessel accidents prior to 1991.

Rail Freight

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list in tonnes the quantity of freight lifted on Britain's railways in each year since 1988–89; and if he will make a statement; [40239]

(2) if he will list in tonnes/kilometres the quantity of freight moved on Britain's railways in each year since 1988–89; and if he will make a statement. [40240]

Mr. Watts: The quantities of freight lifted on Britain's railways in each year since 1988–89 are as follows:

Year	*Million tonnes*
1988–89	149.5
1989–90	143.1
1990–91	138.2
1991–92	135.8
1992–93	122.4
1993–94	103.3
1994–95	97.3

Source:
tsgb, 1995.

In tonne-kilometres, the quantities of freight moved on Britain's railways in each year since 1988–89 are as follows:

	Billion tonnes–kms
1988–89	18.1
1989–90	16.7
1990–91	16.0
1991–92	15.3
1992–93	15.5
1993–94	13.8
1994–95	13.0

Source:
tsgb, 1995.

The Government believe that privatisation of the railways offers the best prospect for addressing the long-term decline of the rail freight industry.

Light Dues

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers competent harbour authorities other than Trinity House have to waive light dues. [40368]

Mr. Norris: None.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers he has to require Trinity House to waive light dues for *(a)* Isle of Wight ferries and *(b)* other vessels. [40367]

Mr. Norris: Under present legislation the Secretary of state has no powers to require Trinity House lighthouse service to waive light dues in relation to any vessel.

Road Casualties

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department will estimate the cost of *(a)* a fatality, *(b)* a serious injury and (c) a slight injury on the road, taking into account the costs of the police, the courts and medical care. [40264]

Mr. Norris: The costs of police and courts, together with insurance company administration and property damage, are not calculated according to casualty but per accident—which may involve more than one casualty. The resulting estimated accident costs in 1994 were *(a)* fatal: £913,100; *(b)* serious: £108,100; *(c)* slight: £10,600.

Ferry Inspections

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many ferries have been inspected by the Marine Safety Agency leaving the United Kingdom; what proportion of those were found to be defective; and if he will make a statement. [40302]

Mr. Norris: This is an operational matter for the Marine Safety Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from R. M. Bradley to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 1 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your Question about the number of ferries inspected by the Marine Safety Agency (MSA).

Unannounced inspections are carried out by MSA surveyors at least twice annually on every UK registered and foreign flagged passenger ferry operating from UK ports. In addition, UK registered ferries are surveyed thoroughly every twelve months by the MSA.

With regard to your query relating to the number of ferry inspections and the proportion of inspections during which deficiencies were identified, I would refer you to my answer to the hon. Member for Stoke on Trent North, Ms Walley, on 22 March 1994, which can be found in Hansard volume 257 columns 222–223. A copy of each of the tables referred to in that reply is attached.

Rail Passenger Journeys

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the number of passenger journeys made on Britain's railways in each year since 1988–89; and if he will make a statement. [40242]

Mr. Watts: The information requested is as follows:

Year	*Million* *Number of passenger journeys*
1988–89	763.7
1989–90	758.3
1990–91	762.4
1991–92	740.8
1992–93	744.8
1993–94	713.2
1994–95	702.2

This information can be found in "Transport Statistics Great Britain 1995", a copy of which is held in the House of Commons Library.

Uninsured Motorists

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimates he has made of the number of motorists who are uninsured; how many accidents took place in the last three years where the culpable driver was uninsured; and what plans he has to increase insurance holidays. [40710]

Mr. Norris: Industry estimates are that 4 to 6 per cent. of motorists are uninsured, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has supported an estimate at the top of this range. Information on the insurance status of motorists involved in accidents is not collected; the Motor Insurers Bureau handled 39,000 cases on average in each of the last three years under the uninsured drivers agreement, although in a significant proportion of such cases insurance cover is subsequently shown to have been in place. A number of possible measures for tackling the problem of insurance evasion are currently being considered by my Department and the other interested parties such as the police and the insurance industry. In addition, measures aimed at reducing evasion of vehicle excise duty, such as the introduction of wheelclamping, are expected to have a beneficial effect on compliance with compulsory insurance requirements.

London-Tilbury-Southend Line

Mr. Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current level of subsidy provided for the operation of the London-Tilbury-Southend line. [40297]

Mr. Watts: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish), *Official Report*, 13 July, column *706*. Negotiations between the franchising director and the British Railways Board on the support appropriate to each individual train operating company are yet to be completed. I will write to the hon. Member when the level of support has been agreed and will place a copy of the letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what is the level of subsidy projected for the operation of the London-Tilbury-Southend line for the next financial year; [40296]

(2) what is the projected year-on-year level of subsidy to be provided to the franchise operator of the London-Tilbury-Southend line; and if any subsidy will be guaranteed throughout the life of the franchise. [40295]

Mr. Watts: The level of subsidy to be contractually agreed for the full franchise term is currently the subject of commercial negotiations between the franchising director and bidders for the LTS rail franchise. Final bids were submitted to the franchising director on 27 October, and he expects to award the franchise in December.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many petitions for bankruptcy has been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40506]

Mr. Norris: Records are not kept in the form requested.

Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment last met; and what plans have been made for the future work programme of the committee. [40500]

Mr. Watts: The Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment last met in May 1994. No decisions have yet been taken on the committee's future work programme.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consideration will be given to including within the work programme of the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment the assessment of the impact of noise from highways and the justification for various means of ameliorating this nuisance. [40498]

Mr. Watts: In 1989 the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment was asked to review the Department of Transport's methods for assessing environmental costs and benefits, including the impact of noise. The committee's report, "Assessing the Environmental Impact of Road Schemes", and the Government's response were published in March 1992. Subsequently, the Department's guidance on the assessment of environmental impacts has been updated—volume 11 of the design manual for roads and bridges. Also research is on-going into the valuation of nuisance, including noise, in the home, due to road traffic.

I have no plans currently to ask SACTRA to revisit this issue.

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40505]

Mr. Norris: Information is not available in the form requested.

M66

Mr. Charles Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by what date he expects completion of the M66 Manchester outer ring road. [39986]

Mr. Watts *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* Spring 1999.

Newbury Bypass

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the total projected cost of the Newbury bypass before its postponement in December last year; and what is the total projected cost now, under the current tendering process. [40583]

Mr. Watts *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to hon Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. David Rendel, dated 1 November 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railway and Roads, Mr. John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport, what was the total projected cost of the Newbury Bypass before its postponement in December of last year: and what is the total projected cost now, under the current tendering process.

You will appreciate that due to the imminent tendering process, there is some commercial sensitivity attached to the previous tender prices received last year. However, for the current tenders, we now expect the cost excluding land and VAT to be about £60m. This figure has increased slightly since last December due to increases in construction prices.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the projected total cost of the current tendering process itself for the Newbury bypass. [40584]

Mr. Watts *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. David Rendel, dated 1 November 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr. John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport, what is the projected total cost of the current tendering process itself for the Newbury Bypass.

Costs to the tenderers are unknown to us, and the cost of our own staff time is relatively small and not easily identifiable, but the estimated cost of our Consultants time in preparing new tender documents and assessing them, and the cost of printing the tender documents is about £100,000.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Jewellery Industry

Ms Short: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment Her Majesty's Government have made of the effect of EU regulation of the jewellery industry on the position of British manufacturers in the foreign market; what review he is conducting; and if he will make a statement. [40751]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: I have been asked to reply.

I am not aware of any EU regulations pertaining to the jewellery industry which substantially affect the position of British manufacturers in foreign markets. The Government have listened carefully to the views of British jewellery manufacturers during negotiations on the proposed directives on the marking of articles of precious metal and on nickel in jewellery, and to their concerns about the implications for Hallmarking Act 1973 of the judgment of the European Court in the Houtwipper case ECJ 293/93.

HMSO

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the advantages and disadvantages in the privatisation of HMSO. [40479]

Mr. Horam: The future of HMSO has been examined in depth several times in recent years, against the background of changing markets and a developing business structure. The most recent examination found that privatisation is feasible and that there should be sufficient interest to maximise proceeds through competitive tender.

Coopers and Lybrand is now considering urgently options for the future of HMSO, with a view to privatisation, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster announced last month. We are consulting the authorities in this House and the other place on the necessary safeguards to protect the continued high standards of HMSO's service to Parliament before taking a decision on the way forward.

HMSO's core market in the public sector is shrinking and it faces intense competition from the private sector. At the same time, it is constrained by having to operate from within government: it cannot trade in wider markets, nor can it diversify or raise investment capital as easily as its competitors. Unless these constraints are removed there is a real risk of the business declining. An early privatisation, subject to the needs of Parliament being met, would open up opportunities for the business.

Lancashire Constabulary

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of performance against the standards set out in the citizens charter of the Lancashire constabulary. [40474]

Mr. Horam: Lancashire constabulary applied for a charter mark this year. Assessment involves evaluation against all six citizens charter principles plus three more: user satisfaction, measurable improvements in the quality of service, and innovative enhancements to services at no extra cost. An announcement on those organisations which have been successful will be made in December.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39853]

The Deputy Prime Minister: Since assuming my new responsibilities, I have met the chief executive of the Civil Service College for discussions on one occasion.

I have yet to meet the other agency heads in person. However, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster met the chief executives of the

Chessington Computer Centre and of HMSO for discussions in August, and again in September; and the chief executive of the Central Office of Information in October.

My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary, Office of Public Service has met the chief executives of all the agencies reporting to me at least once each in the course of the year.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39493]

Mr. Horam: As this question concerns a purely operational matter, I have asked the chief executive of each agency concerned to write direct to the hon. Member.

Letter from Dr. E. C. McCloy to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 26 October 1995:

I am replying to your question to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in so far as it relates to my agency. The information you asked for is in the attached schedule.

The following information is available in respect of 1995-96.

	1995–96 Numbers	*Estimated cost £*	*1994–95 Numbers*	*1994–95 [1]salaries £*
Grades 3–7	20	1,186,745	20	—
Executive Grades:	8	168,856	7	—
Secretarial/ Clerical:	25	451,160	24	—
SOHAs	9	277,844	9	—
OHAs	24	584,344	19	—
OHPs	8	189,316	11	—
OHNs	6	57,797	10	—
SPTOs	2	63,278	3	—
HPTOs	2	41,558	2	—
Total	104	3,020,898	105	—

[1] Detailed analysis for 1994–95 salaries not available.

Letter from Mike Lynn to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 27 October 1995:

I have been asked to reply, in respect of HMSO, to your Question (No 301) to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster about staff numbers and costs.

I should explain initially that for some years now HMSO has been maintaining its own pay and grading system, which is quite different from the standard Civil Service grading arrangements. Apart from my own post, which is a Civil Service Grade 2, about two thirds of HMSO's staff are on job evaluated paybands and the remainder is made up of mainly operational staff and others who are in single status grades. Average staff numbers in 1994 and 1995 (forecast) were as follows:

HMSO Payband	*1994*	*1995*
Payband 20	2	3
Payband 19	1	0
Payband 18	4	3
Payband 17	3	2
Payband 16	6	5
Payband 15	8	7
Payband 14	17	13
Payband 13	35	34
Payband 12	18	26
Payband 11	57	62
Payband 10	100	118
Payband 9	179	182
Payband 8	253	285
Payband 7	331	300
Payband 6	128	122
Payband 5	270	276
Payband 4	337	288
Payband 3	147	128
Payband 2	32	36
Payband 1	27	19
Non-banded staff	951	960
Total	2,907	2,870

Staff costs, including employer's contributions for national insurance and superannuation, were £75.1m in 1994, and are forecast to be £70.9m in 1995. HMSO's financial year runs from January to December.

Letter from Elizabeth Chennells to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 26 October 1995:

Your written question to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster regarding the staff numbers and costs for Executive Agency staff refers. Agency Chief Executives have been asked to reply to you directly. I am replying on behalf of Dr Hickey, Chief Executive of the Civil Service College, who is currently away from the office.

The information that you require is attached. Because of the method the College uses to maintain its records for staff costs, a breakdown of costs by grade is not readily available. However I have included the total staff costs for the College for 1994–95 and our expected costs for 1995–96.

Civil Service College

Grade	*1994–95*		*1995–96*	
	Number	*Cost £000*	*Number*	*Cost £000*
Grade 3	1	—	1	—
Grade 5	3	—	4	—
Grade 6	19	—	18	—
Grade 7	77	—	75	—
SEO	11	—	13	—
Senior Librarian	1	—	1	—
HEO	16	—	17	—
EO	45	—	43	—
Assistant Librarian	2	—	2	—
Senior Personal Secretary	1	—	1	—
AO	76	—	73	—
AA	3	—	4	—
SGB1	3	—	3	—
SGB2	10	—	14	—
Personal Secretary	10	—	10	—
Typist	2	—	1	—
Total	280	6,878	280	7,324

Letter from R. N. Edwards to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 26 October 1995:

STAFF NUMBERS AND COSTS AT THE CHESSINGTON COMPUTER CENTRE

I refer to your enquiry to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster regarding staff numbers and their cost for the financial years 1994–95 and 1995–96.

As the detail of staff numbers and cost by grade is not readily available and a disproportionate cost would be involved in collecting the data the response is limited to providing aggregate numbers and costs for the two financial years. The figures are as follows:-

Year	*Average No. of (full-time equivalent) staff in post*	*Annual cost £*
1994–95	395.5	8,484,447
1995–96	385	8,519,620

The estimate for 1995–96 is based on actuals as at the end of October 95 and planned staff in post figures for the remainder of the year.

Letter from Kim Bright to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 26 October 1995:

"To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for (a) financial year 1994/95 and (b) the estimated figures for the year 1995/96 for each executive agency for which he is responsible."

(a.) As at 31 March 1995

	Staff
Grade 3	1
Grade 5	1
Grade 6	3
Grade 7	13.5
Senior Psychologist	1
Higher Psychologist	4
SEO	6
HEO	7
EO	24
AO	38
AA	14
SPS	1
PS	1.5
Typist	6
SM3	1
SGI	3
SGII	8.5
Total	133.5

Cost £2.328 million.

(b) Approximately 135 staff

Cost £2,833 million.

Letter from Mike Devereau to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 31 October 1995:

STAFF NUMBERS AND COSTS

You asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for information on the number and cost of staff, by grade, for the last and current financial years.

As this is an operational matter I have been asked to reply on behalf of the Central Office of Information.

At 31 March 1995 there were 486.39 staff in post and at 30 September 19995 there were 452.42. A breakdown by grade is given in the attached table. Salary costs quoted include superannuation and National Insurance costs. Staff numbers in each grade include part-time staff.

I hope that this information meets your needs.

1995–96 Grade	*Total salary cost £*	*Number in Grade*	*Average staff cost £*
Chief Executive	71,715	1.00	71,715
Grade 5	248,785	4.00	62,196
Grade 6	671,484	13.00	51,653
Grade 7	1,233,043	30.65	40,230
Supervisory Engineer (SIO)	0	0.00	0
Senior Executive Officer	397,546	12.00	33,129
Senior Information Officer	3,271,929	103.81	31,518
Senior Engineer (IO)	0	0.00	0
Engineer (IO)	0	0.00	0
Higher Executive Officer	515,014	19.00	27,106
Information Officer	2,418,583	95.30	25,379
Librarian	26,539	1.00	26,539
Assistant Information Officer	209,158	11.00	19,014
Executive Officer	828,970	41.00	20,219
Personal Secretary	202,019	11.00	18,365
Vaultkeeper	0	0.00	0
Assistant Librarian	22,723	1.00	22,723
Support Manager 3	35,594	2.00	17,797
Typist	118,421	7.00	16,917
Administrative Officer	1,209,726	72.66	16,649
Support Grade; Band 1	90,270	6.00	15,045
Support Grade: Band 2	174,979	14.00	12,498
Administrative Assistant	65,347	7.00	9,335
Total	11,811,845	452.42	

1994–95 Grade	*Total salary cost £*	*Number in Grade*	*Average staff cost £*
Chief Executive	71,984	1.00	71,984
Grade 5	247,713	4.00	61,928
Grade 6	677,885	13.00	52,145
Grade 7	1,203,404	29.65	40,587
Supervisory Engineer (SIO)	38,569	1.00	38,569
Senior Executive Officer	364,874	12.50	29,190
Senior Information Officer	3,443,567	112.82	30,523
Senior Engineer (IO)	54,057	2.00	27,028
Engineer (IO)	145,055	6.00	24,176
Higher Executive Officer	515,732	20.00	25,787
Information Officer	2,370,873	99.92	23,728
Librarian	25,957	1.00	25,957
Assistant Information Officer	245,240	12.00	20,437
Executive Officer	886,623	44.00	20,151
Personal Secretary	220,063	13.00	16,928
Vaultkeeper	18,397	1.00	18,397
Assistant Librarian	22,013	1.00	22,013
Support Manager 3	34,478	2.00	17,239
Typist	128,821	8.00	16,103
Administrative Officer	1,185,717	75.00	15,810
Support Grade; Band 1	87,047	6.00	14,508
Support Grade: Band 2	193,923	14.50	13,374
Administrative Assistant	70,734	7.00	10,105
Total	12,252,726	486.39	

Departmental Costs

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what is his estimate of the total costs of running his office since his appointment, broken down between *(a)* establishment costs, *(b)* equipment costs, *(c)* refurbishment costs, *(d)* running costs, *(e)* entertainment costs, *(f)* stationery costs, *(g)* rental costs and *(h)* other costs. [39647]

The Deputy Prime Minister: Expenditure directly incurred in the running of my office during July, August and September 1995 was as follows:

	£
(a) Establishment costs[1]	86,360
(b) Equipment costs	19,860
(c) Refurbishment costs	0
(d) Running costs[2]	8,940
(e) Entertainment costs	0
(f) Stationery costs	6,100
(g) Rental costs	[3]—
(h) Other costs	[3]—
Total	121,260

[1] Direct staff costs.

[2] Running costs not covered by categories *(a)*, *(e)* and *(f)*, principally transport.

[3] Rental and other costs (e.g light and heating) are incurred within the costs of the office as a whole and cannot be separately identified.

Ministerial Information Systems

Ms Hodge: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, pursuant to his oral answer, *Official Report*, column 823, what sums have been spent on introducing the computerised interdepartmental desk diary system. [40004]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) on 30 October 1995, *Official Report*, column 6.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40530]

Mr. Horam: None.

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40529]

Mr. Horam: The information is not available in the form requested. The Department's performance in respect of the payment of invoices from its suppliers is published in the annual department report, Cm 2820.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40843]

Mr. Horam: I am also answering on behalf of the Prime Minister.

It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time salary fell within the band.

	1994–95 £	*1995–96* £
(i)	5,000–9,999	5,000–9,999
(ii)	5,000–9,999	5,000–9,999
(iii)[1]	0–4,999	0–4,999

[1] Information refers to the research councils sponsored by the Office of Science and Technology which transferred to the Department of Trade and Industry on 5 July 1995.

The highest full-time salary fell within the band.

	1994–95 £	*1995–96* £
(i)	115,000–119,999	120,000–124,999
(ii)	70,000–74,999	65,000–69,999
(iii)[1]	100,000–104,999	100,000–104,999

[1] Information refers to the research councils sponsored by the Office of Science and Technology which transferred to the Department of Trade and Industry on 5 July 1995.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many individuals in *(a)* his Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies received annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeding (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in each year since 1985–86. [40842]

Mr. Horam: I am also answering on behalf of the Prime Minister.

Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies and NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pensions scheme or equivalent, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules which have been deposited in the House of Commons Library. The numbers receiving annual remuneration above the sums specified, excluding pension benefits are as follows.

The Department has a nil return for the period 1985 to 1991 in all categories. The statistics for the remaining years are:

	1992–93	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*
(i)	1	1	1	1
(ii)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
(iii)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

The executive agencies for which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has responsibility all have a nil return for the period 1985–86 to 1995–96 in all categories.

The NDPBs' have a nil return for the period 1985–86 to 1993–94.

	1994–95	*1995–96*
(i)	1	1
(ii)	Nil	Nil
(iii)	Nil	Nil

[1] Information refers to the research councils sponsored by the Office of Science and Technology which transferred to the Department of Trade and Industry on 5 July 1995.

DEFENCE

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40531]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The payment of the vast majority of the Department's bills and those of its agencies is a matter for the chief executive of the Defence Accounts Agency. The Defence Evaluation and Research Agency is responsible for paying its own bills. I have asked the chief executives of these agencies to reply.

Letter from Peter Trevelyan to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 1 November 1995:

You asked the Secretary of State for Defence how often his Department and each Agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last 5 years. As Chief Executive of the Defence Accounts Agency, responsible for paying the vast majority of MOD bills, I have been asked to reply. I understand MOD Agencies which pay their own bills will reply separately.

The statistics which are readily available to the MOD payment office at Liverpool go back two and a half years. During this time 99.99% of bills have been paid within 30 days of receipt. Some low value bills are paid locally throughout MOD, but information about these is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Letter from John Chisholm to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 1 November 1995:

1. You asked the Secretary of State for Defence how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last 5 years. I am replying for the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency, formerly the Defence Research Agency.

2. Assuming that the 30 day period is measured from the point at which a validated invoice is passed to our bill paying section for action, then virtually all bills are settled within 9 days. We make no distinction in this process between small and large businesses.

Defence Expenditure (NATO Countries)

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of gross national product is spent on defence in each of the members of NATO. [40704]

Mr. Soames: The information requested is contained in the "Statement of Defence Estimates 1995", page 82, a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Military Hospitals

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what dates the military hospitals at *(a)* Aldershot, *(b)* Woolwich, *(c)* Wroughton and *(d)* Halton close; and on what date the (i) Royal Naval hospital Stonehouse and (ii) RAF Hospital, Ely will close. [40759]

Mr. Soames: The service hospitals at Aldershot, Halton and Wroughton will close by April 1996. The sale of the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich to the NHS took place on 30 August this year. The hospitals at Stonehouse, Plymouth, and Ely closed in March this year and in 1992 respectively.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many national health service patients have been treated as in-patients at *(a)* the Cambridge military hospital, Aldershot, and *(b)* the RAF Wroughton hospital, near Swindon, in each year since 1991–92 and in 1995–96 to date; and how much was paid by NHS purchasing authorities to each of these military hospitals in each of those years. [40758]

Mr. Soames: The figures are as follows:

	CMH Aldershot	*PARAFH Wroughton*
1991–92	5,980	2,218
1992–93	6,248	2,293
1993–94	8,345	2,486
1994–95	5,744	2,366
1995–96[1]	1,386	544

[1] As at 1 October 1995.

These patient numbers were contained within the required training margin for military medical personnel and therefore were treated at no cost to health care purchasers.

French Nuclear Tests

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information or data Her Majesty's Government have received from French nuclear tests conducted at *(a)* Reganne in 1965–66, *(b)* Mururoa in 1966 to the present, *(c)* Fangataufa since 1966 in regard to Euratom treaty, articles 34 or 35. [40593]

Mr. Arbuthnot: None.

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will place in the Library copies of all memoranda of understanding signed with France in regard to co-operation on nuclear weapons since 1965. [40591]

(2) what technical data or other information his Department has received from France on the parameters, reasons for and outcome of French nuclear tests conducted this year as part of existing nuclear co-operation agreements with France; [40592]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) on 24 October 1995, *Official Report*, column *587*.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40532]

Mr. Arbuthnot: This information is not held centrally and, while detailed research could be undertaken only at disproportionate cost, a limited inquiry has been made within the time available. This found that there did not appear to have been any instances in any of the years in question.

Low Flying

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his Department's policy concerning low flying in Wales; and what is the minimum height permitted for such flights. [40847]

Mr. Soames: Low flying is permitted throughout the United Kingdom, except in controlled airspace, over major conurbations and in other locations which are to be avoided for safety or environmental reasons. The normal minimum height for military fixed-wing aircraft, except light propeller driven aircraft, is 250 ft minimum separation distance. A small amount of operational low flying by such United Kingdom military aircraft is permitted down to 100 ft minimum separation distance in three tactical training areas, one of which is in central Wales. Light propeller driven aircraft are permitted to fly to a minimum height of 50 ft. There is no minimum height restriction for helicopters.

Dr. Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with his German counterpart concerning low flying by British aircraft over German territory; and what is the minimum height permitted for British aircraft flying in Germany. [40845]

Mr. Soames: There have been no such recent discussions. The normal minimum height permitted for Royal Air Force fixed-wing aircraft flying in Germany is 1,000 ft; however, a lower limit of 500 ft is permitted for a number of major NATO exercises.

Tornado F3

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his Department's assessment of the Tornado F3 upgrade with EJ200 engines. [40851]

Mr. Arbuthnot: There is no current requirement to upgrade the Tornado F3 with EJ200 engines.

Dr. Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if his Department has examined the interoperability of US F–16 aircraft with Britain's air-to-air refuelling systems. [40849]

Mr. Arbuthnot: My Department is currently evaluating a proposal to upgrade the Tornado F3's weapons systems. As a routine part of our evaluation process, we are examining the comparative costs of alternative options, including acquiring F–16 aircraft from the US. In assessing these alternatives we will take full account of all relevant factors, including the need for air-to-air refuelling.

Dr. Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the maximum flying height of the Tornado F3. [40850]

Mr. Soames: The Tornado F3 is cleared to fly at a maximum height of 50,000 ft. In practice, however, the actual operating ceiling will be determined by a range of interrelated factors, including weapon and fuel load, environmental conditions, and others.

Housing Stock

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's current policy in respect of the married housing stock. [40855]

Mr. Soames: We are continuing to consider possibilities for transferring ownership of the married quarters estate to the private sector. We expect to be in a position to clarify the way ahead before the end of the year.

Dr. Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the *(a)* independent advisers and *(b)* companies who are providing advice concerning his Department's (i) housing stock and (ii) surplus land; and if he will make a statement. [40854]

Mr. Soames: For management of my Department's housing stock, a number of individual consultants have been employed on a contract basis by the Defence Housing Executive. The principal companies providing advice on the possible transfer of ownership of the married quarters estate to the private sector are Nat West Markets (financial advisers), Herbert Smith (legal advisers) and Savills (property advisers).

Independent advisers who have contributed in the past year to our consideration of proposals for the married quarters estate are:

Mr. David Dugdale
Mr. David Hart
Mr. Douglas Hogg
Sir Nigel Mobbs
The Lord Poole

In respect of surplus land, no single adviser or company provides advice on all cases. Consultants are appointed, where necessary, to provide advice on such matters as development potential, planning issues and marketing. No central record is maintained of all such current contracts.

Contractorisation

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian jobs have been replaced under his Department's contractorisation programme. [40844]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The Department's budget holders operate within financial allocations, which cover a range of operating costs, including military and civilian staff. Since April 1992, some 26,000 posts have been reviewed under the competing for quality programme, resulting in a reduction in the overall number of MOD posts of nearly 17,500. Details of the breakdown of posts between military and civilian staff are not held centrally.

Air Defence Capability

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has carried out in the last three years of the United Kingdom's air defence suppression capability; and if he will make a statement. [40848]

Mr. Soames: We keep our SEAD—suppression of enemy air defences—assets under constant review to ensure that we maintain our capability against current and future radar threats.

Practice Flights (Wales)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the total number of practice flights over Wales by the RAF in each of the last five years. [40846]

Mr. Soames: Records are not maintained of the total number of training flights conducted over specific areas.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Executive Agencies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39856]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I and my predecessor have frequently met the heads of the agencies which report to us to discuss the work of the agencies concerned. My Department is of course in regular contact with the agencies and I am briefed on major developments.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list by grade the number of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39486]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Estimated outturn for 1994–95 and plans for 1995–96 for civil service staff numbers and pay bill are set out in annexes 5 and 6 of my Department's annual report, Cm 2803, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House. A breakdown by grade and individual agency could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Arable Area Payments Scheme

Mr. Tipping: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list by county the number of payments made under the arable area payments scheme of *(a)* less than £25,000, *(b)* between £25,000 and £50,000, *(c)* between £50,000 and £75,000 and *(d)* above £1 million for the latest year for which figures are available. [39885]

Mr. Baldry: The table gives the number of payments in England by county and banded by size of payment. It is not possible to identify separately the number of payments above £1 million for reasons of confidentiality.

Arable area payments 1994—number of payments by county

County	*Below £25,000*	*£25,000–£50,000*	*£50,000–£75,000*
Avon	346	33	6
Bedfordshire	380	104	42
Berkshire	151	55	20
Buckinghamshire	427	125	34
Cambridgeshire	1,580	313	129
Cheshire	935	21	3
Cleveland	181	29	7
Cornwall	1,608	47	4
Cumbria	877	9	3
Derbyshire	683	67	15
Devon	2,550	75	12
Dorset	542	98	42
Durham	526	87	21
East Sussex	334	55	23
Essex	890	375	156
Gloucestershire	735	127	53
Greater London	43	12	0
Greater Manchester	130	9	1
Hampshire	438	146	82
Hereford and Worcester	1,790	178	42
Hertfordshire	223	145	58
Humberside	1,501	406	123
Isle of Wight	94	15	11
Kent	678	179	71
Lancashire	441	23	7
Leicestershire	795	190	75
Lincolnshire	2,448	482	230
Merseyside	157	17	2
Norfolk	2,277	373	134
North Yorkshire	2,617	419	94
Northamptonshire	504	223	69
Northumberland	548	191	50
Nottinghamshire	727	181	63
Oxfordshire	493	176	94
Shropshire	1,395	160	28
Somerset	1,134	85	23
South Yorkshire	386	86	30
Staffordshire	721	74	25
Suffolk	1,475	368	118
Surrey	153	36	8
Tyne and Wear	81	24	4
Warwickshire	609	165	59
West Midlands	85	9	2
West Sussex	328	87	26
West Yorkshire	319	49	15
Wiltshire	622	189	93
Total	35,957	6,317	2,207

Payments are shown against county of the main holding.

Mr. Tipping: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list by county the amount paid under the arable area payments scheme for the latest year for which figures are available. [39884]

Mr. Baldry: The table gives the total arable area payments claimed in 1994 on land situated in each county of England. The total amounts paid will have been slightly lower because of reductions made for various reasons. However, since such reductions normally have to be calculated on the basis of the total claim, which may include land in more than one county, it is not possible to give figures for the total amounts paid on a county basis.

	Total payments claimed £
Avon	4,740,888
Bedfordshire	20,579,153

	Total payments claimed £
Berkshire	11,841,859
Buckinghamshire	17,644,628
Cambridgeshire	62,314,987
Cheshire	7,853,495
Cleveland	5,046,152
Cornwall	11,250,044
Cumbria	4,152,384
Derbyshire	10,035,857
Devon	18,390,558
Dorset	16,999,055
Durham	13,025,550
East Sussex	9,557,599
Essex	58,827,843
Gloucestershire	26,546,974
Greater London	1,415,166
Greater Manchester	1,634,561
Hampshire	34,732,756
Hereford and Worcester	29,629,509
Hertfordshire	21,526,960
Humberside	62,523,576
Isle of Wight	3,000,696
Kent	36,657,080
Lancashire	5,268,782
Leicestershire	31,904,533
Lincolnshire	107,101,476
Merseyside	3,013,057
Norfolk	68,895,924
North Yorkshire	65,185,535
Northamptonshire	35,852,850
Northumberland	27,953,889
Nottinghamshire	29,100,997
Oxfordshire	37,018,288
Shropshire	24,570,683
Somerset	14,238,260
South Yorkshire	14,057,997
Staffordshire	14,422,395
Suffolk	58,461,539
Surrey	4,477,063
Tyne and Wear	2,829,561
Warwickshire	25,109,362
West Midlands	1,718,520
West Sussex	14,479,976
West Yorkshire	7,593,090
Wiltshire	36,257,406
Total	1,119,438,513

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40536]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Ministry has served one petition for insolvency during this period. It is not known how many people the company employed.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Contributions Agency

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many staff are currently employed by the Contributions Agency in identifying those evading their proper social security contributions; and how many he expects will be employed following the implementation of the business unit implementation exercise for the reorganisation of offices; [39971]

(2) what has been the cost of the employment of consultants in connection with the business unit implementation exercise for the reorganisation of Contributions Agency offices; what consultation has so far been undertaken with local authorities, citizens advice bureaux and local chambers of commerce in this connection; and what overall budget savings are expected from the exercise. [39972]

Mr. Heald: The administration of the Contributions Agency is a matter for Mrs. Faith Boardman, the chief executive. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Faith Boardman to Mr. Chris Smith, dated 31 October 1995:

As Chief Executive of the Contributions Agency, I have responsibility for answering questions about operational matters relating to the Agency. I have been asked to reply to your questions about the cost of consultants in connection with the Business Unit Implementation exercise for re-organisation, what consultation has taken place with various bodies, expected overall budget savings, and the numbers of staff employed in identifying those contributors evading contributions. In view of the nature of the questions I have combined the responses.

I am unable to provide the cost of consultants used in connection with the Field Operations Business Unit Implementation as this information is subject to commercial confidentiality provisions.

The Agency proposes to reduce its Field Operations network from the existing 248 offices to approximately 115. The proposed Field network is being developed in consultation with local management, staff and Trade Unions. A decision on specific locations will not be taken until this process is complete. Thereafter the business community, including Local Authorities, Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Chambers of Commerce and Members of Parliament will be fully consulted before implementation takes place.

Precise details of savings cannot be determined during the planning and development stage of the re-organisation. However it is estimated that there will be significant savings in management costs. Savings in accommodation and related costs will also be captured as the new Field network is implemented.

The Agency has responsibility to ensure compliance with the law in relation to National Insurance contributions. Non-compliance is not solely due to evasion but is frequently the result of lack of awareness or genuine error. Because of this, it is impossible to estimate the proportion of work or staff directly dealing with evasion. Of the Agency's current total Field force of 3093 staff, approximately 1300 are employed on inspectorate duties which bring them into direct contact with employers and the self-employed. It is not anticipated that inspectorate numbers will significantly change as a result of the Business Unit Implementation process.

I hope that this reply proves helpful. Please let me know if I can be of any more assistance.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what is the average time taken by the Child Support Agency to make a maintenance assessment; and if he will make a statement on how this meets the set targets; [38813]

(2) if he will make a statement on the basis for the time period set out in the guidelines, of the Child Support Agency within which the claimants assessments should be completed. [38814]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Ann Chant. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Ann Chant to Mr. Llew Smith, dated 31 October 1995:

I am replying to your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Social Security concerning the time taken by the Agency to clear maintenance assessments.

Due to the nature of the child support work, and the varying level of co-operation experienced, reaching a full maintenance assessment will, on average, involve a period of months rather than weeks. The Agency has, however, sought to introduce a number of operational improvements to ensure that straightforward cases, in which both parents co-operate with the Agency, are cleared quickly. Where both parents co-operate,we would hope that an assessment is completed within 6 to 12 weeks of the maintenance application form being issued.

At present, including the less straightforward cases, the average time taken by the Child Support Agency to make a maintenance assessment is approximately 30 weeks. This information is taken from a five per cent. statistical sample carried out on 31st May 1995.

You asked about performance against the set target. From April to August this year just under 50 per cent. of applications received since the beginning of October 1994 had been cleared within 26 weeks. These figures do not currently take account of all the cases cleared, for example, where "good cause" has been accepted and a reduced benefit direction has been issued. We expect more comprehensive figures to become available within the next two months.

I hope this is helpful.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the number *(a)* invalidity/disability premium claimants for fit for *(a)* work and *(b)* for light work in the past 12 months for each of his Department's benefit offices covering the Doncaster and Mexboroguh area; and what was the comparative figure for the previous 12 months. [39561]

Mr. Burt: The administration of incapacity benefits is a matter for Mr. Peter Mathison, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member with such information as is available.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 31 October 1995:

The Secretary of State for Social Security has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the number (a) of invalidity/disability premium claimants found fit for (a) work and (b) for light work in the past 12 months for each of his Department's benefit offices covering the Doncaster and Mexborough area; and what was the comparative figure for the previous 12 months.

Invalidity Benefit was replaced by Incapacity Benefit from 13 April 1995. Disability premium is payable as part of Income Support. A customer who receives Incapacity Benefit may also receive Income Support which could include a disability premium.

Information is not available in the form requested. Statistics are only available for the numbers of customers failing the All Work Test on a national basis from 13 April to the end of June this year. They are available at a local level from July 1995. Figures are not available to show the breakdown into Incapacity Benefit or disability premium as separate statistics are not kept on the type of benefit entitlement at the time of the decision.

The number of customers failing the All Work Test from July to September, in the Mexborough and Doncaster area, are as follows:

	Mexborough	*Doncaster*
July 1995	10	11
August 1995	20	50
September 1995	40	87

The Doncaster figures include both Doncaster West and Doncaster East Benefits Agency offices.

The Incapacity Benefit scheme does not have a category of "fit for light work" as it is based on either the customers Own Occupation or All Work Tests.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

Social Security Expenditure

Mr. Robert Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the annual expenditure on social security benefits for people in employment for the latest available year broken down by *(a)* family credit, *(b)* income support, *(c)* housing benefit and *(d)* council tax benefit. [38612]

Mr. Roger Evans: The information is set out in the table.

Benefit expenditure on people in employment 1994

£ million

Benefit	*Estimated annual expenditure*
Family Credit	1,480
Income Support	617
Housing Benefit	697
Council Tax Benefit	137

Notes:

1. The figures have been rounded to the nearest million pounds.
2. The expenditure figures for income support, housing and council tax benefits have been estimated by calculation from the number of cases in receipt of benefit and the weekly amount of benefit in payment at a point in time in May 1994. They may not therefore represent actual spending through the year.
3. For the purposes of the calculations referred to in note 2 above 'people in employment' have been defined as cases where either the benefit claimant and/or his/her partner have earnings from employment or self-employment.
4. It is possible for one person to receive more than one of the benefits listed above.
5. Figures for family credit refer to estimated expenditure in 1994–95.

Source:

1995 Social Security Departmental Report.
Income Support Statistics Quarterly Enquiry, May 1994.
Housing Benefit MIS 1 per cent. sample.

Reduced Earnings Allowance

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the total number of reduced earnings allowance awards in each year since 1991, and this year to date *(a)* nationally and *(b)* in each of his Department's benefit offices covering the Doncaster and Mexborough postal districts. [39040]

Mr. Roger Evans: The information is not available in the format requested. Available information is set out in the table. Rother and Dearne district office includes Rotherham north and south, Goldthorpe, Mexborough and Wath-on Dearne.

Total of new reduced earnings allowance awards

	Part 1991[1]	1992	1993	1994	Part 1995[2]
Great Britain	2,904	6,047	3,179	3,570	2,608
Doncaster District Office	10	11	7	24	26
Rother and Dearne District Office	5	42	7	27	13

Note:

[1] October to December 1991.

[2] January to September 1995.

Source:

BA CDU 100 per cent. count subject to amendment.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what estimate he has made of the changes there will be in the levels of indebtedness among benefit recipients who make up the shortfall in rent demanded by the landlord from their disposable income, following the capping of housing benefit. [38898]

Mr. Roger Evans: No such estimate has been made.

Mr. Elletson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what were the total amounts paid to recipients of housing benefit in *(a)* Manchester, *(b)* Blackburn, *(c)* Burnley and *(d)* Liverpool in (i) 1991–92 and (ii) 1993–94; and if he will estimate the amounts likely to be paid out this year; [39842]

(2) what were the total amounts paid to recipients of housing benefit in Blackpool in *(a)* 1991–92 and *(b)* 1993–94; and if he will estimate the amounts likely to be paid out this year. [39843]

Mr. Roger Evans: The available information is set out in the table.

Expenditure on housing benefit

£000s

	1991–92	*1993–94*
Blackburn	18,466	25,235
Blackpool	18,619	29,872
Burnley	10,225	14,216
Liverpool	127,599	164,600
Manchester	213,383	254,638

Note:

Figures relate to local authority areas.

Estimates for expenditure during 1995–96 are not available.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 19 July, *Official Report*, column *1480–81*, (1) if he will exempt private sector accommodation identified by local authority social services departments as consistent with strategies for care in the community; [40426]

(2) if he will exempt accommodation provided by a social services authority. [40427]

Mr. Evans: We are considering the situation as regards private sector accommodation which is consistent with social services' strategies for care in the community and accommodation which is provided by social services authorities.

Asylum Seekers

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make it his policy that asylum seekers who have been victims of torture will not have their welfare benefits withdrawn. [40060]

Mr. Roger Evans: The Government referred proposals affecting the benefit entitlement of asylum seekers and other persons from abroad to the Social Security Advisory Committee on 11 October. We will consider the position fully once the committee has reported on its consultation exercise.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to amend the current benefits system to ensure that self-employed persons are able to claim benefits on becoming unemployed. [40145]

Mr. Roger Evans: Current policy will be carried forward in the new jobseeker's allowance from October 1996. Payment of class 2 national insurance contributions on earnings from self-employment will not enable a self-employed person to gain entitlement to contribution-based jobseeker's allowance. Self-employed claimants will have access to income-based jobseeker's allowance in the same way as other claimants.

Changes to the availability for work rules will, however, recognise the growth in self-employment. As now, all claimants will have to be available for employed earner's employment, but under jobseeker's allowance, people who have been self-employed will be able to limit their jobsearch to self-employed opportunities in their usual occupation for up to 13 weeks at the beginning of their claim.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for business with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40510]

Mr. Burt: No statistics are held to identify the number of employees involved when a winding-up petition is filed against a business by this Department.

Hardship Allowance

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many young people are currently claiming hardship allowance. [40425]

Mr. Roger Evans: For the quarter ending August 1995, 12,417 16 to 17-year-olds were receiving hardship allowances. This figure is provisional and is subject to amendment.

Late Payments (Small Business)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40509]

Mr. Burt: The information is not available in the format requested.

The methods of recording suppliers and payments does not allow for separation into different categories of suppliers, such as small businesses.

Since 1992, the Department has conducted an annual exercise to establish what proportion of bills for goods and services have been paid timeously, that is within any special terms agreed, or, if none exists, within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice, whichever is the later. Details of the percentage of payments made timeously from 1992–93 are as follows:

	1992–93	*1993–94*	*1994–95*
Department of Social Security HQ	90	97	89.5
Benefits Agency	93	95	96
Contributions Agency	93	99	99
Resettlement Agency	96	87	98
Child Support Unit[1]/Child Support Agency	95	90	96
Information Technology Services Agency	96	95	99
War Pensions Agency	part of BA	89	96
Departmental total	94	94	96

[1] child support unit did not exist post 1992–93.

Young People (Benefits)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many *(a)* 16 and *(b)* 17-year-olds are currently available for work and not in receipt of benefit. [40439]

Mr. Roger Evans: The latest available labour force survey for Great Britain shows that, in summer—June to August 1995—there were 180,000 16 to 17-year-olds who were unemployed[1]. However, of these, 91,000 were still in full-time education and around a further 55,000 were either receiving benefit direct or their parents were receiving benefit on their behalf. Of the remaining 34,000, there is no information on their personal financial circumstances although many will be living as part of their parents' household. In addition, significant numbers move into youth training shortly after registering at the careers office.

Notes

[1] The Labour Force Survey uses the International Labour Organisation's definition of "unemployed", i.e. people who were without a job, were available to start work in the next fortnight, and had either looked for work in the last four weeks, or were waiting to start a job they had already obtained.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies, (iii) non-departmental bodies in (1) 1994–95 and 2) 1995–96. [40820]

Mr. Burt: It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time salaries fell within the following bands:

	1994–95 £	*1995–96* £
(i) Department	[1]5,000–9,999	[2]5,000–9,999
(ii) Agencies	5,000–9,999	5,000–9,999
(iii) Non-Departmental Public Bodies[3]	5,000–9,999	5,000–9,999

[1] There were 10 people in the Department whose salary fell just under £5,000.

[2] There were 12 people in the Department whose salary fell just under £5,000.

[3] Information refers to those bodies listed in "Public Bodies 1994".

The highest full-time salaries fell within the following bands:

	1994–95 £	*1995–96* £
(i) Department	95,000–99,999	95,000–99,999
(ii) Agencies	85,000–89,999	80,000–84,999
(iii) Non-Departmental Public Bodies[1]	70,000–74,999	75,000–79,999

[1] Information refers to those bodies listed in "Public Bodies 1994".

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will estimate the number of individuals in his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeded (i) £100,000 (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in (1) 1985–86, (2) 1990–91, (3) 1992–93, (4) 1994–95 and (5) 1995–96. [40819]

Mr. Burt: Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies and non-departmental public bodies. As members of the principal civil service pension scheme, staff may receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules which had been deposited in the Library of the House. No member of staff has received remuneration above £100,000 in the years in question.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Dumped Armaments

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the locations in Northern Ireland where old armaments have been washed up on the shoreline in the past 10 years. [39643]

Mr. Moss: No old armaments are recorded as having been washed up on the shoreline in Northern Ireland in the past 10 years.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many incidents have been reported by fishermen in Northern Ireland of catching dumped armaments in their nets in the 10 years. [39625]

Mr. Ancram: Such information is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Armaments caught in fishermen's nets may come from a number of sources other than dumping, including shipwrecks or bombing.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the fish caught for consumption in Northern Ireland is caught in or around the Beaufort dyke area. [39639]

Mr. Ancram: It is estimated that, of the total quantity of fish landed into Northern Ireland in 1994, less than 4 per cent. was caught in or around the Beaufort dyke area. No information is available on how much of this is consumed in Northern Ireland.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of armaments washed up on the shoreline in Northern Ireland can be identified as having drifted out of the Beaufort dyke munitions dump in the last 10 years. [39638]

Mr. Moss: No armaments are recorded as having been washed up on the shoreline in Northern Ireland in the past 10 years.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many phosphorus incendiary bombs have been washed up on the Antrim coast in the past 10 years. [39641]

Mr. Moss: The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland has no record of phosphorous incendiary bombs having been washing up on any part of the Northern Ireland coast in the past 10 years. However, early in May 1993, the Department began to receive reports that a number of unidentified phosphorous canisters were being washed ashore, mainly in County Antrim.

Although there is no record of the number washed ashore, the Department has arranged for the recovery and safe disposal of 84 such objects in 1993, six in 1994 and one to date in 1995.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fishermen in Northern Ireland have reported injuries caused to themselves or crew members of their trawlers due to handling weapons and dumped armaments which have become caught up in their fishing nets in the past 10 years. [39640]

Mr. Ancram: We are not aware of any such cases.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fishermen in Northern Ireland fish in or around the Beaufort dyke area. [39642]

Mr. Ancram: It is estimated that 33 Northern Ireland fishing vessels employing about 150 fishermen fished in and around Beaufort dyke in 1994.

Electricity Prices

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the cost per unit of electricity in Northern Ireland for *(a)* domestic users and *(b)* business users. [39636]

Mr. Ancram: Information on unit electricity charges for domestic and business users is set out in the monthly and quarterly billed tariffs booklets published by Northern Ireland Electricity plc. I have arranged for copies of the April 1995 booklet to be placed in the Library of the House.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the differential between electricity prices in Northern Ireland and Great Britain. [39631]

Mr. Ancram: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State said in his statement to the Northern Ireland Committee on 21 June that the Northern Ireland electricity system, because it was small, dispersed and isolated, was inherently high cost by British isles standards, but that the growing divergence currently being experienced is more due to falling prices in Great Britain than to rising prices in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland electricity supply industry is at present in transition, but it is making steady progress towards mirroring the characteristics of the lower cost industry in Great Britain. Recent developments which will help reduce the differential include the reallocation of sulphur quotas and the decision of British Gas to support the development of a natural gas industry in Northern Ireland, as this will reduce the cost of the gas supply to the Ballylumford power station. The 1997 Northern Ireland Electricity price reviews and the introduction of more competition should also have a favourable impact on prices. The latest comprehensive statements on the size of price differential is based on 1994–95 data and are contained in the Director General of Electricity Supply for Northern Ireland's memorandum submitted to the Northern Ireland Committee earlier this year and the paper published in June 1994 entitled "Northern Ireland and Great Britain's Electricity Prices". Copies of these are available in the Library of the House.

Drug Addicts

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many registered drug addicts in Northern Ireland are under the age of 18 years. [39632]

Mr. Moss: None.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the number of registered drug addicts in Northern Ireland in each of the past 10 years. [39635]

Mr. Moss: The number of registered drug addicts in Northern Ireland as at 31 December of each of the past 10 years was as follows:

1985: 29
1986: 36
1987: 32
1988: 35
1989: 38
1990: 48
1991: 51
1992: 60
1993: 80
1994: 87

Gas supplies

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the availability of gas in Northern Ireland to *(a)* domestic users and *(b)* industrial users. [39630]

Mr. Ancram: British Gas is in the process of laying an undersea pipeline from Scotland to Northern Ireland to supply its Ballylumford power station and it has recently announced plans to lay a pipeline from there which will enable it to supply natural gas to consumers in the greater Belfast area. A gas supply to industrial, commercial and domestic consumers is expected to be available at the end of 1996. I intend to present legislation at the beginning of 1996 to facilitate this development.

Drug-related Offences

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list the number and nature of arrests for drug-related offences in Northern Ireland in each of the past five years; [39627]

(2) if he will list the number of arrests in each of the last 10 years for offences regarding the possession and selling of *(a)* heroine, *(b)* cocaine, *(c)* ecstasy and *(d)* cannabis in Northern Ireland. [39634]

Sir John Wheeler: The Government, together with the Royal Ulster Constabulary, are committed to tackling all aspects of the drug problem in Northern Ireland. During the past year, the number of officers in the RUC drugs squad has increased by 15 per cent. and the post of head of drugs squad has been upgraded to detective superintendent. There are now more than three times the number of drugs liaison officers as there were last year, an increase from 18 to 60.

In addition, I recently established the central co-ordinating group for action against drugs of which I am chairman. This group comprises top level representatives from Northern Ireland Government Departments, the medical profession and the RUC and will co-ordinate Government action on all aspects of the campaign against drugs.

The RUC collate figures showing the number of persons arrested for drugs offences. A breakdown by drugs trafficking, possession, or type of drugs is not available.

The number of persons arrested for drugs offences, and the number of persons proceeded against at court for drugs offences, are set out in the tables.

Number of persons arrested in Northern Ireland for drugs offences 1985–1994

	Numbers
1985	316
1986	304
1987	223
1988	432
1989	440
1990	429
1991	453
1992	610
1993	976
1994	1,196

Persons proceeded against at court for drugs offences Northern Ireland 1993 and 1994

	1993	*1994*
Males	471	573
Females	25	37
Total	496	610

"Persons proceeded against" refers to persons prosecuted for drugs offences at Juvenile, Magistrates' or Crown Courts and for whom a result has been obtained ie guilty or not guilty.

Figures cannot be provided prior to 1993 on grounds of disproportionate cost.

Executive Agency Staff Costs

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list by grade the number of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39519]

Sir John Wheeler: Estimated outturn for 1994–95 and plans for 1995–96 for civil service manpower and pay bill are set out in the Northern Ireland Office and Northern Ireland Departments' annual report, Cm 2816, copies of which are available in the Library. A breakdown by grade and individual agency could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Electricity Generation

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list *(a)* the companies who run electricity generating power stations in Northern Ireland and *(b)* the names of the power stations run by each company. [39629]

Mr. Ancram: The information requested is as follows:

(a)	*(b)*
Premier Power Limited	Ballylumford
Coolkeeragh Power Limited	Coolkeeragh
NIGEN Limited	Kilroot
	Belfast West

Dental Health Education

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provisions are in place to educate children about dental health in schools in Northern Ireland. [39644]

Mr. Ancram: The statutory Northern Ireland curriculum makes provision for health through the health education cross-curricular theme and the programme of study for science, which all pupils of compulsory school age must follow. The objectives of the cross-curricular theme include the teaching of the skills necessary to make informed decisions about health. The science programme of study requires pupils at key stage I—age four to eight—to be taught about personal hygiene, of which oral hygiene is a part.

In addition, the staff of the health boards' community dental service, which is responsible for screening pupils at intervals during their school careers, take the opportunities offered by their school visits to talk to pupils and teachers about dental health generally.

Nuclear Waste

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assistance he will give the European Commissioner for the Environment and Nuclear Safety, Ms Ritt Bjerregard, in her investigation into allegations that nuclear waste was dumped in the seas off the Irish and Scottish coasts in 1981 by the British Government. [39626]

Mr. Moss: There is no nuclear industry in Northern Ireland, and no radioactive waste from Northern Ireland has been dumped into the seas off the Irish and Scottish coasts at any time under an authorisation from the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland. There is, therefore, no assistance which could be afforded to the European Commissioner.

Drug Education

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to educate schoolchildren in Northern Ireland on the dangers of drug abuse. [39633]

Mr. Ancram: In schools, the statutory Northern Ireland curriculum make provision for drugs education through the programme of study for science and health education cross-curricular theme. Both of these are compulsory and apply to pupils throughout their period of compulsory schooling from age four to 16. The Department of Education issued guidance on dealing with drug-related incidents in the form of a circular in 1992.

A new and comprehensive package of advice and guidance will be issued to schools in the spring of 1996. The pack will contain an expanded circular, guidance on preparing drugs policies and on the place of drugs education in the curriculum, and a detailed working manual for schools on dealing with drug-related incidents.

Fluoridation

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what evidence he has of public support for the fluoridation of the water supply in Northern Ireland. [39619]

Mr. Moss: Health and social services boards are required to consult their resident populations about any proposal to fluoridate a water supply. In four of the five consultations they have carried out to date, a clear majority of the responses received were in favour of fluoridation. Further consultations will be carried out in the near future.

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the past five years. [40510]

Sir John Wheeler: The information is not available in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Departments, however, are required to provide details of their annual performance in their departmental reports. For 1993–94 and 1994–95, the Northern Ireland Office and Northern Ireland Departments paid 95 per cent. and 94.7 per cent. respectively of their bills in accordance with agreed contractual conditions or, where no such contractual conditions existed, within 30 days of receipt of goods and services or the presentation of a valid invoice.

Forestry

Mrs. Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list all Forestry Commission woods currently for sale in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the targets for the disposal of land by *(a)* area and *(b)* projected income. [40673]

Mr. Ancram: State forestry in Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the forest service of the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland. In the current year, the following woods have been on offer for sale:

Bann Woods South
Castleward (Ballynacraig)
Castleward (Castleward)
Ecclesville.

The forest service is currently undergoing a prior options study under the Government's "next steps" initiative. Future disposals policy and targets will be determined by the outcome of that study.

Royal Mail (Redundancies)

Ms Mowlam: to ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the number of redundancies in Northern Ireland Royal Mail for each of the past five years. [39628]

Mr. Oppenheim: I have been asked to reply.

The Post Office tells me that the number of redundancies in Royal Mail Northern Ireland, all of which have been achieved on a voluntary basis, in each of the past five years are as follows:

Year
1991–92: 5
1992–93: 21
1993–94: 23
1994–95: 20
1995–96: 7 (to date)

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Industrial Prospects

17. **Ms Quin:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade when he last met representatives of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss Britain's industrial prospects. [38666]

Mr. Lang: My ministerial colleagues and I meet representatives of the CBI from time to time to discuss a variety of matters.

Trans-channel Electricity Link

19. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade to what extent the trans-channel electricity link has been used in the last 10 years to import from and export to France. [38669]

Mr. Eggar: Since it was commissioned in 1986 the interconnector has normally supplied baseload electricity from France to England.

Ministerial Responsibilities

20. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement on his governmental responsibilities. [38670]

Mr. Lang: My Department's objective is to help United Kingdom business compete successfully at home and abroad. It also aims, through the Office of Science and Technology, to strengthen the UK's science engineering and technology capability and to maximise its contribution to national economic performance and quality of life. The drive to enhance the UK'S international competitiveness, to which the whole Government is committed, is central to the Department's work.

Vehicle Industry (Investment)

21. **Mr. Miller:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what support his Department gives to inward investment from the vehicle industry. [38671]

Mr. Oppenheim: Inward investment by vehicle companies may be eligible for a variety of forms of support, depending on the circumstances and proposed location, in common with inward investment by companies in other sectors.

Small Businesses

22. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what initiatives he is taking to assist small business. [38672]

Mr. Ian Taylor: A complete outline of the range of initiatives introduced is published in "Small Firms in Britain 1995", copies of which are in the Library of the House.

The business link network is the single most important industrial initiative to be introduced by any UK Government. The national launch of the network took place on 31 October and by the end of the year every business in England will have access to the wide range of services available to assist their prosperity and growth.

24. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many small businesses have been established since 1992. [38674]

Mr. Taylor: Estimates for business starts in England and Wales are produced by Barclays and Natwest banks. These show that in the two and a half years to end June 1995 approximately 1 million new businesses started up.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what advice his Department issues to employees of small businesses regarding *(a)* rights at work and *(b)* terms and conditions of maternity pay. [40543]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: My Department produces a comprehensive range of free booklets describing the rights of all employees under employment legislation. The booklet *"Maternity Rights"* was produced with the Department of Social Security, which is responsible for the maternity pay provisions, and the Health and Safety Executive, and gives information about all aspects of the statutory maternity provisions.

Mrs Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many small businesses there have been in Britain in each of the last 17 years; and, of these, how many had between *(a)* one and nine employees, *(b)* 10 and 99 employees and *(c)* 100 and 499 employees. [40545]

Mr. Page: Estimates of the number of businesses with fewer than 500 employees in the United Kingdom since 1979 are given in the table. Separate figures are not available for Britain.

At the end of 1993, 791,000 businesses had between one and nine employees, 185,000 had between 10 and 99 employees and 14,000 had between 100 and 499 employees; the remainder have no employees. There are no comparable figures for earlier years.

Table 1: Number of businesses in the UK 1979–1993

Thousands

Year	*Number of businesses*
1979	2,420
1980	n/a
1981	n/a
1982	n/a
1983	2,880
1984	n/a
1985	n/a
1986	3,230
1987	n/a
1988	3,680
1989	3,830
1990	3,780
1991	3,600
1992	3,510
1993	3,570

Note:

n/a not available.

Source:

Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) Statistics for the UK, 1993.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what assessment his Department has made of the number and proportion of small businesses which *(a)* have debt financed over five years and *(b)* have debt financed by overdraft; what comparable figures are available for European competitor nations; and what plans he has to ensure that longer-term financing is available to small businesses. [40537]

Mr. Page: A number of different surveys confirm that there has been a marked trend away from overdrafts towards term lending among small and medium-sized enterprises in this country in the last few years. According to figures produced by the British Bankers Association, term lending now accounts for 61.7 per cent. of total lending to SMEs compared to 40 per cent. in 1990. The Government welcome this trend and hope it will continue.

As regards the situation in other European countries, a recent survey carried out by 3i found that an average of 29 per cent. of SMEs are reliant upon overdrafts.

Although the Government believe that finance for any business venture is a commercial matter for the banks and other financial institutions, we continue to point out to SMEs the dangers of an over-reliance on short-term debt finance and to encourage them to consider longer-term alternatives. In appropriate cases, term loans over periods of two to seven years are available under the Government's small firms loan guarantee scheme.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement with regard to the small firms Ministers' network announced by his

Department on 12 October on *(a)* what role each Minister will play, *(b)* how many times per year the network plans to meet, *(c)* when it last met, *(d)* what objectives have been set and *(e)* what effect the network will have on the public purse. [40539]

Mr. Page: The first meeting of the small business Ministers took place on Monday 30 October. It is envisaged that the full team of Ministers will meet approximately every six months with individual bilateral meetings being arranged as necessary to discuss specific issues.

The aim of the group is to discuss how each Department can develop its own programme to help small businesses and how such a programme can be taken forward.

The group itself will not have a direct effect on the public purse.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many small businesses have failed within three years of starting up in each of the last 10 years; and what proportion this is of the total of new small businesses. [40544]

Mr. Page: Official estimates for business survival are produced from the VAT register and are given in the table. Figures for business failure rates are not the same as deregistration rates as many deregistrations are for reasons other than business failure.

Table 1: Deregistration rates of businesses registered for VAT

Year	*Number deregistering within 3 years (thousand)*	*Per cent. deregistering within 3 years*
1980	57	36
1981	57	37
1982	63	38
1983	69	38
1984	71	39
1985	71	39
1986	72	38
1987	78	37
1988[1]	94	39
1989	110	43

Note:

[1] Deregistration rates for 1988 onwards will be inflated by additional deregistrations following the VAT threshold increase in 1991.

Source:

DTI Small Firms Statistics Unit.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is his current estimate of the number of small businesses in each London borough. [40546]

Mr. Page: The best estimate of the number of small businesses by London borough is given by the number of VAT registered businesses. A copy of the most recent figures "VAT Registrations and Deregistrations, County and District Analysis 1992–1993" is in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what assessment his Department has made of the cost to the public purse of the bankruptcy of small businesses as regard *(a)* write-off of tax debts, *(b)* tax relief to creditors on their losses in the bankruptcy and *(c)* the cost of statutory redundancy payments to the work force. [40548]

Mr. Evans: The information is not available.

South Western Electricity

23. **Ms Church:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what representations he has had from the National Consumer Council on behalf of consumers about the bid for South Western Electricity by Southern Company. [38673]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: None.

Nuclear Industry Privatisation

25. **Mr. Simpson:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement on the Government's plans to privatise the nuclear industry. [38675]

Mr. Eggar: Preparations are in hand to transfer the United Kingdom's advanced gas-cooled reactor and pressurised water reactor nuclear power stations, together with their liabilities, to the private sector. It is our intention that this sale should take place in the summer of 1996.

This sale will bring many benefits. In private ownership, the holding company will be free to compete, both domestically and overseas. Privatisation will provide powerful incentives for the two subsidiary companies to benefit their customers by raising efficiency and reducing costs. Our proposals will make for a more competitive nuclear generation sector operating to continuing, rigorous safety standards and will strengthen the ability of British companies to market nuclear services abroad. At the same time, the changes in the fossil fuel levy and the equivalent step in Scotland will bring significant benefits to consumers.

27. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement on the Government's plans to privatise the nuclear industry. [38677]

Mr. Eggar: Preparations are in hand to transfer the United Kingdom's AGR and PWR nuclear power stations, together with their liabilities, to the private sector. It is our intention that this sale should take place in the summer of 1996.

This sale will bring many benefits. In private ownership, the holding company will be free to compete, both domestically and overseas. Privatisation will provide powerful incentives for the two subsidiary companies to benefit their customers by raising efficiency and reducing costs. Our proposals will make for a more competitive nuclear generation sector operating to continuing, rigorous safety standards and will strengthen the ability of British companies to market nuclear services abroad. At the same time, the changes in the fossil fuel levy and the equivalent step in Scotland will bring significant benefits to consumers.

32. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what additional measures he is taking to ensure that safety standards are maintained in the period prior to privatisation of the nuclear industry. [38685]

Mr. Eggar: The independent Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate continues to monitor closely the safe operation of all the United

Kingdom's nuclear installations. The Government will not permit any weakening of the existing regulatory regime or of the current safety standards in force.

Competitiveness

26. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what new initiatives he is taking to improve competitiveness in British industry. [38676]

Mr. Lang: Improving UK competitiveness is at the centre of my Department's work. We are pursuing a wide range of initiatives, including the extension of the benchmarking approach into the service sector; encouraging innovation and improved supply chains; expanding support for small businesses through the opening of more business links; and export promotion.

Government-owned Companies (Exports)

28. **Mr. Gunnell:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what steps he is taking to improve the level of United Kingdom exports from Government-owned companies. [38678]

Mr. Oppenheim: The Government are offering the best ever package of support to British exporting companies, regardless of ownership or sector. I draw the hon. Member's attention to the British Overseas Trade Board annual report and forward plan, which details our support. A copy is in the Library of the House.

Manufacturing Industry

29. **Sir David Knox:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade when he next expects to meet the President of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss manufacturing industry. [38679]

Mr. Lang: I am due to address the national conference of the Confederation of British Industry on 14 November. The latest CBI survey shows continued growth in manufacturing output, investment and exports. In 1996 the CBI expects manufacturing output to grow by 4 per cent.

Cable Television

30. **Mr. Batiste:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the value of current cable television investments in the United Kingdom. [38681]

Mr. Taylor: Investment of some £2 billion in 1995 will bring total cable investment in the UK to £5.2 billion. The recent cable communications exhibition showed the extent of the industry and its suppliers.

Engineering Exports

31. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the current level of United Kingdom engineering exports. [38684]

Mr. Oppenheim: The information is published by the Central Statistical Office in overseas trade analysed in terms of industries, business monitor MQ10, which is available in the Library of the House.

Insurance Company Funds

33. **Mr. Denham:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what further plans he has to regulate the use of insurance company funds. [38686]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: We propose to update the annual returns which insurance companies are required to make to the Department, and to make some technical amendments to the regulations on the value placed on insurance companies' assets. Interested parties are being consulted on these proposals.

Gas and Electricity Prices

34. **Sir Teddy Taylor:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what has been the change in real terms of the prices of *(a)* electricity and *(b)* gas for use by domestic consumers since these industries were privatised. [38687]

Mr. Eggar: Since privatisation in 1990, domestic electricity prices, including VAT, have increased by 2 per cent. in real terms. Excluding VAT, they have fallen by 6 per cent. in real terms.

Since privatisation in late 1986, domestic gas prices, including VAT, have fallen by 16 per cent. in real terms. Excluding VAT, they have fallen by 23 per cent.

Privatised Utilities

35. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the President of the Board of Trade what subjects were discussed at his last meeting with chairmen of the privatised utilities. [38688]

Mr. Lang: I meet the chairmen of privatised utilities from time to time to discuss a range of matters of common interest.

Export Markets (East Timor)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if export licences have been applied for or granted for the export of logging trucks to East Timor. [40373]

Mr. Oppenheim: None in the period 1990 to 1995. Examination of manual records for earlier years would entail disproportionate costs.

Postal Services

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement on the future of the postal services. [38920]

Mr. Oppenheim: The Government are committed to maintaining a nationwide letter and parcel service with daily delivery to every address in the country at a uniform and affordable structure of prices.

Regional Electricity Companies

Mr. Hanson: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what assistance the Government will give to regional electricity companies in respect of tax liabilities arising from the flotation of the National Grid. [40567]

Mr. Eggar: None.

Internal Market Council

Ms Quin: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement on the outcome of the EU Internal Market Council of 9 October. [40112]

Mr. Oppenheim: The Internal Market Council scheduled for 9 October was cancelled. The next IMC is on 23 November.

Research Council

Ms Quin: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement on the outcome of the EU Research Council of 30 October. [40113]

Mr. Ian Taylor: The Council agreed to increase the budget of the EU fourth framework programme for research and technology development by 6.5 per cent. to reflect the accession to the EU of Austria, Finland and Sweden. A number of member states, representing a blocking minority of votes, including the UK, formally indicated that any further decisions made by the Council for supplementary financing for the programme should be contained within the European Union's current financial perspectives.

The Council also decided that the International Association for the Promotion of Co-operation of Scientists from the new independent states of the former Soviet Union should continue in operation until the end of the fourth framework programme in 1988, and agreed a position for the EU at the meeting of the International Thermonuclear Reactor Council in December 1995.

The Commissioner for Research and Education introduced a Commission communication setting out the EU's approach to scientific and technological co-operation with third countries. The Commissioner for Industry briefly reported on the work of the Commission's research-industry task forces. These two issues will be the subject of further analysis and discussion by member states during the Italian presidency in the first half of 1996.

BMARC

Mr. Redmond: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will rescind his decision not to release documents to the former director of BMARC, Mr. John Anderson, and if he will make a statement. [39014]

Mr. Lang: The court considering my application for disqualification of Mr. Anderson from acting as a company director, has ordered disclosure of certain documents and other material

> "as are presently in the hands of the Inspectors appointed to investigate the affairs of Astra Holdings Plc."

All such documents have been supplied to Mr. Anderson.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40508]

Mr. Oppenheim: Information on the number of petitions for bankruptcy initiated by my Department could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

However, my Department would initiate such proceedings only in exceptional circumstances and the number of such actions begun in each of the last five years is therefore likely to be very few.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many *(a)* liquidations, *(b)* administrations, *(c)* receiverships and *(d)* company voluntary arrangements businesses employing under 500 people have experienced in each year since 1985. [40541]

Mr. Oppenheim: The information available is published in table 2 of the Insolvency Service general annual report for the years 1989 and 1994, copies of which are available in the Library of the House. Information by size of business is not available. However, over 99 per cent. of businesses employ less than 500 people.

Company Rescue Procedures

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what plans his Department has to encourage insolvency practitioners to undertake the London approach with small businesses, allowing a company to work out an informal arrangement with creditors while being protected from them. [40542]

Mr. Oppenheim: My Department has no such plans. I am keen to encourage the use of company rescue procedures, such as company voluntary arrangements and administration orders, wherever appropriate.

In April 1995, the Insolvency Service issued a consultative document on proposals for adding a 28-day moratorium on creditors' actions to the existing company voluntary arrangement procedure. It would give a company in financial difficulty a breathing space to put rescue proposals to creditors and was developed with the small company particularly in mind.

Illegal Immigration (Employer Sanctions)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what representations he has received from organisations representing small businesses about the burden on them of his proposals to fine employers who hire illegal immigrants. [40540]

Mr. Page: No representations on this issue have been received.

This proposals is the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary.

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40507]

Mr. Lang: The information is not available in the form requested. However, in common with other Government Departments, surveys of the DTI's payment performance have been carried out annually since 1991–92. Since then, the proportion of bills paid to all suppliers by DTI and its agencies within 30 days, or within the agreed credit period, has been as follows:

1991–92: 80 per cent. proportion
1992–93: 90.5 per cent. proportion
1993–94: 90 per cent. proportion

In 1994–95, following Treasury guidance, a new more rigorous system of sampling was introduced and the figure for that year was 84 per cent. I do not regard this performance as satisfactory and a target of 95 per cent. has been introduced for 1995–96.

Jewellery Industry

Ms Short: To ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) if he will make it his policy to accept annexe III of the draft directive on precious metals only if traditional marks remain permitted; and if he will make a statement; [40720]

(2) if Her Majesty's Government intend to support the draft precious metals directive; and if he will make a statement; [40719]

(3) what assessment has been made of the views of jewellery manufacturers and retailers on the proposed European directive on precious metals; and if he will make a statement. [40716]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: The Government attach great importance to the maintenance of traditional Assay Office marks and will continue to press for these to be permitted, within the terms of any directive. However, he will continue to oppose the adoption of any precious metals directive which includes manufacturer marking on this basis of self-certification, as in annexe III of the current draft. Manufacturer marking on this basis is an inadequate form of consumer protection. The Government have consulted the British jewellery manufacturers and retailers throughout negotiations on the directive.

Ms Short: To ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) what assessment has been made of the likely effect of the Houtwipper decision in the European Court of Justice on the British jewellery industry; and if he will make a statement; [40717]

(2) what review his Department has undertaken of the Hallmarking Act 1973 in following the Houtwipper judgment in the European Court; and if he will make a statement. [40718]

Jonathan Evans: The Government are considering what the implications of the Houtwipper judgment, ECJ 293/93, might be for the Hallmarking Act 1973 and the British jewellery industry, having regard to the industry's concerns about the need to avoid confusion among customers in the marketplace, and to progress on negotiations on a draft directive to harmonise laws on the marking of precious metal articles.

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the President of the Board of Trade for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38609]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of National Heritage on 31 October 1995.

Inward Investment

Mr. Waterson: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the level of inward investment in the United Kingdom, and what is the average figure for the EU. [38680]

Mr. Oppenheim: The stock of inward direct investment in the UK in 1993—the latest available year—was £120 billion. It is estimated that the total stock of inward direct investment in the EU Twelve in 1993 was about £410 billion. The average of the EU Twelve was about £34 billion.

Former Coalfield Areas

Dr. Wright: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement on the regeneration of the former coalfield areas. [38668]

Mr. Oppenheim: My right hon. Friend the then President of the Board of Trade announced a package of measures totalling £200 million to help areas affected by pit closures. The major elements of this package were £75 million for training and enterprise councils, to be focused on training and business start-up measures and a £75 million English partnerships programme for factory and site provision. Assisted-area status was also granted to eight travel-to-work areas affected by pit closures.

This framework of regeneration measures is now in place in all areas and major projects are under way.

Electronic Batons

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the country of origin and the destination of the electronic batons which were covered by trans-shipment licences issued in *(a)* 1992, *(b)* 1993 and *(c)* 1994. [40375]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answers of my hon. Friend the Minister of Science and Technology to her on 15 June 1995, *Official Report*, column *603* and his letter to her of 3 August this year. No such licences were issued for these goods in 1994.

"The Torture Trail"

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the cost in damages and legal fees of the Department's unsuccessful libel action brought by Martyn Gregory, in relation to his programme "The Torture Chamber". [40374]

Mr. Ian Taylor *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* I assume the programme to which the hon. Member refers is "The Torture Trail". I refer her to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Don Valley on 27 October 1995, *Official Report*, column *826*. In addition, the Department's own costs, including calculation of value of time spent on the matter by officials, are estimated at £31,500.

Export Licences

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if the practice of successive administrations not to disclose details of export licences has precluded providing information on the country of origin and destination of goods which are the subject of trans-shipment licences on every occasion that applications for such information has been made over the last five years. [40376]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* To ascertain whether the practice has precluded provision of such information over the last five years would involve disproportionate cost. In the event of any such requests, I would expect these details to have been refused in line with the practice of successive Administrations.

Personal Travel Times

Mr. Alton: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what values for personal travelling time are given in departmental assessment methods for *(a)* bus passengers, *(b)* pedestrians, *(c)* motorists and *(d)* cyclists. [39791]

Mr. Norris: I have been asked to reply.

Departmental assessment methods use values for savings in personal travel time, rather than a value of personal travel time itself. A saving of one hour of personal travel time for bus passengers or motorists is valued at £3.15 in 1994 prices. The value used for time savings to cyclists and pedestrians is double that for users of modes.

HEALTH

GP Lists

Dr. Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated into the frequency of patients being removed from their doctor's list, at the decision of their doctor, over the last five years; and if he will publish this research; [37639]

(2) if he will instigate research into the removal of patients from doctor's lists and differences between regions, patient types and age groups and other relevant statistics. [37641]

Mr. Malone: Family health services authorities have delegated responsibility for the provision of general medical services in their area, including registration with and movements between general practitioners. In carrying out their responsibilities, family health services authorities themselves are best placed to recognise the need to commission research. Family health services authorities are increasingly encouraging general practitioners and patients to participate in conciliation processes which help avoid the need for removal action.

Manchester Family Health Services Authority

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what payments were made to *(a)* the chairman and *(b)* the chief executive of Manchester FHSA when they left that authority in 1992; and if he will make a statement. [38299]

Mr. Malone: No payment was made to the chairman of Manchester family health services authority upon his resignation from the authority in May 1992. The chief executive received an employment termination settlement of £58,081.

Besselarr Clinical Research Unit

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what current research the Besselarr clinical research unit based at Leeds is carrying out for his Department; and what research they have carried out during the last 12 months. [39567]

Mr. Malone: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *35–37*.

Malaria

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the change in the incidence of cases of malaria reported in the United Kingdom during the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [39501]

Mr. Sackville: The cases reported to the malaria reference laboratory of the public health laboratory service and the London school of hygiene and tropical medicine for the United Kingdom for the period August 1994 to July 1995 are shown in the table.

	Total all malaria
August 1994	228
September 1994	222
October 1994	171
November 1994	176
December 1994	132
January 1995	124
February 1995	92
March 1995	98
April 1995	85
May 1995	173
June 1995	259
July 1995	218

These figures reflect the seasonal pattern in the numbers of United Kingdom citizens visiting malarious regions. The Government recommend that all travellers to malarious areas should seek advice from their doctor on measures to prevent malaria, including the use of appropriate prophylaxis.

Private Patient Income

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list, by trust in each region, details of income from private patients for 1993–94 and 1994–95 *(a)* as a total and *(b)* as a percentage of total trust income. [39955]

Mr. Sackville: Details for 1993–94 will be placed in the Library. Figures for 1994–95 are not yet available.

Westminster Hospital

Dr. Goodson-Wickes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what future plans are being considered for the former site of the Westminster hospital. [40238]

Mr. Malone: North Thames regional health authority is marketing the site. My hon. Friend may wish to approach the chairman, Sir William Staveley, for details.

Pharmaceutical Industries

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when, and for what purpose, he, his Ministers, or his officials last met representatives of the pharmaceutical industries. [40694]

Mr. Malone: There are regular contacts, at both ministerial and official level, between this Department and a wide range of representatives of the pharmaceutical industry to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many petitions for bankruptcy have been began by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40522]

Mr. Sackville: None.

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40521]

Mr. Sackville: The information is not available in the form requested. The Department and its agencies regularly monitor their overall payment performance, the results of which are as follows:

Since 1991–92 the Department, excluding its agencies, has carried out annual surveys to ascertain the percentage of invoices paid within the agreed credit period, or where no credit period has been set, within 30 days of the presentation of a valid invoice. The Department's payment performance, against these criteria is as follows:

1991–92: 85 per cent.
1992–93: 90 per cent.
1993–94: 87.1 per cent.
1994–95: 91.9 per cent.

Information is available for the Department's agencies only in respect of 1994–95. Details are as follows:

NHS estate management and Health Building Agency—85 per cent. of payments were made within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice.

NHS Pensions Agency—the average time taken to pay suppliers was six days from the date of receipt of an invoice.

Medical Devices Agency—all invoices are paid promptly on receipt of a valid invoice. The agency which was established in September 1994 is due to publish its payment performance in its next annual report.

Youth treatment service—the average time taken to pay suppliers was 11 days from the receipt of the invoice.

Medicines Control Agency —the average time between receipt of a valid invoice and payment was 20 days.

Drug Deaths

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were killed in each of the past 10 years as a result of the use of *(a)* heroin and *(b)* paracetamol and substances containing paracetamol among other drugs. [40668]

Mr. Bowis: Data for 1993 and 1994 are not available.

Data for previous years are published in table 10 of the publication, "Mortality statistics, injury and poisoning, England and Wales", Series DH4, copies of which are available in the Library.

Donations

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total amount of moneys donated by *(a)* private individuals, *(b)* private companies and *(c)* charitable or voluntary organisations to hospitals and other NHS bodies in each of the last three years. [40794]

Mr. Sackville: This information is not available centrally.

Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the losses made by the Royal National Orthopaedic hospital from the collapse of its joint business venture in building a super-incinerator; and if he will make a statement on the impact of these losses on patient services. [40798]

Mr. Sackville: The Royal National Orthopaedic hospital national health service trust is taking action to minimise the loss arising from its failed joint venture and to prevent any similar situation arising again. The loss to date stands at £3,492,000. The NHS executive is working with the trust to ensure that the impact of the loss on patient services is minimised.

Joint Business Ventures

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the financial impact of joint business ventures on NHS trusts. [40799]

Mr. Sackville: It is a matter for individual national health service trusts whether they enter into joint business ventures. Trusts must satisfy themselves that any such venture is value for money and secures benefits for the NHS, in terms of either additional income, increased quality of service or access to private sector expertise, which would not be available to the trust operating alone.

Hospital Beds

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking in respect of bed losses in hospitals; and if he will make a statement. [40800]

Mr. Sackville: The number of beds needed by each individual hospital cannot be determined centrally. Decisions about bed stocks need to be made at local level, based on contracted work loads and taking account of local circumstances, such as the local rate for emergency admissions, the level of day case treatments and the availability of alternative services, such as hospital at home schemes.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will make a statement on the prevalence of under-bedding in the NHS *(a)* by category of hospital and *(b)* by region. [40801]

Mr. Sackville: National health service trusts regularly review the availability of beds to ensure they are matched to demand and to secure the best use of available resources.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40867]

Mr. Sackville: It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time salary fell within the band:

1994–95:
£5,000.00-£9,999.00
1995–96:
£5,000.00-£9,999.00

The highest full-time salary fell within the band:

1994–95:
£95,000.00-£99,999.00
1995–96:
£95,000.00-£99,999.00

GP Recruitment, London

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he proposes in respect of general practitioner recruitment in inner London. [40829]

Mr. Malone: We have made available £15 million this year and plan to make available £20 million next year to support a package of initiatives designed to recruit and retain high-quality general practitioners in inner London. These initiatives have been drawn up in collaboration with local family health services authorities and general practitioners.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many individuals in *(a)* his Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies, received annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeding (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in each year since 1985–86. [40866]

Mr. Sackville: Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the department, agencies and non-departmental public bodies. As members of the principal civil service pensions scheme, staff received benefits in accordance with the scheme rules which had been deposited in the Library. Excluding the benefit of pension contributions, no member of staff employed directly by the organisations mentioned received annual remuneration above the sums specified in the years in question.

Accident and Emergency Departments

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the performance of hospitals in meeting the patients charter target for trolley waits. [40802]

Mr. Sackville: Since April 1995 there has been a patients charter standard that a patient admitted to hospital via an accident and emergency department can expect to be given a bed a soon as possible, and certainly within four hours. From April 1996 this standard will be improved to two hours. Information relating to performance on this standard will become available in due course.

London Initiative Zone

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the underspend on capital spending by London initiative zone in each year since 1992 *(a)* in total and *(b)* by family health services authority; and if he will make a statement. [40828]

Mr. Malone: London initiative zone funding began in 1993–94. The information for 1993–94 and 1994–95 is shown in the table.

Reasons for the underspends included: delays and setbacks in finding suitable sites and securing planning permission; and adjustments inevitably needed when managing a complex capital programme over a six-year period. Capital underspends will be carried forward as part of ring-fenced funding of the development programme. The relevant funds will be spent on LIZ capital projects. In its third year, overall management of the LIZ capital programme continues to improve, in terms of both smaller projects and larger schemes requiring input from a number of different agencies.

London Initiative Zone: Capital Expenditure: variance against plan

FHSA	*£,000 1993–94*	*£,000 1994–95*
Barking and Havering	(594)	(24)
Camden and Islington	(458)	(1,720)
City and East London	'741	(1,803)
Enfield and Haringey	'28	(1,236)
Redbridge and Waltham Forest	—	(689)
Brent and Harrow	(501)	(2,102)
Ealing, Hammersmith and Harrow	(1,340)	(3,876)
Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster	(460)	(1,909)
Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham	—	'1,362
Bexley and Greenwich	(1,192)	(370)
Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth	(1,628)	(1,261)
Croydon		(2,264)
Total FHSAs	(5,404)	(15,892)

Note:

Figures in brackets represent underspends. All underspends are ring-fenced and carried forward in 1995–96 and future years. Figures at ' are overspends and affect the total underspend for all FHSAs.

Source:

Thames RHAs.

Hospital Wards

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS hospital wards are presently closed in *(a)* London and *(b)* England. [40830]

Mr. Sackville: The information is not available centrally.

Staff Cars

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by *(a)* trusts, *(b)* district health authorities, *(c)* regional health authorities and *(d)* in total on cars for staff within the NHS in each of the last five years. [39652]

Mr. Malone *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* I refer the right hon. Member to the reply the Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, West (Mr. Sackville), gave her on 25 May, *Official Report* column *776.* These replies cover the total expenditure on cars for the period 1991 to 1993. The expenditure on staff cars by regional health authorities in the year 1993–94 fell by £332,881 to £5,053,065. The expenditure on staff cars by district health authorities in the year 1993–94 fell by £17,071,191. Expenditure on staff cars by national health service trusts rose from £24,010,267 to £47,219,792, with the growth in the number of trusts from 156 in 1992–93 to 292 in 1993–94, an increase in expenditure on cars of about 5 per cent. per trust. The total expenditure on cars for staff was £76,271,287 in 1993–94, as against £70,465,834 in 1992–93. The provision of lease cars for NHS staff working in regional and district health authorities and for those working in NHS trusts on Whitely terms and conditions are governed by section 24 of the general Whitley Council handbook. Under these arrangements, employees contribute to costs of lease cars according to the amount of private mileage included in the lease car contract. The figures do not take account of employee contributions for private use of lease cars, since this information is not held centrally. In some cases, cars are offered to trust staff as part of remuneration packages. A survey on the use of lease cars in the NHS was carried out by the general Whitely Council management side secretariat during June 1994. The replies showed 62 per cent of cars being used by nurses, midwives and doctors.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Class Sizes

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the average size of classes in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Doncaster in January; and what was the figure for the previous 12 months. [38633]

Mr. Paice: The information requested is shown in the table.

Average size of single teacher classes in maintained schools in Doncaster local education authority area

Position in January each year *Year*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
1994	27.5	21.1
1995[1]	28.1	21.4

[1] Provisional.

Research Funding

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what steps she is taking to ensure adequate funding for long-term research projects in United Kingdom universities. [38912]

Mr. Forth: The Higher Education Funding Council for England has allocated £636 million for support for basic research and the research infrastructure in English universities and colleges this year. It is for institutions themselves to decide how to spend their funds and what priority they attach to long-term research projects.

Barnsley-Doncaster Training and Enterprise Council

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list the employers in the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC area who have been given the investors in people award; and if she will list the employers who have currently made a commitment to meeting the standard. [39454]

Mr. Paice: The companies in the Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council area who have been recognised as investors in people are:

> Bridon Ropes, JI Case, Reed Northern Newspapers, HMP Lindhome, Barnsley College, ACE Conveyor, Apollo Travel, Barnsley and Doncaster TEC, BYDA, Chamber of Commerce and Training, Doncaster Careers, G Page Holdings Look and Learn. Mercedez Benz, Rossington Comprehensive, Russell Eaton, The Hayfield School and the Weldrick Group.

Companies in the Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council area who have made a commitment to investors in people are:

> ABB Passenger Services Ltd, Addspace/Coltran, Amocura, Barnsley Benefits Agency, Barnsley Hospital, Barnsley NHS Trust, Benefits Agency Doncaster, BMBC Catering, BTCV (Charity), BTCV (Enterprise), Care Homes Thorne, Doncaster College, Dunlop Slazenger, Grampian Country Foods, Haslam Homes, Hepworth Building Products Barnsley, Hepworth Building Products Doncaster, Hepworth Refractories, Hoyland Fox, KOYO, Lyons Cakes, Midland Bank Data Centre, Moorlands Prison, MP Burke, Naylor Brothers, Pilkington, Pindar Nursing Home, PLM Redfearn, Ardsley Moat House, Benton House Nursing Home, Billington Structures, BLP Group, BMB Builders Merchants, BMBC TES, Cambertown, Cameron Motor Services, Campsmount School, Danum Hotel, Doncaster Health Authority, Dunstan Brearley Travel, DVBS, Edlington School, FM Ball, Fosters Bakery, Fox's Music, Kostal, Monkton Coke, Northern College, Perry's, Priory School, Regent Hotel, Siddall & Hilton, SPG, Spring Choice, Sue Ryder Home, Sqllow Wood Nursing Home, Syndicate Group, Taylor Bracewell, Tranmoor Primary School, Walter Frank, Willis Supermarkets, Winterbottom Wire, Regency Doors, The Dome and Yorkshire Traction.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) how much funding the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC has allocated to childminders undertaking the national vocational course in child care and education; [39478]

(2) if the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC assists childminders undertaking the national vocational qualification course in child care and education at *(a)* level 2 and *(b)* level 3. [39476]

Mr. Paice: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment when her Department last checked the credit rating of the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC; and if she will make a statement. [39542]

Mr. Paice: The Department for Education and Employment carries out an assessment of Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council's financial viability on an annual basis.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what facilities are available to *(a)* her Department and *(b)* training providers to check the changing credit rating assessments of the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC. [39510]

Mr. Paice: The Department does not undertake credit rating checks on Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council. An annual assessment of financial viability is made, and the financial status of the TEC is continually monitored by qualified accountants within the Government office for Yorkshire and Humberside.

Copies of the TEC's annual accounts are placed in the Library. Copies are also lodged with Companies House and these are available to training providers. Information is also provided by credit rating organisations in the private sector which offer assessments of TECs as part of their normal business. It is for individual training providers to decide if they need a credit rating assessment for Barnsley and Doncaster TEC.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is the current percentage pass rate at Barnsley and Doncaster TEC of general national vocational qualification students; and how this compares with previous results. [39470]

Mr. Paice: The information requested is operational information on the Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council and the question would be best addressed to the TEC to answer.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many training weeks *(a)* were promised and *(b)* were undertaken for (i) employment training, (ii) youth training and (iii) other programmes for the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC for each year since its inception. [39464]

Mr. Paice: Since the inception of Barnsley and Doncaster TEC the total number of training weeks for employment training, youth training and other programmes allocated and paid for against the contract is as follows:

Contract year 1991–92

Programme	*Allocated*	*Delivered*
Youth training	237,801	229,578
ET participation	130,000	126,889

Source:
GOYC Management Information/invoice records data.

Contract year 1992–93

Programme	*Allocation*	*Delivered*
Youth training	236,577	228,023
ET participation	118,953	118,953

Source:
GOYH Management information/invoice data on ROCs.

Contract year 1993–94

Programme	*Allocation*	*Delivered*
Youth training	226,407	212,028
Training for work participation	136,032	136,032

Source:
RHOMIS/invoice data.

Contract year 1994–95

Programme	*Allocation*	*Delivered*
YT, youth credits and modern apprenticeships	204,837	194,540
Training for work participation	140,897	139,101

Source:
ROMIS/invoice data.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will publish the budget agreed with the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC for *(a)* 1994–95 and *(b)* 1995–96 broken down by programme area. [39475]

Mr. Paice: The agreed budget for Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council for 1994–95 and 1995–96 is as shown in the table:

£ thousands

Programme	*1994–95*	*1995–96*
1. Standard programmes		
Youth programmes	10,902.7	10,750.8
Accelerated modern apprenticeships	n/a	95.8
FE development fund	n/a	110.8
FE competitiveness fund	n/a	378.0
Work related further education	1,010.0	n/a
Careers guidance	359.4	397.2
Careers libraries	16.7	16.9
Work experience	n/a	25.6
Training for work (including allowances)	13,786.3	10,358.0
Employer investment in people	532.1	678.4
Childcare	129.4	177.8
Learning for work	78.1	n/a
Skills for small businesses	n/a	72.4
Management fee	1,917.9	1,906.3
2. Coal programmes		
Training for work (including allowances)	3,925.6	2,100.0
Management fee	83.0	83.0

These are Department for Education and Employment budgets only.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment when she last met representatives of the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC to discuss its budget. [39523]

Mr. Paice: The Secretary of State for Education and Employment does not meet representatives of Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council to discuss its budget. Officials from the Government office for Yorkshire and Humberside meet TEC representatives monthly.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many people were trained by Barnsley and Doncaster TEC in 1993–94 and 1994–95. [39452]

Mr. Paice: The total numbers starting youth training and training for work in the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC area are given in the table:

Barnsley and Doncaster TEC total starts in year

	1993–94	*1994–95*
Youth Training	5,070	5,370
Training for Work	10,040	7,360

Source:
TEC Management Information Returns.

Cornish Language

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will take steps to ensure the continued existence of GCSE examinations in Cornish. [40489]

Mr. Robin Squire: It is for the GCSE examining groups, as independent commercial enterprises, to decide which subjects outside the national curriculum they wish to offer at GCSE. The Government cannot and should not require the groups to continue to offer a particular subject.

Workfare

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement on the Government's policy on workfare. [38682]

Mr. Forth: The term "workfare" can mean many things. As I understand, it usually refers to a universal compulsory work creation programme. We must be clear that the Government cannot create jobs; only the economy can do that. The Department's priority is to get unemployed people into jobs, and we have a wide range of provision to help them.

Unemployed people must make every effort to get work and it is right to require them, if necessary, to undertake appropriate action to do so. The Government have always made it clear that they do not rule out the use of targeted compulsory work experience programmes if it is shown that these help people back to work. We believe it is right to require activity that is focused firmly on what is most appropriate to the individual's circumstances.

Education Council

Ms Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement on the outcome of the EC Education Council held of 23 October 1995. [40115]

Mr. Forth: On 23 October, my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) attended the Council of EC Education Ministers. The Council adopted a decision allowing the conclusion of a bilateral agreement in higher education and vocational training with the United States. The Council and the representatives of the Governments of the member states adopted a resolution on the response of education systems to the problems of racism and xenophobia and the Council also agreed conclusions on social participation as a factor for quality in non-university education.

Political agreement was reached on a bilateral agreement in higher education and vocational training with Canada which will be taken as an "A" point at a future Council.

Ministers received information from the European Commission on the European Year of Lifelong Learning; multimedia education software; and the forthcoming Commission White Paper on education and training. The presidency reported on preparations for the Euro-Med conference to be held in Barcelona on 27-28 November.

After the conclusion of Council business, a meeting was held with Education Ministers of the associated countries of central and eastern Europe to discuss prospects for their eventual participation in EC education, training and youth exchange programmes.

Stapio Insecticide

Mr. Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, pursuant to the answer of 2 May, *Official Report*, column *145*, what materials are disclosed on the invoice held by the Treasury Solicitor as having been used to spray the Grays unemployment benefits office on 8 October 1991; [40223]

(2) what properties are claimed for the chemical compound Novastet in relation to extermination of cockroaches and other insects; and if she will make a statement; [40224]

(3) if it was an implied condition for the contractors who sprayed chemicals at the Grays unemployment benefit office on 8 October 1991 to have public liability insurance; and if she will make a statement; [40225]

(4) what was the nature of the insect infestation as a result of which the Grays unemployment benefit office was sprayed on 8 October 1991. [40226]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the questions has been delegated to the Employment Service under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from D.J. Lifton to Mr. Andrew Mackinlay, dated 1 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me, in the absence of the Chief Executive, to reply to your questions about Grays Unemployment Benefit Office (UBO).

You asked what materials are disclosed on the invoice held by the Treasury Solicitor as having been used to spray Grays UBO on 8 October 1991. The invoice does not make reference to materials and I attach a copy (Annex 1) for information.

You also asked what properties are claimed for the chemical compound Novastet in relation to the extermination of cockroaches and other insects. The Chief Executive's letter to you of 5 October provided a copy of the latest manufacturer's Data Hazard Sheet for Novastet.

You asked whether it was an implied condition for the contractors who sprayed chemicals at Grays UBO on 8 October 1991 to have public liability insurance. I am advised that it was not.

Finally, you asked what was the nature of the insect infestation which led to the spraying at Grays UBO. I am advised that the insects were black beetles.

I hope this is helpful.

Annex 1: Invoice from CDR services to Grays Unemployment Benefit Office, Essex, dated 14 November 1991

Date	*Description*	*Price*	*VAT*	*Total*
8 October 1991	U.B.O. Grays. Spraying to de-infest fleas	£191.35	£33.46	£224.71

Training and Enterprise Councils

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to make training and enterprise council board members more accountable to the community. [40424]

Mr. Paice: Training and enterprise councils are already accountable to their local communities in a number of ways. The contract Government have with TECs requires them to publish summaries of their corporate and business plans, to hold public meetings at least annually and to publish an annual report. All TECs have endorsed the TEC National Council framework on local accountability to which they are required to have due regard under their contract.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how individual training and enterprise council board members' activities are monitored to ensure they are in the public interest. [40420]

Mr. Paice: Training and enterprise councils are private companies. The activities of the directors are a matter for the TECs themselves in compliance with company law. The Government contract with TECs requires them to maintain a register of directors' interests, which is open to regular inspection by staff from the Government regional office. All TECs have endorsed the TEC National Council framework on local accountability and the Cadbury code on corporate governance to which they are required to have due regard under their contract.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement on the Confederation of British Industry's review of training and enterprise councils and local enterprise companies, "Making Labour Markets Work", and its recommendation in respect of enhanced local democracy. [40440]

Mr. Paice: In July this year the Training and Enterprise Council National Council published a "Framework for the Local Accountability of TECs in England and Wales". The framework, which is based on the principles of openness, integrity and accountability, covers the issues relating to local accountability addressed by the Confederation of British Industry in its 1993 report, and in particular the recommendation that the council develops a voluntary code of practice. TECs are required by their contract with Government to have due regard to the framework. Local enterprise companies in Scotland are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement on the merger arrangements between training and enterprise councils and chambers of commerce. [40423]

Mr. Paice: The Government have agreed to a pilot programme of voluntary mergers to test local initiatives which build on the existing strengths of training and enterprise councils and chambers. So far five proposals for merger have been approved.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to *(a)* increase the numbers of directors on training and enterprise boards, *(b)* maintain a register of board members' interests, *(c)* appoint directors for specific terms of office and *(d)* ensure that directors receive initial training. [40419]

Mr. Paice: There are no plans to increase the number of directors on the boards of training and enterprise councils. The contract the Government have with TECs requires them to maintain a register of the declared interests of directors. As private companies, the organisation of TECs is set out in their articles of association. These require the directors to seek re-election by the membership every three years. Induction training is a matter for each TEC board.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what actions she plans to take to promote women, representatives of ethnic minority groups and the voluntary sector becoming involved in training and enterprise council boards of directors. [40421]

Mr. Paice: As private companies, training and enterprise councils are responsible for the appointment of their directors. The Government's contract with a TEC requires at least two thirds of the directors to be chairmen, chief executives, senior partners or top operational managers from the private sector. The remaining directors should have equivalent status and be drawn from education, economic development, trade unions, voluntary organisations or the public sector. Directors are appointed as individuals and not as the representatives of another organisation. The Training and Enterprise Council National Council framework on local accountability, endorsed by all TECs, expects boards to have the necessary breadth and balance to reflect the priorities of the local community and economy.

Training Schemes

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many persons undertaking employment training and training for work schemes left without a qualification in the last five years for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [40438]

Mr. Paice: The information requested is given in the table.

Employment training/training for work England and Wales—Percentage of leavers without a full qualification or credit towards one

	Per cent.
1990–91	67
1991–92	63
1992–93	59
1993–94	56
April 1994–January 1995	52

Source:
ET and TFW National Follow-Up Surveys.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what steps she plans to take to promote employment training and training for work within the ethnic minority community; and how she plans to pursue an improvement in qualification pass rates. [40418]

Mr. Paice: Training for work, which replaced employment training in April 1994, is delivered locally by training and enterprise councils. They have contractual obligations to promote equality of opportunities for all their activities. To help them meet these obligations, the Department has recently issued an updated equal opportunities good practice guide.

The Department recognises the importance of qualification and monitors closely the achievement rates of the ethnic minority and non-ethnic minority communities. TFW's main focus, however, is on jobs and we have set each TEC targets that reflect this. TECs are paid substantial premiums for trainees requiring basic literacy and numeracy or for whom English is a second language.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how she plans to prevent abuse of output-related funding schemes within training for work; and if she will make a statement. [40422]

Mr. Paice: Output-related funding in training for work provides an effective incentive to produce results for participants in the form of jobs and qualifications. Any specific allegations of abuse are investigated. The Department has stringent audit requirements in its contracts with TECs. Measures have been taken to assist awarding bodies to enhance their verification of NVQs within training for work.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by her Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40528]

Mr. Forth: I know of none.

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how often her Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40527]

Mr. Forth: Information in the form requested is not available. In the Department and its agencies, over 95 per cent. of bills are paid within 30 days.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in her (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40863]

Mr. Robin Squire: It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time salary fell within the band:

1994–95: £6,773—£9,499
1995–96: £6,928—£9,716

The highest full-time salary fell within the band:

1994–95: £95,000—£99,999
1995–96: £95,000—£99,999

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many individuals in *(a)* her Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies, received annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeding (i) £100,000 (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in each year since 1985–86. [40862]

Mr. Robin Squire: Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies and NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pensions scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme's rule, which has been deposited in the Library.

The numbers receiving annual remuneration above the sums specified, excluding pension benefits in the years in question, was: (i) nil, (ii) nil, (iii) nil.

Skills Shortages

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what assessment her Department has made of skills shortages experienced by British exporters. [40538]

Mr. Paice: In October 1995 10 per cent. of manufacturing firms, of which the majority of companies surveyed are exporters, expect skill shortages to limit output over the next four months. This is similar to recent quarters and well below the levels observed in the 1980s.

Small Businesses

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what assessment her Department has made of the impact of *(a)* skills training and *(b)* management training on the likelihood of small businesses surviving. [40547]

Mr. Paice: The "Winning Report", published by DTI and CBI in 1994, shows that training is increasingly a key element in business success. On small firms, the 1994 skill needs in Britain survey provides clear evidence that smaller businesses need to improve management and skills training. The last two competitiveness White Papers have announced measures to encourage training in small firms.

Teachers' Pensions

Mr. Coe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement on the future administration of teachers' pensions in England and Wales. [41373]

Mr. Robin Squire: I announced on 7 June 1995 that we were inviting expressions of interest for a contract to administer the teachers' superannuation scheme. In the light of the expressions of interest that we received, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is satisfied that we should proceed to the next stage and invite some of the companies concerned to tender for a contract. Inviting tenders will give the companies the opportunity to show whether they could administer the scheme at lower cost and to the required standard. The taxpayer is entitled to the best possible value for money in the administration of the scheme.

We are inviting six companies to tender: Abbey National Benefit Consultants Ltd., Capita Group Plc, Colonial Mutual Group (UK Holdings) Ltd., CSL Group Ltd., Hartshead Solway Ltd. and ITnet Ltd.

All six have declared that they would: intend to seek a fee for administering the scheme that was lower than the expected cost of keeping the administration of the scheme in the public sector; and agree in any contract to provide a standard of service and performance that was at least as high as that which the Teachers' Pensions Agency would provide.

We shall let a contract only if it would be better value for money than keeping the administration of the scheme in the public sector. We remain absolutely committed to ensuring that the scheme continues to operate smoothly and without interruption. We continue to expect that any contract would start in the latter part of 1996.

We are advised that staff of the Department for Eduction and Employment who transferred to a contractor would be covered by the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981. All six companies say that they would intend to keep the core administration of the scheme at its current location in Darlington. All six see possibilities for introducing new business.

We shall lay a draft order under section 69 of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994 at the start of the coming Parliamentary Session. It will be subject to affirmative resolution in both Houses. Once approved, it will allow my right hon. Friend to authorise a contractor to administer the scheme.

I reaffirm that a contractor would not be allowed to use data on teachers for purposes other than administering the scheme. All the companies have declared that they would keep data concerning members of the scheme confidential.

I also reaffirm that any contract would concern only the administration of the scheme. Whether or not we let a contract, the scheme itself will stay in the public sector, on its current statutory basis.

Letting a contract would not affect the size of safety of teachers' pensions. The scheme has no real pension fund. Instead payments are made to and from the Exchequer; and the Exchequer guarantees, in effect, the payments to which retired teachers are entitled under the regulations that govern the scheme.

We shall shortly invite representatives of teachers and their employers to comment on a draft statement of the service that any contactor would have to provide in administering the scheme. Similar invitations will go to the staff of the TPA itself and to the six companies that we are inviting to tender. We shall take careful account of all the comments that we receive before finalising the statement.

Industrial Tribunals

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list by individual case the number of industrial tribunal and fair employment applications lodged against each *(a)* college and *(b)* university in England for each year since 1990; how many cases have been upheld against the colleges and universities; how many cases have resulted in a settlement which has involved payments being made by an education and library board or university; and if she will make a statement. [39508]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: I have been asked to reply.

Responsibility for the industrial tribunals has now passed to my Department. Information about individual parties to industrial tribunal cases is not collected and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if he will place in the Library a list of the *(a)* regional, *(b)* full-time and *(c)* part-time chairs of industrial tribunals stating in each case their previous or past occupation and positions and any relevant interest they have declared. [40494]

Mr. Evans: I have been asked to reply.

Responsibility for the industrial tribunals has now passed to my Department. A list of all industrial tribunal chairmen, giving their previous occupations, will be placed in the Library at the earliest opportunity. Details of positions held and any relevant interests they have declared could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Training and Employment Grants Scheme

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if he will make a statement on how the training and employment grants scheme operates in Scotland; what criteria are used to assess entitlement; how post codes are used to identify eligible areas and if he will make a statement. [39294]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: I have been asked to reply.

The training and employment grants scheme is operated by Scottish Enterprise through its network of local enterprise companies. The scheme is designed to increase access to employment opportunities for young and long-term unemployed people, and to enhance their employability through the provision of training and work experience. The scheme operates in selected postcode areas of Scotland where employment opportunities are generally low and unemployment high. The designation of the eligible areas for TEGS is a two-tier process. The first tier ranks every postcode in the SE area based on levels of unemployment. Three factors are applied: the proportion of unemployed people in the area, numbers of long-term unemployed males and the rate of change in the numbers of long-term unemployed males. The second tier relies on judgments by LECs based on their knowledge of local needs and unemployment patterns using a number of criteria which focus on linking unemployed people into the wider economy.

Unemployment (Carers)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what analysis she has of current levels of unemployment among *(a)* male and *(b)* female carers and past carers. [38546]

Mrs. Angela Knight: I have been asked to reply.

The latest available information from the labour force survey shows that in spring 1995 there were 23,000 International Labour Organisation unemployed women who stated that their previous occupation was a care assistant or attendant. The number of ILO unemployed men whose previous occupation was in these categories is too few to provide a reliable estimate.

Information is also available from the autumn 1994 LFS, which shows that there were 68,000 men and 246,000 women who said they were economically inactive—not in employment or ILO unemployed—because they were looking after a dependent adult relative.

Local Education Authorities

Mr. William O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what additional revenue is allowed to local education authorities over the capping levels to provide the additional services to meet local demands? [38789]

Sir Paul Beresford: I have been asked to reply.

Under the 1995–96 capping criteria even those local education authorities budgeting above their standard spending assessment were able to increase their budgets by a minimum of 0.5 per cent. over the previous year. Within its overall budget, it is a matter for each authority to decide on its relative priorities in the light of local needs.

We will announce our provisional decisions on the local government finance settlement for 1996–97 and our intentions for capping shortly after the Chancellor's Budget statement. We will consult authorities and others on our proposals at that time.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 2 November 1995

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38600]

Mr. Hanley: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by my Friend the Minister of State, Department of National Heritage on 1 November 1995, *Official Report*, columns *186-87*.

Correspondence

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department will be in a position to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Oldham, West of 1 September following up a letter of 18 July concerning the case of Mohammed Nadeem, GV100/28257. [40731]

Mr. Hanley: The migration and visa correspondence unit replied to the hon. Member's letter of 1 September on 27 October. The delay in replying is regretted.

Cyprus

Mr. O'Hara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the names of those holders of British passports who went missing during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. [41178]

Mr. David Davis: We have no record of any single nationality British citizens still missing following events in Cyprus over the last 30 years. Under international law, British citizens with dual nationality are the responsibility of the country of their second nationality while in that country. The cases of dual nationals who went missing in Cyprus were submitted to the UN committee on missing persons by the Government of Cyprus. If there are dual nationals amongst those Cypriots known to be missing, they are not specifically listed as such.

Mr. O'Hara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action Her Majesty's Government propose to take to ascertain the fate of those holders of British passports who went missing in the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. [41176]

Mr. Davis: It is for the UN committee on missing persons to examine these cases. We have no locus to act for dual nationals in the country of their second nationality. The British High Commission in Nicosia remains in close touch with the committee and is ready to check with the committee that all cases of dual UK/Cyprus nationals brought to its attention are being examined.

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the oral answer of the Attorney-General of 30 October 1995, *Official Report*, column 12, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and if he will further indicate the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41207]

Mr. David Davis: The information requested will take some time to compile. I shall reply to the hon. Member shortly.

Zaire

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about the alleged killings of peaceful protesters during a rally in Kinshasa, Zaire on 29 July. [40599]

Mr. Hanley: An unauthorised demonstration was held on 29 July in Kinshasa by the Unified Lumumbist party—PALU—close to the transitional Parliament buildings. Demonstrators clashed with the gendarmerie and, most regrettably, 10 people died: one gendarme and nine demonstrators.

Mr. Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information and representations he has received about the human rights situation in Zaire. [40598]

Mr. Hanley: Through the British embassy in Kinshasa we are in regular contact with a broad range of human rights organisations and political parties in Zaire. We receive information on a regular basis about human rights issues from non-governmental organisations, the press and political parties.

Mr. Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Zaire about protection of human rights in the country. [40600]

Mr. Hanley: We remain concerned at the human rights situation in Zaire. Through the British embassy in Kinshasa we keep in close touch with the Zairean authorities over the need to improve respect for human rights, including issues that affect refugees in the great lakes region.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Thursday 2 November. [39339]

Sir Peter Tapsell: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Thursday 2 November. [39341]

Sir Michael Neubert: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Thursday 2 November. [38959]

The Prime Minister: This morning, I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with Ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Prime Minister if he will estimate the number of individuals in his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies whose annual remuneration, including benefits in kind exceeded (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in (1) 1985–86, (2) 1990–91, (3) 1992–93, (4) 1994–95 and (5) 1995–96. [40813]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary, Office of Public Service on 1 November, column *324*.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Prime Minister what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40814]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary, Office of Public Service on 1 November, columns *324-25*.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Benefits Agency

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the cost to public funds in respect of the Benefits Agency staff who travelled around Spain earlier this year explaining to resident United Kingdom citizens how to claim pensions and social security allowances; and if he will make a statement. [39051]

Mr. Roger Evans: This is a matter for Mr. Peter Mathison, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 1 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the cost to public funds in respect of the Benefits Agency staff who travelled around Spain earlier this year explaining to resident United Kingdom citizens how to claim pensions and Social Security allowances.

A visit to Spain was made by Benefits Agency staff during the period 4 June 1995 to 8 June 1995. This was in response to requests from the British Consulate and customer representative organisations to provide sufficient information to them to better understand and answer enquiries from Benefits Agency customers living in, or visiting Spain. The cost of the visit was less than £4,000.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39560]

Mr. Burt: Estimated outturn for 1994–95 for civil service manpower and pay bill and manpower plans for 1995–96 are set out in the Department's annual report, Cm 2813, copies of which are in the Library.

A breakdown by grade and individual agency could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Statutory Maternity Pay

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to reduce the statutory maternity pay rebate. [40093]

Mr. Heald: Any proposed changes in the level of reimbursement of statutory maternity pay paid by employers would be announced and would require primary legislation.

Vaccine Damage Payments

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what criteria are used by the vaccine damage payments unit to decide on the merits of claims and order of magnitude of payments arising from claims; and on what basis as to liability claims are made. [40273]

Mr. Burt: Vaccine damage payments are made by the Secretary of State under the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 and associated regulations. The Act and regulations set out the conditions of entitlement, including medical and disability conditions, which must be satisfied before payment is made. Where a claim is successful a single tax-free payment of £30,000 is made. The payment is made without acceptance of liability and does not affect the claimant's right to seek compensation through the courts.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will list the total number of individuals claiming housing benefit in each of the past five years; [40688]

(2) if he will list the total sums of money paid in housing benefit in each of the past five years. [40686]

Mr. Roger Evans: The information is set out in the table.

Housing benefit recipients and expenditure for Great Britain

Year	*Recipients Thousands*	*Financial year*	*Expenditure £ million*
1991	4,030	1991–92	5,100
1992	4,326	1992–93	6,375
1993	4,533	1993–94	7,793
1994	4,650	1994–95	9,193
1995	4,734	1995–96	10,253

Notes:

1. Figures for number of recipients is taken from count made on last working day of May for each of the given years. Figures refer to benefit units which may be a single person or a couple.

2. Expenditure figures for 1995–96 are the estimated outturn. Figures for other years are outturn.

3. Sources of data: Housing Benefit Management Information System and the 1995 departmental report.

Lone Parents

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what research his Department is currently undertaking to investigate whether child maintenance payments set at too high a level can provide a work disincentive to some lone parents. [40316]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The Department has an on-going programme for evaluating the effects of child support. Research by the Policy Studies Institute has already established that over 90 per cent. of parents with care who are not working have past work experience, and that maintenance provides an important incentive for those who want to return to work.

Child Support Agency

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many of the parents with care who cease benefit claims after the intervention of the Child Support Agency reapply within a six month period. [40317]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The information is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what information he had in respect of the legal dispute between EDS and Computer Associates at the time of placing the Child Support Agency computer system with EDS. [40320]

Mr. Burt: The Secretary of State had no information about any legal dispute between EDS and Computer Associates at the time of placing the child support computer system with EDS.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many persons receiving *(a)* income support, *(b)* housing benefit and *(c)* council tax benefit he expects to lose their entitlement on 8 January 1996 as a result of the determination of a claim for asylum on or after 12 October 1995; and what would be the cost in 1996–97 of preserving that entitlement; [40612]

(2) how many persons receiving income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit, respectively, he expects to lose their entitlement on 8 January 1996 as a result of having claimed benefit as asylum seekers on or after 12 October 1995; and what would be the cost in 1996–97 of preserving that entitlement. [40625]

Mr. Roger Evans *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* It is estimated that following an asylum decision in the period after 12 October, some 7,000 existing asylum seekers who applied for benefits before that date may lose their entitlement when the regulations come into effect. The gross cost of preserving those entitlements during any appeals process in 1996–97 is estimated at £15 million. This does not allow for those who may have lost their entitlement under the previous regulations.

A further 6,000 in-country asylum seekers who are expected to claim benefit after 12 October may also lose their entitlement to benefits when the regulations come into effect. The gross cost of preserving those entitlements in 1996–97 is estimated at £30 million. This extra cost arising because their entitlements would have to be preserved during the initial decision making process as well as any appeals process.

Asylum seekers are separately identified only in the income support scheme. Approximately 55 per cent. of asylum seekers in receipt of income support are also in receipt of housing benefit. Some 15 per cent. are also in receipt of council tax benefit.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) which countries have been notified to him by the Home Secretary as having *(a)* before 12 October 1995 and *(b)* on or after 12 October 1995 undergone a significant upheaval; and how many asylum seekers from each of those countries have claimed income support since 12 October; [40626]

(2) if people claiming asylum while in Great Britain on or after 12 October 1995 as a result of a significant upheaval in their country of origin which occurred before 12 October will be treated as asylum seekers for purposes of entitlement to benefit. [40628]

Mr. Evans: I have not yet received notification of any upheaval list countries.

Motability

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when his Department will receive a report from the National Audit Office on Motability and Motability Finance Ltd. [40929]

Mr. Burt: The status and timing of the report from the National Audit Office on Motability is a matter for the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Earnings (Replacement Ratios)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his estimate of the current replacement ratio of *(a)* a single person, *(b)* a married couple, *(c)* a married couple with one child, *(d)* a married couple with two children and *(e)* a married couple with three children and jobs paying at (i) 25 per cent. of median wages, (ii) 50 per cent. of median wages, (iii) 60 per cent. of median wages, (iv) 75 per cent. of median wages, (v) 80 per cent. of median wages and (vi) 90 per cent of median wages. [41079]

Mr. Roger Evans: The information is set out in the table.

Replacement ratios show potential out-of-work income as a percentage of in-work income. It should be noted that the figures provided for couples assume that only one partner is in work. The replacement ratio is likely to be significantly lower if both partners are in work.

Changes made to the tax and national insurance systems and to the structure of income-related benefits since 1985 have led to a significant reduction in the numbers with very high replacement ratios of over 90 per cent. It is estimated that only a tiny proportion of the working population have replacement ratios of over 100 per cent.

The new premium in family credit from July for those working 30 or more hours per week will further reduce the numbers with very high replacement ratios. In addition, a new in-work benefit aimed at couples and single people without children will be tested from October 1996 to examine its effects on increasing the gain from work, in the same way as family credit does now for families with children.

Replacement ratios at various percentages of median earnings

Family Type	*Percentage of median earnings* 25 per cent.	50 per cent.	60 per cent.	75 per cent.	80 per cent.	90 per cent.
Single person	85	52	42	33	30	27
Married couple	94	79	64	50	47	41
Married couple with 1 child aged 3	83	80	80	68	63	56
Married couple with 2 children aged 4 and 6	87	86	85	79	74	65
Married couple with 3 children aged 3, 8 and 11	91	90	88	83	82	77

Notes:

[1] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 1 per cent.

[2] Median earnings are £323.20 gross per week, based on all males in full-time work at April 1995 (New Earnings Survey 1995).

[3] Replacement ratios shown are based on in work and out of work income after the payment of housing costs. Out of work income figures used include the cash value of milk tokens and free school meals where appropriate.

[4] All family types shown are assumed to live in local authority accommodation and pay average rent, appropriate to family size, and average council tax. Families with children are assumed to work for 30 or more hours per week and have no childcare costs.

[5] Married couple examples assume only one partner working. All examples assume no income other than earnings, income-related benefits and, where appropriate, Child Benefit.

[6] All benefit rates used in the calculation of replacement ratios are for 1995–96.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what will be the estimated cost of ending the capital and notional income testing rules for council tax benefit for retired people while retaining unchnged the present tests for actual income. [41035]

Mr. Roger Evans: The estimated cost of removing the lower and upper capital limits and the tariff income rule for pensioners is £340 million in council tax benefit. This assumes that actual income from capital would be taken into account.

Notes:

1. Although the question refers to retired people, it has been interpreted to refer to people over 60 years of age and living in the community. The cost for those in residential or nursing care is not applicable, as these are exempt from council tax.

2. Estimates are rounded to the nearest £10 million.

3. The estimate is based on data from the 1991, 1992 and 1993 Family Expenditure Survey, adjusted to be consistent with reported data from the 1994 HBMIS dataset for council tax benefit.

4. All figures are uprated to 1995–96 prices and benefit levels.

5. Given the tenuous nature of the data and the methodology used to arrive at this estimate, the figure are broad order of magnitude as opposed to robust estimates.

Income Support

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the income support and housing benefit income of *(a)* a single person, *(b)* married couple, *(c)* married couple with one child, *(d)* married couple with two children and *(e)* married couple with three children assuming an average housing benefit payment. [41080]

Mr. Roger Evans: The available information is provided in table 3.1 of the tax benefit model tables, a copy of which is in the Library.

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to the oral answer of the Attorney-General of 30 October, *Official Report*, column 12, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and if he will further indicate the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41213]

Mr. Burt: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Attorney-General how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work-force; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41112]

The Attorney-General: Breakdowns by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—normally those engaged for a period of up to 12 months, but exceptionally up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in respect of which countries he expects, on the basis of the information at present available to him, to make a declaration on 8 January 1996 for the purposes of the Income Support (General) Regulations 1995 that they have undergone events likely to give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution among their nationals. [40627]

Mr. Kirkhope: We envisage that a declaration will be made only if a major upheaval occurs in a country. It is not proposed to make a declaration in respect of upheavals which have already taken place, since nationals of the country concerned who were present in the United Kingdom will have had adequate opportunity to claim asylum before 12 October. Under the draft regulations, the benefit entitlement of a person who claimed asylum before that date will be protected until a decision is taken on their claim.

National Lottery Charities Board

Mr. Hutton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn) on 23 October 1995, *Official Report*, column *448*, if he will list *(a)* the consultants employed by the National Lottery Charities Board in the 14 months up to September 1995 and *(b)* the amounts paid to each firm. [39817]

Mr. Kirkhope *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* This is a matter for the National Lottery Charities Board, on which the hon. Member may wish to contact the chief executive. The National Audit Office has full access to contract and payment details.

Mr. Hutton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn) on 23 October 1995, *Official Report*, column *448*, if he will specify the travel costs claimed by each member of the National Lottery Charities Board. [40659]

Mr. Kirkhope *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Of the £44,000 reimbursed to the chairman and members of the National Lottery Charities Board up to the end of September 1995, £21,000 was paid in travelling expenses for legitimate attendance at board meetings and journeys on official board business. These figures are subject to scrutiny by the National Audit Office.

Michael Joseph McKenny

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will release Joseph McKinney from Frankland prison; what is Mr. McKinney's date of birth; and how many years of his sentence he has served. [40450]

Miss Widdecombe *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* The prisoner referred to was convicted under the name of Michael Joseph McKenny.

Mr. McKenny was born on 7 February 1927. He has served eight years and seven months of a 16-year sentence. His final statutory parole review is due to commence in January 1996. If he is not released as a result of that review, his earliest date of release will be in January 1997.

Metropolitan Police (Settlements)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been paid by the Metropolitan police in out-of-court settlements in each of the past three financial years and the current year to date. [41182]

Mr. Maclean: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Wallsend (Mr. Byers) on 17 July 1995, *Official Report*, column *933*. This information is recorded by calendar year, not by financial year. The amount paid in out of court settlements this year up to 31 October is £488.000.

Football Matches (Policing)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to extend charges made upon London football clubs for police presence in or at stadiums to include all officers employed outside the ground in connection with matches; and if he will make a statement. [41179]

Mr. Maclean: Policing outside football grounds is part of the duty of the police to maintain law and order in public places and to keep traffic flowing. It would not be appropriate to make charges.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the payments to police forces made by each of London's Premier and Football League clubs in season 1994–95 and 1995–96 to date. [41181]

Mr. Maclean: I understand from the Metropolitan police that the payments—which are not necessarily the same as the amounts billed—are those given in the table.

	Payments to Metropolitan police	
Club	*1994–95 season* £	*1995–96 season*[1] £
Arsenal	332,659.52	9,499.91
Barnet	49,524.31	5,159.90
Brentford	69,016.21	0.00
Charlton	25,427.74	2,974.75
Chelsea	363,476.16	21,187.40
Crystal Palace	183,057.73	0.00
Fulham	35,513.76	2,021.40
Leyton Orient	16,293.57	7,023.21

Club	*Payments to Metropolitan police* *1994–95 season* £	*1995–96 season*[1] £
Millwall	125,840.29	29,625.22
Queens Park Rangers	100,058.84	0.00
Tottenham Hotspur	161,127.84	0.00
West Ham United	172,376.87	0.00
Wimbledon	130,932.86	28,443.58
Total	1,765,305.70	105,935.37

[1] (as at 30–09–95)

National Insurance Status

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from employers' organisations in respect of the Government's plans to make employers check on employees' national insurance status; and what proportion of these have been in favour of the proposals. [40968]

Mr. Kirkhope: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) on 1 November 1995, *Official Report,* column *270.*

Doncaster Prison

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the disturbances that have occurred since Doncaster prison was opened; and if he will make a statement. [40955]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 2 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the number of disturbances that have occurred since Doncaster prison was opened.

Doncaster prison was opened on 20 June 1994 and from that date until 30 September 1995, a total of 48 incidents of concerted indiscipline were reported to Prison Service headquarters.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who or what organisation initiated the litigation about the tariff scheme for criminal injuries compensation; and to what extent this litigation was funded out of public funds. [40705]

Mr. Maclean: The applicants in the application for judicial review were the Fire Brigades Union, the National Association of Schoolmasters and Women Teachers, Unison, GMB, the Royal College of Nursing, the Transport and General Workers Union, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, the Prison Officers Association, the Civil and Public Services Association and the Trades Union Congress. After the House of Lords judgment, the applicants were awarded costs; these costs and the costs incurred by Government were met from public funds.

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of whether the police and medical authorities are co-operating sufficiently with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board concerning cases of the constituents of the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East. [40496]

Mr. Maclean: Under the terms of the criminal injuries compensation scheme the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is exclusively responsible for the handling and determination of individual applications. The CICB reviews on an on-going basis the responses of the police and medical authorities to requests for reports. It advises that there are no significant problems in the Bolton, North-East area.

Gambling

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what restrictions on the commercial promotion of gambling are currently in place; and what have been the changes in the last five years. [40750]

Mr. Kirkhope: Section 42 of the Gaming Act 1968 prohibits, with certain exceptions, advertisements which inform the public of premises on which gaming takes place or which invites them to participate in such gaming. The main exceptions are:

> advertisements relating to incidental activities at non-commercial entertainments; to amusement centres and arcades; and to travelling showman's pleasure fairs;
>
> print advertisements relating to bingo which do not contain inducements;
>
> signs displayed on bingo premises giving information on prizes;
>
> signs outside casinos indicating that gaming takes place on premises.

Section 10 of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963 provides a general prohibition on advertisements relating to particular betting shops. There are exceptions for advertisements which are published inside betting shops and those which can be seen from outside the premises, provided that they comply with certain restrictions which are prescribed in regulations.

The Broadcasting Act 1990 makes the Independent Television Commission and the Radio Authority responsible for drawing up and enforcing codes governing standards and practice for advertising and programme sponsorship on television and radio respectively. There is a general prohibition on advertising of betting and gaming in the advertising codes. This prohibition does not apply to advertisements relating to lotteries permitted under National Lottery etc. Act 1993 and the Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976, or the football pools. In addition, the ITC and Radio Authority programme sponsorship codes prohibit betting and gaming companies from sponsoring television and radio programmes about certain activities related to the same form of betting or gaming as that in which the company deals.

Changes introduced in the last five years include:

the Bingo Act 1992, which introduced a partial relaxation of restrictions on print advertising of bingo;

the Licensed Betting Offices (Amendment) Regulations 1995, which gave betting shops greater freedom to advertise in their windows;

changes to the ITC and Radio Authority advertising codes in December 1993 and April this year, respectively, to allow broadcast advertising of the national lottery;

changes to the ITC and Radio Authority programme sponsorship codes in January and December 1994, respectively, to allow betting and gaming companies to sponsor certain types of programmes;

changes, in April this year, to the ITC and Radio Authority advertising codes to allow broadcast advertising of the football pools.

Prison Education

Mr. George Howarth : To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate for spending on prison education for 1995–96, 1996–97 and 1997–98 following the Woodcock and Learmont reports. [40461]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. George Howarth, dated 2 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the estimate for spending on prison education for 1995–96, 1996–97 and 1997–98 following the Woodcock and Learmont reports.

Budgets for education services are devolved to governors who base their spending plans on local needs taking into account the number of teacher contact hours which can be purchased from their education provider at the agreed contract price.

The estimate for spending on prison education in 1995–96, including Public Library Authority library provision but excluding Vocational Training and Construction Industry Training spending, is £37,093,000.

Estimates of expenditure for 1996–97 and 1997–98 will be determined as part of the strategic planning cycle on which negotiations are currently taking place. Final decisions will not be taken until shortly before the start of the next financial year.

Prison Service Performance Indicators

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to make changes to the Prison Service's key performance indicators; and if he will make a statement. [40454]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Mr. Richard Tilt to Mr. George Howarth, dated 2 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about proposed changes to the Prison Service's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The Prison Service has achieved its existing targets on visits and trebling. The remaining indicators do not now fully reflect the impact of new work that the Service has taken on (for example, the mandatory drug testing programme). The Service is therefore committed to developing new indicators to reflect its performance across the range of its work.

We are now considering what changes are necessary in the light of Sir John Learmont's recommendation on performance indicators.

The Prison Service Framework Document requires changes to the KPIs to be approved by Home Office, Treasury and Office of Public Service Ministers.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the figures for each key performance indicator for each prison for the year 1994–95. [40453]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. George Howarth, dated 2 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about figures for key performance indicators (KPIs) for the year 1994–95.

The figures are set out in the attached tables, copies of which will be placed in the Library of the House. Establishments are grouped by type to make it easier to compare performance between establishments of a similar kind.

The tables do not include data on KPIs 3, 4 or 7. The target for KPI 3 was to ensure that the average number of prisoners held three to a cell intended for one was fewer than in 1993–94. The outcome was that there was no trebling in any establishment. On KPI 4, the target was to provide 24 hour access to sanitation in at least 3,500 more cells, thus ensuring that at least 95% of prisoners have access to sanitation at all times. This target is managed nationally, not locally, and the outcome was that 4,191 more cells were provided with 24 hour access to sanitation. On KPI 7, the target was to ensure that all prisons had the opportunity to exceed the minimum visiting entitlement throughout the year. This was achieved in full at all establishments.

Performance against key targets: 1994–95—Dispersals

	Average population 1994–95	*KPI 1: Escapes*	*KPI 2: Assaults as percentage of average population*	*KPI 5: Regime hours*	*KPI 6: Time unlocked (weekdays)*	*KPI 8: Cost per place (£)*
Frankland	418	0	12.2	20.0	10	32,662
Full Sutton	543	0	13.4	25.1	10.5	31,509
Long Lartin	355	0	9.3	22.3	11	29,437
Parkhurst	226	3	16.8	17.6	11.3	32,947
Wakefield	696	0	4.9	20.1	11.6	23,731
Whitemoor	474	6	23.4	21.4	10.3	32,397
Average	452	1.5	13.3	21.1	10.8	29,944

Category B

	Average population 1994–95	*KPI 1: Escapes*	*KPI 2: Assaults as percentage of average population*	*KPI 5: Regime hours*	*KPI 6: Time unlocked (week days)*	*KPI 8: Cost per place (£)*
Albany	415	0	6.5	25.3	11	19,725
Blundeston	381	0	10.5	23.3	12	18,873
Dartmoor	532	3	7	23.7	10	16,384
Garth	505	0	5	20.0	9.1	18,750
Gartree	275	0	3.6	28.3	12.3	21,751
Grendon (see also Spring Hill)[1]	185	0	1.3	28.6	13	19,121
Kingston	135	0	2.2	26.8	12.5	23,226
Maidstone	459	0	6.3	22.3	11.7	18,051
Nottingham	207	1	5.3	25.8	12	24,775
Swaleside	502	1	11.8	22.8	10.5	18,359
Average	360	0.5	6	24.7	11.4	19,092

[1] Some establishments consist of a 'parent' establishment and one or more satellite establishments with different functions. Figures are shown separately except for combined figures for KPI 2 and KPI 8 which are shown under the parent establishment.

Open Prisons (Male)

	Average population 1994–95	*KPI 1: Escapes*	*KPI 2: Assaults as percentage of average population*	*KPI 5: Regime hours*	*KPI 6: Time unlocked weekdays*	*KPI 8: Cost per place (£)*
Ford	440	0	1.1	37.3	13.3	10,357
Hewell Grange	164	0	1.2	42.8	24	15,152
Hollesley Bay (see also Warren Hill)[1]	162	0	12.5	38.1	24	22,124
Kirkham	521	0	0.2	48.7	13.5	10,870
Leyhill	387	0	0	40.0	24	14,634
Morton Hall	161	0	1.2	46.0	24	14,286
North Sea Camp	204	0	0	62.7	16.5	15,423
Rudgate	261	0	0.4	47.2	14	13,937
Spring Hill (see also parent establishment Grendon)[2]	205	0	—	39.4	24	—
Stanford Hill	361	0	0.8	41.8	14.5	15,104
Sudbury Foston	422	0	0.2	46.8	14.5	12,308
Average	299	0	0.6	44.6	18.8	14,847

[1] Some establishments consist of a 'parent' establishment and one or more satellite establishments with different functions. Figures are shown separately except for combined figures for KPI 2 and KIP 8 which are shown under the parent establishment.

[2] Figures for KPI 2 and KPI 8 are shown under the parent establishment.

Female establishments

	Average population 1994–95	*KPI 1: Escapes*	*KPI 2: Assaults as percentage of average population*	*KPI 5: Regime hours*	*KPI 6: Time unlocked (weekdays)*	*KPI 8: Cost per place (£)*
Local	503	5	37	19.5	9.8	29,595
Holloway	64	0	75	18.0	11	48,214
Pucklechurch	284	2.5	56	18.8	10.4	38,904
Average						
Closed						
Bullwood Hall	121	1	16.5	30.4	12	29,365
Cookham Wood	129	1	16.3	29.3	10.5	24,167
New Hall	178	3	32	29.4	12	26,633
Styal	235	1	14.5	34.8	13.3	29,167
Average	166	1.5	19.8	31.0	12	27,333
Open						
Askham Grange	114	0	1.8	45.4	24	17,647
Drake Hall	224	0	1.8	36.9	24	14,902
East Sutton Park	89	0	0	36.8	24	19,149
Average	142	0	1.2	39.7	24	17,233
Average for all female establishments	184	1.2	21.6	31.2	15.6	25,713

Young Offender Institutions

	Average Population 1994–95	*KRP 1: Escapes*	*KPI 2: Assaults as percentage of average population*	*KPI 5: Regime hours*	*KPI 6: Time unlocked (weekdays)*	*KPI 8: Cost per place £*
Closed						
Aylesbury	219	0	45.2	26.6	9.3	24,399
Castington	275	0	24.7	25.2	9.3	17,667
Deerbolt	387	5	17.6	24.8	10.8	16,630
Dover	272	0	12.9	23.6	9.3	18,354
Glen Parva	769	2	23.7	21.9	9	14.769
Guys Marsh	196	0	8.7	41.6	13.4	16,667
Warren Hill (see also parent establishment Hollesley Bay)[1]	159	0		27.9	8	
Huntercombe (see also Finnamore Wood)[2]	197	0	21.2	24.9	11	17,009
Onley	476	2	33.8	23.4	12	14,038
Portland	369	0	10.6	29.6	10.7	14,098
Stoke Heath	263	1	28.5	28.6	12.5	16,667
Swinfen Hall	182	0	8.2	29.7	10.1	24,176
Werrington	107	9	69.2	42.1	13.5	21,239
Wetherby	137	8	21.9	38.2	12	18,878
Average	286	1.9	24.2	29.2	10.8	17,344

[1] Figures for KPI 2 and KPI 8 are shown under the parent establishment.

[2] Some establishments consist of a 'parent' establishment and one or more satellite establishments with different functions. Figures are shown separately except for combined figures for KPI 2 and KPI 8 which are shown under the parent establishment.

Young offender remand centres

	Average population 1994–95	*KPI 1: Escapes*	*KPI 2: Assaults as percentage of average population*	*KPI 5: Regime hours*	*KPI 6: Time unlocked (weekdays)*	*KPI 8: Cost per place (£)*
Open YOI						
Finnamore Wood (see also parent establishment Huntercombe)[1]	25	0		38.0	—	
Hatfield	161	0	8.7	38.4	13.3	21,111
Prescoed (see also parent establishment USK)[1]	49	0		42.5	18.8	
Thorn Cross	167	0	13.2	46.5	12.5	13,333
Average	101	0	11	41.4	12.9	17,222
Remand Centres						
Brinsford	458	3	27.3	23.7	9.1	20,253
Feltham	805	0	29.7	30.4	10	18,472
Hindley	268	1	29.1	22.7	8.8	23,220
Lancaster Farms	344	0	22.4	23.5	12	22,281
Low Newton	248	0	22.2	23.1	9	25,253
Moorland	485	0	29.3	24.9	11.5	17,433
Northallerton	170	0	25.9	23.5	10.3	32,432
Reading	177	0	25.4	27.1	10.5	29,121
Rochester	257	2	26.8	25.1	11.5	19,487
Average	357	0.7	26.4	24.9	10.3	23,106
Average for all YOI remand establishments	283	1.2	23.9	29.5	10.8	20,944

[1] Figures for KPI 2 and KPI 8 are shown under the parent establishment.

Category C

	Average population 1994–95	*KPI 1: Escapes*	*KPI 2: Assaults as percentage of average population*	*KPI 5: Regime hours*	*KPI 6: Time unlocked weekdays*	*KPI 8: Cost per place £*
Acklington	613	2	4.1	26.6	12.1	13,757
Aldington	118	4	0.8	31.4	12	17,293
Ashwell	384	4	2.9	35.3	15.5	13,861
Blantyre House	94	2	0	33.2	15.3	22,105
Brockhill	117	1	1.7	34.4	12.3	20,497
Camp Hill	389	1	4.6	28.0	12	17,271
Channings Wood	568	6	2.1	29.3	11.3	13,805
Coldingley	283	2	7.1	25.4	13.5	20,890
Downview	277	4	2.9	32.3	11.5	20,906
Erlestoke	250	3	3.2	30.5	12.8	20,000
Everthorpe	217	2	7.8	29.7	11.3	18,447

Category C

	Average population 1994–95	*KPI 1: Escapes*	*KPI 2: Assaults as percentage of average population*	*KPI 5: Regime hours*	*KPI 6: Time unlocked weekdays*	*KPI 8: Cost per place £*
Featherstone	574	12	3.8	28.5	10.4	14,858
Haverigg	344	5	1.5	36.6	12.5	18,136
Highpoint	602	3	6	27.9	13	15,169
Kirklevington	76	0	0	47.3	24	23,457
Lancaster	243	3	4.9	26.9	12	16,016
Latchmere House	139	0	0	55.9	24	14,765
Lindholme	545	6	2.4	29.1	15.3	15,722
Littlehey	555	4	5	32.3	10.8	14,334
The Mount	476	3	5.9	26.9	12.1	14,876
Oxford[2]	77	0	0	41.5	17	19,303
Ranby	335	13	3.9	31.7	13.3	17,579
Risley	725	3	13.1	28.5	10.5	18,117
Send	119	1	1.7	34.9	12.7	22,124
Shepton Mallet	189	0	5.8	27.5	12	24,684
Stafford	516	1	11	25.3	9.2	19,291
Stocken	392	0	5.1	34.0	12.5	16,414
Thorpe Arch	164	8	0.6	34.8	11.7	22,289
USK (see also Prescoed)[1]	179	0	0	32.3	18.8	20,661
The Verne	533	4	1.5	31.5	14.5	14,855
Wayland	542	1	3.9	26.6	12	13,793
Wellingborough	306	4	3.3	29.6	12	16,667
Whatton	213	0	6.6	31.1	12.8	17,593
Wymott	389	0	3.6	36.6	13.3	10,907
Average	330	2.9	3.7	32.2	13.5	16,330

[1] Some establishments consist of a 'parent' establishment and one or more satellite establishments with different functions. Figures are shown separately expect for combined figures for KPI 2 and KPI 8 which are shown under the parent establishment.

[2] Re-opened April 1994. Cost per place figure includes Bullingdon.

Local prisons adult remands

	Average Population 1994–95	*KPI 1 Escapes*	*KPI 2: Assaults as per cent. of average population*	*KPI 5: Regime hours*	*KPI 6: Time unlocked (week days)*	*KPI 8: Cost per place (£)*
Bedford	296	2	9.5	22.9	10.5	24,422
Belmarsh	724	0	14.2	15.7	11.2	26,397
Birmingham	778	1	12.2	20.5	6.9	21,816
Bristol	456	0	7.2	23.1	11.8	23,896
Brixton	605	1	14.9	18.3	8.6	31,366
Bullingdon[1]	622	0	19.2	24.2	11.5	19,303
Canterbury	259	0	5	24.9	12	34,783
Cardiff	421	0	13.3	23.3	11.9	28,399
Chelmsford	371	1	10.8	16.1	7.2	33,068
Dorchester	202	0	3	21.2	10.3	30,714
Durham	612	4	6.5	19.0	10.5	22,446
Elmley	609	1	10.5	22.5	10.5	18,009
Exeter	391	1	9.5	22.6	9	27,660
Gloucester	248	1	16.1	23.2	9.5	29,858
Haslar	126	7	0	31.8	12.3	16,327
Highdown	584	0	12.2	21.0	11.5	19,260
Holme House	613	2	8.6	16.2	9	18,336
Hull	394	1	25.4	21.0	12	34,146
Leeds	1,042	0	14.3	15.5	7	19,675
Leicester	339	1	14.2	22.7	10	42,784
Lewes	325	1	10.5	18.6	8.9	22,572
Lincoln	609	2	6.7	19.9	11.2	23,210
Liverpool	1,222	3	6.2	17.5	7.2	18,371
Manchester	843	1	8.4	20.3	12.8	20,188
Norwich	362	2	14.4	23.1	10.9	30,584
Pentonville	720	2	12.8	27.9	10.5	19,336
Preston	492	1	12.6	18.4	6.8	28,180
Shrewsbury	276	1	11.2	21.8	10	33,523
Swansea	211	4	16.6	21.9	12	27,273
Wandsworth	907	1	16.3	23.5	10	18,288
Winchester	385	0	9.6	23.0	8.8	24,675
Woodhill	518	0	20.3	24.0	12	24,735
Wormwood Scrubs	804	0	7.5	15.2	9.6	29,132
Average	524	1.2	12.4	21.2	10.4	23,408

[1] Cost per place figure includes Oxford

Contracted out prisons

	Average Population 1994–95	*KPI 1: Escapes*	*KPI 2: Assaults as a percentage of average population*	*KPI 5: Regime hours*	*KPI 6: Time unlocked (weekdays)*	*KPI 8: Cost per place £*
Blakenhurst	629	0	17.5	—[1]	14	17,874
Buckley Hall[2]	24	0	4.2	—[1]	13.5	86,667
Doncaster[3]	557	1	33.8	—[1]	12	18,040
Wolds	320	0	15.3	—[1]	13.8	20,059
Average	382.5	0.25	17.7	—[1]	13.3	19,627

[1] Regime hours not available in comparative form.

[2] Opened in December 1994. The KPI 8 figure reflects the general build up of population.

[3] Opened in June 1994.

Public Appointments, South Yorkshire

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the public appointments for which his Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating in each case the duration of the appointment, the date when a new appointment is due, and the salary. [39461]

Mr. Howard: My Department is responsible for the following appointments in South Yorkshire:

one member of the selection panel on appointments of independent members to the South Yorkshire police authority;

the board of visitors at the following prison establishments:

Doncaster

Lindholme

Moorland Young Offenders Institution

Hatfield Young Offenders Institution.

The appointment to the selection panel is for two years. A new appointment is due on 8 August 1996. There is no salary but members are entitled to be paid allowances; the rates to be determined at the police authority's discretion. The Home Office recommends the allowances should be consistent with those paid to police authority members, that is £15 per hour up to a maximum of £120 per day and £3,000 per year.

Members are appointed to the boards of visitors for a maximum period of three years to coincide with the triennial review date of that board. Appointments are made for varying periods of up to three years and new appointments are made as and when vacancies arise. Members are unpaid volunteers though they can claim for expenses they have incurred as a result of the performance of their official duties.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which his Department makes appointments in the county of South Yorkshire, with the total annual budget for each body and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years. [39571]

Mr. Howard: The only such bodies in South Yorkshire to which my Department makes appointments are the boards of visitors at the following prison and young offender establishments:

HMP Doncaster;

HMP Lindholme;

HMP and Young Offenders Institution Moorland;

HMYOI Hatfield

The national boards of visitors budgets for the financial years 1991–92 to 1994–95 were as follows:

£ thousands

Year	*Budget*[1]
1991–92	378,000
1992–93	507,000
1993–94	734,000
1994–95	764,000

[1] These figures include the liaison section, which manages the administration of boards of visitors, and all local board expenses.

The total number of national appointments to the boards of visitors were as follows:

Year	*Appointments*
1991	346
1992	350
1993	344
1994	243
Total	1,283

The following table illustrates the appointments/reappointments during the last four years—1 January 1991 to 31 December 1994—in the South Yorkshire area.

	1991	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*Total appointments*
Doncaster	—	—	—	11	11
Lindholme	2	2	2	16	22
Moorland	4	—	15	—	19
Hatfield	—	—	15	—	15
Total	6	2	32	27	67

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39859]

Mr. Howard: I met the former Director General of the Prison Service 11 times in January, four times in both February and October, 10 times in March, once each in April, August and September, three times in both May and July and five times in June, an average of one meeting a week over the 10-month period. I met the chief executive of the Passport Agency once in April. I had no meetings with the chief executives of the Forensic Science Service and the Fire Service College—the other Home Office agencies—during that period. I receive quarterly reports from the chief executives on the performance of their agencies.

Military Corrective Training Centre, Colchester

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he last visited the military corrective training centre at Colchester; [39515]

(2) on what dates during the last 12 months his Ministers have visited the military corrective training centre at Colchester. [39514]

Miss Widdecombe: My right hon. and learned Friend last visited the military corrective training centre at Colchester on 3 March this year. The right hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) visited the centre on 3 May.

Fire Services, Wales

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is prepared to receive further representations on the re-structuring of the fire services in Wales. [39579]

Mr. Kirkhope: The consultation period has ended and drafts of the orders containing the schemes which will establish the three combined fire authorities in Wales were laid in Parliament on 24 October. This stage could not have been postponed without putting the timetable for reorganisation at risk. For the future, if representations are made we shall consider them.

Camden Hopscotch Asian Women's Group

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all grants given, and any future grants planned, by his Department to the Camden Hopscotch Asian women's group, indicating the amount and dates. [38131]

Mr. Kirkhope: From April 1992 to March 1995, the Home Office supported a project entitled training and employment opportunities for Bangladeshi women, which was run by the Hopscotch Asian women's centre. Payments of some £19,000, £32,000 and £38,000 in the three financial years were made under the ethnic minority grant to the Central London training and enterprise council, which acted on behalf of the Home Office in relation to the project.

The Home Office has agreed to pay grant to Kingsway college, under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966, in respect of a project to be run by the college for two years in association with the Hopscotch Asian women's centre. The maximum potential grant cost is £25,000 in 1995–96, and £50,000 in 1996–97.

NATIONAL HERITAGE

Meeting Heads of Agencies

Mr. Gordan Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many times in each month of the current year she has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to her to discuss the work of those agencies. [39860]

Mr. Sproat: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has met the chief executive of the Royal Parks Agency once, in September. No such formal meetings have been held with the chief executive of the Historic Royal Palaces Agency although one is planned for November.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which she is responsible. [39466]

Mr. Sproat: I have responsibility for two executive agencies: the Historic Royal Palaces Agency and the Royal Parks Agency. The information in respect of both agencies is as follows:

Historic Royal Palaces Agency

Grade	*(a) Number 1994–95*	*(b) Number 1995–96*[1]
Grade 3	1	1
Grade 5	6	6
Grade 6	1	1
Grade 7	15	17
SEO and equivalent	18	20
HEO and equivalent	26	30
EO and equivalent	47	47
AO and equivalent	146	144
AA and equivalent	209	138
Industrials	55	55
Totals	524	459

Notes:

[1] Estimate.

1. Information on the cost of staff by grade is not held.

2. In 1994–95, the payroll cost of the staff listed above was £10,400,000 (as recorded HRPA Annual Report).

3. In 1995–96, the estimated payroll cost for the staff listed above is £9,047,000 (as recorded in HRPA Sixth Corporate Plan).

Royal Parks Agency

List by grade of number and cost of staff

	1994–95 Actual		*1995–96 Estimate*	
	Number of staff	*Cost*	*Number of staff*	*Cost*
Grade 5	1.0	56,250	1.0	60,483
Grade 7	2.1	95,003	2.0	88,493
SEO	4.2	133,561	4.0	139,244
HEO	9.1	215,834	9.8	262,792
EO	14.2	279,927	14.9	292,752
AO	23.8	347,219	26.8	355,803
AA	5.4	56,775	2.3	22,305
Typist	1.4	21,315	1.5	23,339
Principle Park Manager	1.0	50,374	1.0	51,348
Park Superintendent II	3.0	113,012	3.0	115,253
Park Superintendent III	8.0	250,998	8.0	254,164
Park Supervisor	12.5	306,345	12.0	311,265
SPTO	2.0	34,078	2.0	35,355
PTO	0.5	12,555	3.0	64,436
HMCO	1.0	26,861	1.0	27,606
BAND 14 (Gamekeeper)	3.0	64,009	3.0	65,124
Chief Officer	1.0	51,779	1.0	81,215

Royal Parks Agency

List by grade of number and cost of staff

	1994–95 Actual		*1995–96 Estimate*	
	Number of staff	*Cost*	*Number of staff*	*Cost*
Deputy Chief Officer	1.3	53,129	1.0	37,470
Inspector	6.8	243,121	7.5	277,080
Sergeant	22.8	735,901	20.3	693,144
Constable	143.4	3,830,672	139.4	3,682,061
Groom	5.6	48,283	5.3	54,380
Total	273	7,027,001	270	6,995,112

ENVIRONMENT

Fair Rents

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of tenants with registered fair rents at the end of each of the past five years. [40687]

Mr. Clappison: The estimates available for tenants in England are as follows:

	Private rented	*Housing Association*
1990	[1]320,000	—
1992	—	[4]405,000
1993	[2]220,000	[4]385,000
1994	[3]170,000	[4]330,000

[1] Summer 1990.

[2] Average for financial year 1993–94.

[3] Average for financial year 1994–95.

[4] At 31 March.

The estimates for private renters are from the 1990 private renters survey and, from 1993–94, the survey of English housing. Like all estimates from sample surveys, they are subject to sampling error. The estimates for Housing Association tenants are based on returns to the Housing Corporation.

Living-over-the-shop Grant, Newcastle

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the applications for living-over-the-shop grant support was received for Clayton street and High Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne; how many dwellings units are proposed for these projects; and when he expects to make a decision on them. [40495]

Mr. Clappison: An SRB challenge fund plan to regenerate the Grainger Town area of Newcastle upon Tyne was received in the Government office for the nort-east on 27 October 1995. This plan includes a living-over-the-shop programme to bring city centre disused upper floors back into the use for residential purposes. A decision will be issued by the Government Office for the north-east as soon as possible. Approval of individual projects within the programme is subject to delegated arrangements which do not normally involve Ministers.

Ramsar Convention

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list candidate wetlands of international importance in the United Kingdom proposed for listing under the Ramsar convention. [40753]

Mr. Clappison: The Government are considering the sites listed which have been proposed for Ramsar listing by the statutory conservation agencies.

Site	*County or region*	*Site*	*County or region*
Avon Valley	Hampshire Dorset	Greenlaw Moor and Hule Moss	Borders
Breydon Water	Norfolk	Westwater	Borders
Deben Estuary	Suffolk	Lake of Menteith	Central
Duddon Estuary	Cumbria	Castle Loch, Lochmaben	Dumfries and Galloway
Dungeness-Pett Levels	Kent, East Susex	Lock Inch and Torrs Warren	Dumfries and Galloway
Foulness	Essex	Loch of Strathbeg	Grampian
Humber Flats, Marshes and Coast Phase 2	Humberside Lincs	Muir of Dinnet	Gramian
Mersey Estuary	Merseyside Chesire	Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Lochs	Grampian
Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2	Chesire, Shropshire, Staffs and Clwyd	Loch Ruthven	Highland
Morecambe Bay	Cumbria Lancs	Moray Basin, Firths and Bays	Highland
Northumberland Coast	Northumberland	River Spey/Insh Marshes	Highland
Pevensey Levels	East Sussex	Firth of Forth	Lothian
Poole Harbour	Dorset	East Sanday	Orkney
Somerset Levels	Somerset	North Roe and Tingon	Shetland
Southampton Water and Solent	Hampshire, Isle of Wight	Inner Clyde Estuary	Strathclyde
Thames Estuary and Marshes	Kent	Rhinns of Islay	Strathclyde

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of the United Kingdom is designated under the Ramsar convention; and what percentage areas of their territories other EU member status have designated. [40752]

Mr. Clappison: Approximately 1.3 per cent. of the United Kingdom is listed under the Ramsar convention on wetlands of international importance. Similar information is not readily available for other EU member states.

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if there is a timetable for the designation of candidate Ramsar wetlands included on the United Kingdom's shadow list. [40754]

Mr. Clappison: Including three sites in dependent territories, the United Kingdom has already listed 95 wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar convention—far more than any other country in the world. A number of additional proposed sites are under consideration, but there is no firm timetable for future listings.

Planning Permission

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what powers are available to development corporations in respect of *(a)* short-cutting or avoiding standard procedures for planning permission and *(b)* extending their spheres of influence beyond their recognised boundaries. [40709]

Sir Paul Beresford: Urban development corporations are bound by the planning powers which are set out in sections 148 and 149 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. A corporation cannot use these powers outside its designated area.

Charter Trustees

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will establish charter trustees to preserve the office of mayor of Beverley and the civic regalia; and if he will set out their duties and the manner of their appointment. [40595]

Sir Paul Beresford: It is our intention that charter trustees for Beverley will be established on 1 April 1996.

The charter trustees will be the district councillors elected for wards wholly or partly comprised in the area for which charter trustees are established.

As charter trustees, they will be required to hold an annual meeting at which the first business would be to elect one of their number as mayor and another as deputy mayor. They may also exercise powers to appoint local officers of dignity and may acquire and maintain historic or ceremonial property, except land, of the area for which they are established.

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the appointment of charter trustees to preserve the office of major of Beverley will allow the post to be held as in the past in the absence of the establishment of a town or parish council; and what powers the major will have. [40596]

Sir Paul Beresford: The charter trustees for Beverley may elect one of their number as town major and another as deputy mayor: it is not necessary for there to be a town or parish council in existence. The mayor presides at the meetings of the charter trustees but has no formal statutory functions. His role is representative or ceremonial.

Local Government Reviews

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if it is his intention to direct the Local Government Commission to conduct reviews to establish the case for or against new parishes. [40597]

Sir Paul Beresford: The Local Government Commission is devoting its attention to the structure reviews of individual districts which we have directed it to carry out. When these have been completed, its next priority must be the periodic electoral reviews that it has a statutory duty to undertake. Against this background, we expect to direct it to carry out only a few, if any, parishing reviews over the next few months.

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the Local Government Commission to complete all outstanding local government district and other reviews. [40594]

Sir Paul Beresford: We expect the Local Government Commission to complete the district reviews by 2 January 1996.

Local Authority Crematoriums

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what reasons he was unable to lay an order before Parliament relating to the sale of local authority crematoriums prior to the summer adjournment of Parliament. [40568]

Sir Paul Beresford: The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Approved Investments) (Amendment No.2) Regulations 1995 provide for increases in the usable proportion of local authorities' capital receipts from sales of shops and car parks, as well as of crematoriums. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Urban Regeneration announced the increases for shops and car parks on 23 March, and stated that they would apply from 1 September, so the regulations needed to come into effect by then. Discussions with local authorities were held before the regulations were laid, so as to ensure that the increases applied in as wide a range of circumstances as possible. The regulations were laid as soon as possible after those discussions.

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidelines he will issue in respect of the commercial development of crematoriums sold off by local authorities following the order of 2 August. [40569]

Sir Paul Beresford: We have encouraged authorities in considering any disposals to take into account the need to ensure competitive pricing and continuing quality of service.

Rough Sleepers

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has of the number of people currently regularly sleeping rough in central London; what was the equivalent figure in previous estimates; and if he will make a statement. [41130]

Mr. Clappison: Independent street counts of people sleeping rough are undertaken twice yearly in central London, co-ordinated by Homeless Network, the umbrella organisation for voluntary sector agencies helping street homeless people in the capital. The information requested is:

	Number of people sleeping rough in central London	*Percentage sleeping rough for more than one year*
May 1995	270	66
November 1994	288	76
May 1994	268	72
November 1993	287	77
June 1993	348	74

It is, however, likely that people sleeping out for a period of time will occasionally make use of hostel, nightshelter or winter shelter accomodation.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the rough sleepers initiative contained in the housing White Paper will be funded from local authority housing budgets. [41051]

Mr. Clappison: Decisions on future public expenditure commitments cannot be made before the Budget statement by my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 28 November 1995.

Biodiversity

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his timetable for publishing the Government's biodiversity plan; [40909]

(2) what is his timetable for the biodiversity plan being approved by the relevant Cabinet committee; [40910]

(3) what representations he has received from other Government Departments about the biodiversity plan. [40911]

Mr. Clappison: The United Kingdom was one of the first countries to produce a national biodiversity plan when "Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan"was published in January 1994. The plan contains some 59 board targets including a commitment to develop specific costed targets for key species and habitats for the years 2000 and 2010.

A biodiversity steering group, chaired by my Department, with members drawn from all sectors was established to take forward work under the plan. The steering group, which has consulted all the relevant Government Departments, will submit its advice to the Government in a report to be published in December this year. I expect a Government response to the report to be made by the spring of 1996.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work force; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41125]

Sir Paul Beresford: Breakdowns by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—normally those employed for a period up to 12 months, but, exceptionally, up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

Farm Safety

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met representatives of the Transport and General Workers Union to discuss farm safety; and if he will make a statement. [38930]

Sir Paul Beresford: Since my Department took over responsibility for health and safety at work I have not met representatives of the Transport and General Workers Union. The Health and Safety Commission and Health and Safety Executive give advice and enforce the law in relation to farm safety. The Transport and General Workers Union is represented on the commission's agriculture industry advisory committee, which last met on 26 October.

County Hall

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the decision by the Shirayama Group to sell or lease county hall, London, to another hotel group; and how much is still owed by Shirayama from the original purchase price of the building. [41185]

Sir Paul Beresford: No. Proposals for the sale or lease of the Riverside building of county hall are a matter for the freehold owners, Shirayama. The terms of the sale, with which Shirayama has to date wholly complied, were that £50 million was to be paid on completion with a deferred payment of £10 million to be paid in the period 1997 to 2012.

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what arrangements are in place to secure the balance of the purchase price of county hall from the by Shirayama Group in the event of the building being sold or leased to a third party. [41184]

Sir Paul Beresford: The deferred payment was secured by a legal charge on the Riverside building granted Shirayama in favour of the London Residuary Body or its successor.

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what report has been made by English Heritage on the removal of the war memorial in county hall by the Japanese owners of the building; and if he will make a statement. [41188]

Sir Paul Beresford: None, as far as I know.

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has happened to the book of remembrance previously located adjacent to the war memorial on the principal floor of county hall, London. [41183]

Sir Paul Beresford: I understand that the book of remembrance is now located at the headquarters of the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority on Albert embankment.

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what applications have been made by the current owners of county hall, or their representatives, to remove or delist artefacts or listed features of the building. [41187]

Sir Paul Beresford: None, as far as I know.

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when English Heritage last inspected county hall, London, and submitted a report to his office. [41189]

Sir Paul Beresford: On 19 October. There is no requirement to report to me.

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what licences have been applied for by the current owners of county hall, the Shirayama Group, in respect of sea mammals to be housed in the proposed aquarium on the site. [41186]

Sir Paul Beresford: I understand that the owners of county hall intend to open an aquarium on the site. If the proposed aquarium is to be open to the public for more than seven days a year, it would need to be licenced under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981. It would be for the London borough of Lambeth to decide whether to issue such a licence. I understand that the council has not so far received an application from the Shirayama Group.

If the owners wished to import for display at the aquarium any species covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild and Fauna and Flora, they would need to apply for an import permit from my Department, and, for some species, an exemption certificate permitting the display of such specimens. We have received no CITES applications from the group.

Particulate Matter

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the total and percentage source contributions to United Kingdom PM10 particulate matter from *(a)* diesel cars, *(b)* petrol cars, *(c)* petrol light goods vehicles, *(d)* heavy goods vehicles, *(e)* buses, *(f)* domestic heating, *(g)* bonfires, *(h)* power stations and (i) other industry. [41193]

Mr. Clappison: The most recently published UK inventory of emitted PM10 was published in the second report of the quality of urban air review group in December 1993, a copy of which has been placed in the Library. Of a total of approximately 250,000 tonnes of PM10 emitted in 1991, diesel cars accounted for 1 per cent., petrol cars 9 per cent., petrol light goods vehicles 1 per cent., heavy goods vehicles 12 per cent., buses 2 per cent., domestic heating 47 per cent., power stations 7 per cent., and other industry 18 per cent. No information is available on the contribution of bonfires. These proportional contributions apply to the whole of the UK and do not reflect the relative contributions in urban areas or in periods of elevated pollution levels.

Volatile Organic Compound Controls

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment on what basis small service stations will be excluded from the requirements of stage 1 VOC controls for petrol delivery; and when such controls will be introduced. [41192]

Mr. Clappison: Under the stage 1 of the EC petrol vapour recovery directive, member states are allowed to grant a derogation from the requirements of the directive to those service stations with an annual throughput of 100—500m^3/year—those below this threshold are exempt in any case—which are located in a geographical area or on a site where vapour emissions are unlikely to contribute significantly to environmental or health problems. The implementation date for all other existing service stations of this size is 2004 and as such there is a nine-year delay before the derogation takes affect.

My Department is consulting industry and other interested parties on how this derogation should be applied.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 19 July, *Official Report*, column *1421* if he will list the outstanding responsibilities of the London Residuary Body. [41190]

Sir Paul Beresford: The outstanding responsibilities of the London Residuary Body are to distribute to the London boroughs any remaining sums outstanding, and to make arrangements for the transfer of any residue rights and liabilities to successor authorities.

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to ask the royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea to prepare the accounts of the London Residuary Body in 1995–96; and if he has set a date for the order to wind-up the London Residuary Body. [41180]

Sir Paul Beresford: The London Residuary Body has an arrangement with the royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea to prepare the residuary body's final report and accounts for 1995–96. As to the winding up of the London Residuary Body, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19 July 1995, *Official Report* column *1421*.

Archway Tower

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 6 July, *Official Report* column *334*, regarding the future of Archway tower, what discussions his Department has had with estate agents regarding the disposal of the lease; and if he will make a statement. [41070]

Sir Paul Beresford: Letting agents appointed by Property Holdings continue to pursue a number of avenues for disposal and are in discussion with the landlords.

Pollution (Central London)

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will publish the results of research undertaken by Warren Spring Laboratory in 1993 into personal exposure to pollution in central London. [41191]

Mr. Clappison: The results of the research were published in Warren Spring Laboratory report IR 353(AP) in November 1992 and LR 982(AP) in April 1993. Copies are being placed in the Library.

Mesothelioma and Asbestosis

Sir Michael Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, how the number of cases of mesothelioma and asbestosis reported in the London borough of Hillingdon exceeds the average figure for England as a whole during the past 25 years; and if he will publish the number of such cases reported for *(a)* Hillingdon and *(b)* England as a percentage of the population. [41074]

Sir Paul Beresford: The Health and Safety Executive maintains registers of deaths in Great Britain for which mesothelioma or asbestosis are mentioned on the death certificate. Mesothelioma and asbestosis crude death rates per million population for males and females are given for the London borough of Hillingdon and for England as a whole in the tables.

Mesothelioma

Year of death	*Crude death rate per million population* *Hillingdon*	*England*
Males		
1976–79	15	11
1980–83	11	15
1984–87	33	22
1988–91	43	29
Females		
1976–83	3.2	3.0
1984–91	4.2	4.0

Asbestosis

Crude rate per million population *Year of death*	*Hillingdon*	*England*
Males		
1978–91	16	7.7
Females		
1978–91	0.60	0.75

The mesothelioma register records a geographical code for area of usual residence at death from 1976 onwards, and the absestos register from 1978 onwards. The latest year for which complete data is available in 1991.

WALES

Measles-Rubella Immunisation

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what considerations led to the decision not to include details of each of the known side effects of immunisation in the booklet, "Measles—Why every child in school needs to be protected from measles this autumn," which was distributed by the his Department in Wales. [40658]

Mr. Richards *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The content of the measles booklet was underpinned by research to establish what information parents regarded as most important. This research, conducted by the Health Education Authority, showed that parents were unaware of the seriousness of measles. The final leaflet which was approved by the Measles Immunisation Group, an expert committee comprising a wide range of NHS professionals, reflected parents' information priorities about the need for measles and rubella immunisation.

Side effects from measles-rubella vaccine are rare, but the more common ones are covered in the booklet. Doctors were given more detailed information on the full range of possible adverse reactions. Parents were advised to discuss any further concerns with their family doctor.

The measles booklet distributed in Wales was the same as that for the rest of the UK, except that it was bilingual.

Fire Services

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales to what extent extra resources are made available to fire authorities with a coastline. [41146]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: There are no indicators specific to fire authorities with a coastline in the capital and revenue distribution formulae for 1995–96 and the proposed formulae for 1996–97.

Motorway Surfacing

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many miles of motorway there are in Wales, what percentage of them are surfaced by the new low-noise, no-spray tarmac and what plans he has for *(a)* all motorways *(b)* dual carriageways and *(c)* A roads to be so resurfaced. [41145]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: There are 78 miles of motorway in Wales, of which 7 per cent. is currently surfaced with the new porous material. Further lengths will be resurfaced where the cost can be justified.

The dual carriageway section of the A4042 Llantarnam bypass currently being constructed will also have the new surface. There are no further plans to use such a treatment elsewhere on trunk roads.

Kidney Patients

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans there are to improve access to dialysis treatment for renal patients in mid-Wales; and if he will make a statement. [40919]

Mr. Hague: Though Wales has one of the highest access rates in Europe for renal dialysis, health authorities and NHS trusts will continue to assess the case for extra provision against need.

In the case of Mid Wales, I understand that there is a possibility of introducing dialysis facilities at Bronglais general hospital, Aberystwyth along the lines of those currently being provided at West Wales general hospital, Carmarthen. There are also proposals to enhance the existing facilities at Shrewsbury.

Environmental Industries

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he is taking to promote the growth of the environmental industries sector in Wales. [40962]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: Continual efforts are made to highlight opportunities in all industrial sectors through a programme of company visits and awareness raising seminars. A major business and environment campaign is planned which will, among other things, demonstrate business opportunities in the sector.

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has on the extent of the environmental industries sector in Wales; and if he will list the names of the companies involved. [40963]

Mr. Jones: This information is not readily available.

Charter Trains

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the impact of increases in track access charges on special trains in and to Wales. [41466]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: Charter train operators have had to face cost increases. In the past, British Rail provided these services on a marginal cost basis which in effect meant cross-subsidisation with taxpayers' money. Under the new arrangements, charges by Railtrack to charter train operators reflect the full cost of services provided.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Historic Buildings Council

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who are the current members of the Historic Buildings Council; what is their defined role and responsibility; who appoints each of them; and how often they meet. [39922]

Mr. Moss: The current members of the Historic Buildings Council are:

Mrs. P. Wilson (Chairman)
Mrs. D. Corcoran
Dr. M. Gould
Mr. S. C. McGuckian
Ms J. Pyne
Mr. D. Stelfox
Mr. T. Brown
Mr. C. Corry
Dr. P. Mowat
Mrs. F. Jay-O'Boyle
Mrs. J. Smyth
Mr. J. D. Thompson

The functions of the council are as follows:

(a) to give advice on the listing of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, or amendment of lists so compiled;

(b) to give advice on the designating of conservation areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearances of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance;

(c) to keep under review, and from time to time report to the Department on the general state of preservation of listed buildings;

(d) to advise the Department on such matters relating to the preservation of buildings of special architectural or historic interest as the Department may refer to it;

(e) to advise on applications for the exemption of listed buildings from capital transfer tax;

(f) to advise on the issue of certificates stating that buildings are not intended to be listed;

(g) such other functions as are conferred on it by any statutory provision.

All members of the Historic Buildings Council are appointed by the head of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland.

The Historic Buildings Council usually meets on a monthly basis.

Private Patients

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his answer of 18 July 1995, *Official Report,* columns *1119-20,* if he will now confirm and update the figures on private patient income. [39952]

Mr. Moss: The table shows income from private patients for each health and social services board for 1994–95. This information has been extracted from the 1994–95 accounts of the health and social services boards. These accounts are as yet unaudited and therefore the figures supplied may be subject to change.

In my previous reply, I provided unaudited figures for trusts for 1994–95. The trusts accounts have now been audited and I can now confirm these figures.

Private patient income for each health and social services board—1994–95

Health and social services board	*Total private patient income 1994–95*
	£
Northern Board	314,791
Southern Board	23,343
Eastern Board	0
Western Board	179,037
Total — Northern Ireland	517,171

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list, by trust in each region, details of income from private patients for 1993–94 and 1994–95 *(a)* as a total and *(b)* as a percentage of total trust income. [39951]

Mr. Moss: The information requested for health and social services trusts for 1993–94 and 1994–95 years is outlined in tables 1 and 2. For the years in questions there were no trusts in either the Northern or the Western health and social services board areas.

Table 1: Private patients income 1993–94

HSS Trusts	*Total private patient income £000*	*Total income £000*	*Private patient income as a percentage of total income Per cent.*
Eastern Board Area			
Belfast City Hospital	412	78,765	0.52
Eastern Ambulance	1	6,491	0.02
Greenpark	315	41,414	0.76
Royal Group of Hospitals	1,308	113,621	1.15
Ulster, North Down and Ards Hospitals	463	48,951	0.95
Southern Board Area			
Craigavon Area Hospital	227	42,048	0.54
Total—Northern Ireland	2,726	331,290	0.82

Table 2: Private patients income 1994–95

HSS Trust	*Total private patient income £000*	*Total income £000*	*Private patient income as a percentage of total income per cent.*
Eastern Board Area			
Belfast City Hospital	426	81,463	0.52
Down and Lisburn	46	75,649	0.06
Eastern Ambulance	8	7,052	0.11
Greenpark	371	44,953	0.83
Mater Infirmorum Hospital	16	17,429	0.09
North Down and Ards Community	0	31,485	—
North and West Belfast Community	0	65,192	—
Royal Group of Hospitals	1,366	121,370	1.13
South and East Belfast Community	27	75,286	0.04
Ulster North Down and Ards Hospitals	413	52,269	0.79
Southern Board Area			
Craigavon Area Hospital	142	42,791	0.33
Craigavon and Banbridge Community	0	28,130	—
Newry and Mourne	159	39,344	0.4
Total—Northern Ireland	2,974	682,413	0.44

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of the those agencies. [39857]

Sir Patrick Mayhew: In January, I had one meeting with the head of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. I met him again, once in February, twice in June and once in October.

I met the chief executive of the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland in April 1995.

Ballywalter Primary School

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans there are to make secure the grounds of Ballywalter primary school. [39927]

Mr. Ancram: The South-Eastern education and library board has no plans to make additional security provision at Ballywalter primary school.

Listed Buildings

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what method of appeal is available to property owners who dispute a historic building preservation order; and if the appeals body is independent of the Department of the Environment. [39920]

Mr. Moss: There is no legislative provision giving a right of appeal against the decision of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland to list a building as being of special architectural or historic interest. However, any person may make representations to the Department that a building should cease to be listed on the grounds that it is not of special architectural or historic interest, and such representations are carefully considered. Where an application for listed building consent to carry out alterations is refused, the applicant may appeal that decision to the Planning Appeals Commission, which is independent of the Department.

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the Historic Buildings Council has produced a register of the buildings currently listed with it for circulation to the public. [39921]

Mr. Moss: The Historic Buildings Council does not have a register of listed buildings. The official lists are prepared and held by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland. A copy of the relevant lists is sent to divisional planning offices and district councils, where they may be inspected by the public. A full list is also available for inspection in the monuments and buildings record at the public office of the Environment Service of the Department at 5/35 Hill street, Belfast.

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many properties have received historic buildings preservation orders since 1974 in *(a)* Belfast; and *(b)* Northern Ireland excluding Belfast; how many are grade A, and how many are grade B; what criteria are used to determine which grade; what criteria are used to reach decisions as to whether to list; and what process is undergone in determining the listing of buildings. [39919]

Mr. Moss: Since 1974 some 1,018 buildings in the Belfast area have been listed of which 35 are category A and 983 are category B. The number of buildings listed since 1974 elsewhere in Northern Ireland is 7,057 of which 157 are category A and 6,900 are category B.

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland is responsible for listing buildings of special architectural or historic interest; the criteria for listing include the building's age, condition, style, aesthetic quality, structural system, any innovatory architectural qualities, and its historic importance.

The listing process includes a physical survey of the building, the application of the listing criteria and consultations with the local district council and the Historic Buildings Council.

Ardmillan Bay (Pollution)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans there are to clear up the environmental pollution at Ardmillan bay in Killinchy, County Down, and if he will make a statement. [39926]

Mr. Moss: The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland has been investigating water quality in Ardmillan Bay, Killinchy and recently wrote to a developer who is responsible for a private sewage treatment plant discharging into the bay. Subsequently, the Department's environment service took a statutory sample of the effluent emanating from this treatment plant and enforcement action will be considered, as appropriate.

The environment service will continue to monitor the situation. The Department's water executive would be prepared to adopt this sewage treatment works and sewers if the developer brings these up to the required standard.

Grant-giving Funds

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38605]

Sir John Wheeler: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for National Heritage on 30 October 1995, *Official Report*, columns *48–49*.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40859]

Sir John Wheeler *[holding answer 1 November 1995]*: It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time salary fell within the band:

	1994–95 *£*	*1995–96* *£*
Northern Ireland office and NI departments	4,669—9,826	4,669—10,279
Agency	4,669—9,826	4,669—10,279
Non-departmental public body	4,669—8,878	4,669—8,878 (currently under review)

The highest full-time salary fell within the band:

	1994–95 *£*	*1995–96* *£*
Northern Ireland Office and NI Departments	95,000–99,999	95,000–99,999
Agency	52,704–62,817	55,000–82,500
Non-departmental public body	95,001–100,000	95,001–100,000

Domestic Electricity Supply

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many households are estimated to be without a mains electricity supply. [41204]

Mr. Ancram: Figures from the 1994–95 continuous household survey suggest that 0.3 per cent. of households in Northern Ireland are not connected to an electricity supply. The 1991 census recorded a total of 530,000 households in Northern Ireland.

School Transport

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to have discussions with the education and library boards concerning open enrolment and related school transport policy. [40263]

Mr. Ancram: I have no plans for discussions with the education and library boards about open enrolment policy. However, my Department is currently engaged in consultations with board officials about the home-to-school transport arrangements.

LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40517]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The information required to answer the question fully is not held centrally. Since 1992, the Department and its agencies have conducted periodic surveys of performance against the Government's target of 30 days for the payment of invoices. Four surveys have been carried out, covering all invoices paid during specific periods. Those surveys show the percentage of invoices paid within 30 days as follows:

1991–92: 82.5 per cent.

1992–93: 83.4 per cent.

1993–94: 89.4 per cent.

1994–95: 93.9 per cent.

The target for this financial year is 95 per cent. A new survey is under way, but the results are not yet available.

Information relating specifically to small businesses and for earlier years is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Lord Chancellor is now responsible for four agencies: the Court Service, Her Majesty's Land Registry, the Public Record Office and the Public Trust Office. Information relating to the Court Service is included above, as it became an agency only after the period covered by the information available; and information relating to the Public Trust Office is included up to the time it acquired agency status in July 1994. In respect of the Land Registry, the Public Record Office, and the Public Trust Office from July 1994, the question concerns operational matters on which the chief executives are best placed to provide answers. I have accordingly asked them to reply direct.

Letter from Julia C. Lomas to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 1 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to you as part of the Lord Chancellor's Department's response to your Parliamentary Question, listed on 26 October 1995, regarding the number of invoices from small businesses which were not paid within 30 days of receipt over the last five years.

The Public Trust Office became an Executive Agency of the Lord Chancellor's Department on 1 July 1994, prior to which the departmental Headquarters maintained these records on our behalf. We have maintained our own records since becoming an Agency and one month sample of invoices are checked each year to establish how many were paid on time. For the monthly sample for 1994 of 129 invoices 109 (ie. 85%) were paid within terms. Whilst this figure excludes HMSO invoices it does not specifically refer to small businesses, to do so would be at disproportionate cost.

Letter from Sarah Tyacke to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 1 November 1995:

I have been asked by the Lord Chancellor's Parliamentary Secretary to reply, in respect of the Public Record Office, to your question about the prompt payment of invoices due to small businesses.

The Public Record Office has not systematically recorded its performance in paying invoices nor which of its suppliers are small businesses, over the last five years. The answer to your question could therefore be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

In eight months of 1994–95, it monitored its performance in paying invoices and found that 98% were paid within 30 days.

Other occasional monitoring exercises over the last five years have produced similar results.

Letter from John Manthorpe to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 1 November 1995:

I have been asked by the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department, to reply to your recent question on the number of instances in which the Land Registry has failed to pay invoices to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last 5 years.

Records of the size of the supplier are not maintained and therefore I am able only to supply details of all late payments to both large and small businesses. These relate to credit periods up to and including 30 days. In the years 1993/94 and 1994/95 sampling indicated that the annual numbers of such payments were as follows:

1993/94: 2019 (8 per cent.)

1994/95: 2954 (10 per cent.)

In the majority of these cases, payment was delayed whilst verification was sought relating to queries on the invoices. Payment was effected once such queries were satisfied.

Details for the previous three years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill

Mr. Coe: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary Lord Chancellor's Department how he proposes to proceed with the Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill. [41753]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill was timetabled to complete its stages in the House of Commons on the basis that it was uncontentious. This has proved not to be so. Contentious points have arisen during the last stages of this parliamentary Session. My right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor has listened to the concerns expressed about the Bill, and he is considering them. The timetable is such, however, that it is now impossible to make further progress this session. My right hon. and noble Friend will continue to work on the Bill with a view to bringing it back before Parliament as soon as possible.

Information Technology Systems (Confidentiality)

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what steps have been taken to secure the confidentiality of information technology systems, and accountability to the judiciary, in the course of the implementation of the Government's private finance initiative in the *(a)* county court system and *(b)* Crown court system. [39909]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The question concerns a specific operational matter on which the chief executive of the Court Service is best placed to provide an answer and I have accordingly asked him to reply direct.

Letter from M. D. Huebner to Mr. Paul Boateng, dated 2 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to your Question about the confidentiality and accountability of information technology systems introduced within the Government's Private Finance Initiative.

Any contractor will have to ensure that information systems serving the county courts and the Crown Court provide confidentiality and support to all who use the systems. They will be operated within the framework provided by the appropriate Rules of Court and other legislation.

Local Office County Court System

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what administrative processes and support functions are included in the statement of service requirements of the local office county court system. [39911]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The question concerns a specific operational matter on which the chief executive of the Court Service is best placed to provide an answer and I have accordingly asked him to reply direct.

Letter from M.D. Huebner to Mr. Paul Boateng, dated 1 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to your Question about what administrative and support functions are included in the LOCCS Statement of Service Requirements.

The Statement of Service Requirement for the Local Office County Court System procurement project requires bidders to submit proposals for:

provision of the CaseMan service;

provision of the County Court central information systems service;

provision of the County Court Information Systems Development Service.

Bidders may, if they choose, offer to provide other information systems services and other related support services to the Court Service and Lord Chancellor's Department, subject to the restrictions contained in the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994.

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list the companies shortlisted for the bidding process for the local office county court system project. [39910]

Mr. Taylor: The question concerns a specific operational matter on which the chief executive of the Court Service is best placed to provide an answer and I have accordingly asked him to reply direct.

Letter from M.D. Huebner to Mr. Paul Boateng, dated 1 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary has asked me to reply to your Question about the companies shortlisted for the LOCCS project.

The following have been shortlisted for the Local County Court System (LOCCS) Procurement Project:

Electronic Data Systems Limited;

SEMA Group plc;

Siemens Business Services Limited;

Unisys Limited.

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department which companies have been shortlisted for the bidding process for the local office county court system; and what are the criteria for the involvement of the private sector in this process. [39913]

Mr. Taylor: The question concerns a specific operational matter on which the chief executive of the Court Service is best placed to provide an answer and I have accordingly asked him to reply direct.

Letter from M. D. Huebner to Mr. Paul Boateng, dated 2 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department has asked me to reply to your Question about the companies shortlisted for the bidding process for the local office county court system and the criteria for private sector involvement in this.

The Requirements of the Local County Court System (LOCCS) Procurement Project were advertised in the Official Journal of the European Community. The following have been shortlisted:

Electronic Data Systems Limited;

SEMA Group plc;

Siemens Business Services Limited;

Unisys Limited.

Since the cost of meeting the requirements will exceed the Department's financial delegation the Government requires the Department to test the availability of private finance under the Private Finance Initiative. The fundamental principles of the Private Finance Initiative are that:

the private sector contractor must assume genuine risk, and;

value for money must be demonstrated for any expenditure by the public sector.

Contracting Out (Court Service)

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department at what stage in the process of the contracting out of services relating to the Court Service it is required under schedule 16 to the Deregulation and Contracting Oct Act 1995 that the senior judiciary be consulted; on what occasions such consultations have taken place; and in respect of which services. [39912]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The question concerns a specific operational matter on which the chief executive of the Court Service is best placed to provide an answer and I have accordingly asked him to reply direct.

Letter from M. D. Huebner to Mr. Paul Boateng, dated 2 November 1995:

The Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department has asked me to reply to your Question about the judicial consultation required under the above Act when contracting out services.

The Lord Chancellor is required to consult the senior judges before making an order under the provisions of Schedule 16 to the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1995. No such consultations have yet taken place.

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department, pursuant to the answer of the Attorney-General of 30 October, column *12*, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and what was the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41219]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The information requested is not readily available. The question will be answered in detail by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

DEFENCE

Executive Agencies

Mr. Dover: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about Defence Agency status for the Army's personnel, pay and pensions administration. [41642]

Mr. Soames: As originally announced to the House by the then Minister of State for Defence Procurement on 2 November 1993, *Official Report*, column *124*, the Army's pay and personnel administration functions are to be considered for defence agency status. A prior options study is therefore being undertaken to determine whether agency status would be appropriate. If agency status is agreed, then the organisations that will be considered for inclusion within the prospective agency are the Army personnel centre, which now includes administration of Army pensions as well as pay and personnel, and which will be fully formed in Glasgow by mid-1997, and a substantial part of the Adjutant General's information centre, Worthy Down, Winchester.

Phosphorous Canisters, Kintyre

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the wounding of Gordon Baillie of Kintyre by a phosphorous canister on 20 October. [40792]

Mr. Soames: We have been investigating the source and origin of the phosphorous devices which have been washed ashore recently. They are very old and decayed and have proved difficult to identify. Defence experts now believe that they probably formed part of the filling for second world war incendiary devices. There is no record of such devices being dumped but investigations are continuing.

Gordon Baillie received burns to his right hand and arm on 20 October after handling one of these devices which had been washed ashore near his home. A Royal Navy explosive ordnance disposal team attended the scene within 20 minutes of the incident having being reported and dealt with the remains of the device. The local authorities in the area have issued extensive material warning the public of the dangers, and the Royal Navy teams and other emergency services involved in the operation to dispose of these items are making every effort to eradicate the risk of such an incident occurring again.

Disbanded Regiments (Funds)

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State foi Defence how regimental funds of disbanded regiments are disbursed; and what regard is paid to outstanding liabilities before funds are so disbursed. [40392]

Mr. Soames: The information requested is set out in chapter 15 of the service funds Army regulations, a copy of which I have placed in the Library of the House.

Outstanding liabilities should be identified and settled before its residual funds may be disbursed.

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38597]

Mr. Soames: I refer to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for National Heritage on 31 October 1995, *Official Report,* column *186*.

Gurkhas

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many members of the Gurkha troops are in the ranks of the Parachute Regiment; [41097]

(2) what percentage of the ranks of the Parachute Regiment are occupied by Gurkha troops. [41098]

Mr. Soames: There are no Gurkha troops currently serving in the Parachute Regiment.

Armed Forces Medical Services

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of medical services for the armed forces. [40428]

Mr. Soames: Changes to the defence medical services, which were announced last year as part of "Front Line First", will be largely complete by April 1996. The resulting organisation will be able to meet the future requirement for efficient and effective medical support for the armed forces.

Mr. Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the number of *(a)* surgeons and *(b)* anaesthetists currently employed by the armed forces; what is the most current assessment of need for the Defence Medical Services for *(a)* and *(b);* and if he will make a statement. [40434]

Mr. Soames: There are currently 117 surgeons and 64 anaesthetists serving in the regular armed forces. The requirement for surgeons and anaesthetists from 1 April 1996 will be 116 and 95, respectively. The shortfall in anaesthetists is being addressed.

Mr. Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Cambridge military hospital and its present contribution to health services for the armed forces. [40432]

Mr. Soames: Closure of the hospital will take place by April 1996 as previously announced. Its health care services in support of the armed forces are being transferred progressively to the Royal hospital, Haslar, the Duchess of Kent military hospital, Catterick, and the Ministry of Defence hospital units, including that at the Frimley Park hospital, which are being established under the reorganisation of the defence medical services.

Bases (US Use)

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the change of control to the US Army intelligence and security command at Menwith Hill station falls within the remit of the terms of the War Office/US air force agreement of 11 December 1951. [40874]

Mr. Soames: It is not our practice to comment on the confidential arrangements between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States of America concerning the use of Menwith Hill station by United States forces. While Her Majesty's Government retain legal possession of the Menwith Hill site and control over the use that is made of its facilities, it is for the United States Department of Defense to decide the personnel assignment arrangements required to meet the operational objectives of the station.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if there is any intention to use American security police in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence police at Menwith Hill station to secure this base. [40875]

Mr. Soames: No.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State [illegible] Defence on what legal basis the National Security Agency of America is operating and controlling the Menwith Hill station base. [40876]

Mr. Soames: Her Majesty's Government has made the site available for the use of forces of the United States of America by arrangements which are appropriate to the comity which exists between the two allied powers for their mutual defence and defence of their allies.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to what extent the National Security Agency of America operates at RAF Mildenhall, RAF Lakenheath, RAF Feltwell and RAF Molesworth. [40877]

Mr. Soames: Her Majesty's Government have made these sites available for the use of forces of the United States of America. It is not our policy to comment in further detail on operational matters.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the commanding officers or heads of establishment at RAF Lakenheath; RAF Mildenhall, and RAF Molesworth. [40879]

Mr. Soames: Her Majesty's Government have made these sites available for the use of United States forces. the names of the United States commanding officers at these bases are as follows:

RAF Lakenheath: Colonel D.F. MacGhee, United States air force

RAF Mildenhall: Colonel J.W. Morehouse, United States air force

RAF Molesworth: Lieutenant Colonel G.B. Evans, United States air force.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the terms of the administrative arrangements between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States of America for the base at Menwith Hill station. [40880]

Mr. Soames: The site at Menwith Hill has been made available to the United States visiting forces and their civilian component in accordance with the agreement regarding the status of forces of parties to the North Atlantic treaty of 1951 and other arrangements which are appropriate to the relationship which exists between the United Kingdom and the United States for the purposes of our common defence.

Civil Trespass

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what powers the Ministry of Defence police have in respect of civil trespass. [40878]

Mr. Soames: Ministry of Defence police have the same powers of arrest as the Home Department police force in respect of trespass. They also have powers under military lands byelaws.

Royal Welch Fusiliers, Bosnia

Mr. Ainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what discussions took place between British commanders, his Department, the United Nations and UNPROFOR before the deployment of troops from the Royal Welch Fusiliers in Gorazde on the task set for the Royal Welch Fusiliers operation there; [41201]

(2) what discussions took place between British commanders, the United Nations and UNPROFOR about changing the mandate of the Royal Welch Fusiliers in Gorazde during the operation; [41200]

(3) what mandate the Royal Welch Fusiliers were operating under when they arrived in Gorazde; and what changes were made, to that mandate during their deployment. [41198]

Mr. Soames: The Royal Welch Fusiliers, deployed to Bosnia as part of the British contribution towards UNPROFOR, were operating under the UN's humanitarian and peacekeeping mandate for the duration of their tour. Discussions took place both prior to and during their deployment on a range of subjects including the unit's tasks. Restrictions were subsequently placed on some operations in order to reduce the risk to the troops concerned.

Mr. Ainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what equipment and armour the troops of the Royal Welch Fusiliers took into Goradze at the beginning of their operation; what additions were made; and for what reasons. [41199]

Mr. Soames: On deployment to Gorazde the Royal Welch Fusiliers were equipped with Saxon armoured personnel carriers, anti-tank weapons, 51mm mortars, general purpose machine guns and standard infantry small arms. This equipment was subsequently supplemented with heavy machine guns and smoke grenades to enhance the level of protection afforded to British troops.

Mr. Ainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what request was made by *(a)* his Department or *(b)* commanders of the Royal Welch Fusiliers for reinforcements or additional armaments during the Royal Welch Fusiliers operation in Goradze; and what was the response. [41197]

Mr. Soames: There were no requests for reinforcements. Additional armaments requested and supplied were heavy machine guns and smoke grenades.

Telephone Monitoring

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if *(a)* the Army and *(b)* the Navy are permitted by his Department to monitor public cellphone networks; and if he will make a statement. [40970]

Mr. Soames: The services are permitted to conduct telephone monitoring where it is designed to ensure that security regulations are being observed by military users. These activities are governed by the Interception of Communications Act 1985.

European Armaments Agency

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement of the conclusions of the meeting of 20 October of the Western European Armaments Group concerning the development of a European Armaments Agency. [40969]

Mr. Arbuthnot: At their meeting of 20 October, the national armaments directors of the Western European Armaments Group noted the considerable progress made towards developing the structure under which a possible European Armaments Agency could be established.

TREASURY

Private Medical Insurance

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what was the total tax relief paid to those in receipt of private medical insurance in each year since the introduction of the scheme; how much has it cost to administer the scheme in each year; and how many people have claimed relief; [37231]

(2) what is the estimated annual cost to the Exchequer of the provision of private medical insurance as a perk to employed persons due to the tax exemption for those earning less than £8,500. [37233]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 19 October 1995]:* Information on the total tax relief and number of people claiming the relief for private medical insurance premiums in each year since the start of the scheme, is given in the table.

Tax relief on private medical insurance contracts for individuals aged 60 or over

Year	*Approximate number of contracts*	*Approximate number of individuals covered*	*Cost of tax relief (£ million)*
1990–91	350,000	500,000	40
1991–92	350,000	500,000	60
1992–93	350,000	500,000	70
1993–94	375,000	550,000	80
1994–95	375,000	550,000	95
1995–96[1]	375,000	550,000	110

[1] Provisional.

Changes in the scheme announced in the Finance Act 1994 included restricting the tax relief to the basic rate. This has meant that the total cost of the relief in 1994–95 and 1995–96 is lower than it would otherwise have been. Administrative costs were estimated to have been about £150,000 a year up to 1994–95 but, again as a result of the Finance Act, costs have now fallen to an estimated £50,000 in 1995–96. Information on the annual Exchequer cost of providing this relief to employees with earned income including benefits, of less than £8,500 a year is not available.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many meetings there have been since 1 September 1993 between the Chancellor or another Minister in the Treasury and representatives of private health insurance companies; and what was the subject matter of each meeting. [37232]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 19 October 1995]:* Treasury Ministers have meetings with representatives of a broad range of commercial organisations from many sectors, including the private health insurance industry. Since 1 September 1993, a number of meetings with representatives from the private health insurance industry have taken place, covering a wide variety of issues.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimates have been made of the cost of extending private medical insurance tax relief to those policies specifically designed to cover long-term care needs. [39382]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* It would be inappropriate for me to comment on tax matters at this stage of the Budget cycle.

Tobacco Duty

Mr. Parry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the recent meeting with the Paymaster General and hon. Members concerning duty on tobacco products. [39287]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* I recently saw the hon. Gentleman and the hon. Members for Wrexham (Dr. Marek), Easington (Mr. Cummings), Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) and Warley, West (Mr. Spellar) and heard their representations concerning duty on tobacco products.

Oil Taxation Office

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are employed with the Inland Revenue's oil taxation office in Scotland *(a)* full time and *(b)* part time. [39663]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* The Inland Revenue oil taxation office is located in London. It employs 41 full-time and two part-time staff, and deals with the corporation tax and petroleum revenue tax affairs of UK oil and gas producers and associated concerns. A number of Inland Revenue offices in Scotland are responsible for other oil-related matters. These include PAYE matters, the liabilities of divers, and the income tax and corporation tax liabilities of oil industry support concerns based in Scotland. The total number of Inland Revenue employees in Scottish tax and collection offices is approximately 5,700. No information is centrally available on the number of staff in Scotland whose work is related to the oil industry, and obtaining this information would involve disproportionate cost.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Chancellor Exchequer how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40504]

Mr. Angela Knight *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* The total number of petitions for bankruptcy in 1995 is two. No petitions for bankruptcy were begun in any of the previous five years.

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40503]

Mr. Angela Knight *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* The Treasury aims to pay all legitimate invoices within 30 days, irrespective of the size of the business concerned. Records of the promptness of payment for the past five years are not maintained, but over the last three years the following percentage of invoices were not paid within 30 days.

1993–94: 14 per cent.
1993–94: 18 per cent.
1995–96: 14 per cent.

Most of these invoices were delayed due to problems associated with the particular suppliers, such as an error in the invoice or failure to deliver the goods or service.

Immoral Earnings

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted for failure to pay income tax and national insurance while living off immoral earnings in each of the last five years. [40579]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* This information is not available.

Retail Prices Index

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the impact on the retail prices index of *(a)* raising insurance premium tax to 5 per cent., *(b)* giving a £50 rebate to each electricity customer and *(c)* raising fuel and tobacco duties by (i) 5 per cent. (ii) 3 per cent. in real terms. [40768]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The estimated RPI effects are:

Per cent.

	RPI	*RPI Ex MIPs*
Raising insurance premium tax:		
to 5 per cent.	0.03	0.03
£50 rebate to each electricity customer[1]		
Raising fuel duties:		
by 5 per cent. real (8.9 per cent. nominal)	0.22	0.23
by 3 per cent. real (6.9 per cent. nominal)	0.17	0.18
Raising tobacco duties:		
by 5 per cent. real (8.9 per cent. nominal)	0.24	0.25
by 3 per cent. real (6.9 per cent. nominal)	0.18	0.19

[1] The size and timing of any effect of a rebate to electricity customers depends on how the rebate is effected. Assuming the rebate qualified as a price reduction for RPI purposes and that the full rebate was made to all households in the same quarter, then the effect of a £50 rebate to all domestic electricity consumers in the United Kingdom would be to reduce the all items RPI by between 1 and 1½ per cent. by the end of the quarter. A one-off rebate would have a temporary effect only; if there were no other changes the index would return to its previous level by the end of the following quarter.

Housing Investment Trusts

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) when he proposes to make an announcement on the detail of the tax provisions for housing investment trusts; [40765]

(2) if he will estimate the revenue cost in a full year of allowing financial institutions to invest in privately rented property through the housing investment trusts proposed in the paper, "Our Future Homes", assuming that the trusts pay no capital gains tax for gains within the trust and pay corporation tax at the rate of 25 per cent. [40766]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* It would not be appropriate for me to comment on tax matters at this stage of the Budget cycle.

Tax Simplification

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made by the Inland Revenue on the report on tax simplification in accordance with clause 160 of the Finance Act 1995; and what is the estimated date of publication of this report. [40733]

Mr. Jack: The Inland Revenue is preparing its report on tax simplification and this will be presented to Parliament and published before the Christmas recess.

Employment Statistics

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were employed by businesses employing *(a)* 0–9 employees, *(b)* 10–99 employees and *(c)* 100–499 employees in each year since 1979; and if he will break these figures down by (i) region, (ii) ethnicity and (iii) gender. [40965]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Information on the number of people employed in workplaces with one to 10, 11 to 49 and 50 or more employees is available from the labour force survey for Great Britain, annually between 1984 and 1991 and quarterly from spring 1992 onwards. It can be obtained via the Quantime LFS service available in the Library.

Tax Bands

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the cost in a full year of introducing a new 30 per cent. tax band on £3,000 of income above the basic rate band; and what would be the yield from introducing a 60 per cent. upper rate at a 40 per cent. rate limit of *(a)* £50,000, *(b)* £70,000 and *(c)* £100,000. [39105]

Mr. Jack: The full-year cost of introducing the 30 per cent. band at 1996–97 levels would be about £590 million compared with an indexed tax regime.

The table gives the yield from introducing a new top rate of tax of 60 per cent. for taxable income above £50,000, £70,000 and £100,000. These estimates do not allow for any behavioural changes that might result from the introduction of the new tax rate.

Lower limit of taxable income for 60 per cent. rate £	*Full year revenue yield at 1996–97 levels*[1] *(£ billion)*
50,000	4.3
70,000	3.1
100,000	2.2

[1] The figures include consequential effects on the yield of capital gains tax.

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are liable for income tax at the higher level; how many people would be taken out of higher rate tax if the basic rate limit was raised by *(a)* £500, *(b)* £1,000, *(c)* £1,500, *(d)* £2,000, *(e)* £2,500, *(f)* £3,000, *(g)* £3,500, *(h)* £4,500 *(i)* £5,000; and how much of the revenue cost of such a measure would be in 1996–97 and 1997–98 after indexation. [39097]

Mr. Jack: It is estimated that there will be 2.2 million higher rate taxpayers in 1995–96. Providing all of the details sought would involve disproportionate cost. The table gives available estimates for 1996–97 showing the variation in the revenue costs and the numbers of people affected over the range of specified increases in the basic rate limit.

Increasing the basic rate limit by[1] *£*	*Full year revenue cost at 1996–97 levels*[2] *£ million*	*Number of people taken out of higher rate thousands*
500	170	100
2,500	770	450
5,000	1,400	760

[1] Compared to an indexed 1995–96 regime.

[2] The estimates include consequential effects on capital gains tax. They do not take into account any behavioural changes which might result from the introduction of the new regime.

Profit-related Pay

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers are in receipt of profit-related pay; and how many of them are higher rate taxpayers. [39109]

Mr. Jack: There are around 2.5 million participating employees in about 10,000 live registered profit-related pay schemes. Reliable information on the distribution of earnings and the numbers of participants at each marginal tax rate is not available.

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the cost in a full year of raising the threshold for inheritance tax by *(a)* £10,000, *(b)* £20,000, *(c)* £30,000, *(d)* £40,000, *(e)* £60,000, *(f)* £80,000 and *(g)* £100,000, specifying in each case the number of people who would be taken out of tax by the measure. [39096]

Mr. Jack: The estimated full-year costs of increasing the indexed threshold for inheritance tax by the specified amounts, and the associated reductions in taxpaying estates, are given in the table:

Raise IHT by threshold	*1996–97 full year cost £ million*	*Number of estates taken out of tax*
£10,000	80	2,500
£20,000	150	4,000
£30,000	220	6,000
£40,000	280	7,500
£60,000	390	9,000
£80,000	480	11,000
£100,000	560	12,000

Tax Allowances and Reliefs

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will update his answer to the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) of 11 February 1992, *Official Report*, column *430*, on income tax liability as percentage of gross income. [39106]

Mr. Jack: Available estimates for 1995–96 based on a projection of the 1993–94 survey of personal incomes are as follows:

Income tax liability as a percentage of gross income[1]	*Estimated number of taxpayers (thousands)* *Gross income over £100,000*	*Higher rate taxpayers*
Less than 35 per cent.	60	2,190
Less than 30 per cent.	10	1,970
Less than 25 per cent.	—	1,360
Less than 20 per cent.	—	180
Less than 15 per cent.	—	—
Less than 10 per cent.	—	—
Less than 5 per cent.	—	—

[1]Total income for tax purposes.

Millionaires

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the number of millionaires in the United Kingdom. [39100]

Mr. Jack: It is not possible to assess precisely the number of living millionaires in the United Kingdom at any one time. The only available estimates are derived from inheritance tax data on a year-of-death basis. Relevant information for 1991–92 is given at the end of table 13.1 on page 128 of Inland Revenue statistics 1995.

Gardening Leave

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of the staff of the Treasury were on gardening leave on 1 October and at each previous quarter day from 1 October 1992; and what is *(a)* the maximum permissible gardening leave that the Treasury allows and *(b)* the average actually taken. [39333]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Details of the number of Treasury staff on gardening leave—those not working, but excluding those on statutory paid leave, maternity leave or long-term sick leave—by quarter from 1 July 1993 to 1 October 1995 is given in the table. The information for 1 October 1992, 1 January and 1 April 1993 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

HM Treasury staff on "gardening leave" by quarter

	Headcount *1993*	*1994*	*1995*
1 January	—	9	8
1 April	—	13	21
1 July	6	10	19
1 October	6	9	8

The marked increase on 1 April 1995 was a result of the Treasury further expenditure review. Following the Treasury's voluntary redundancy programme, the numbers have returned to the usual levels of less than 1 per cent.

The Treasury does not set limits for the amount of time that staff are on gardening leave but the aim is to keep the amount to a minimum. To that end, we have set in place procedures to allocate project work to staff who are temporarily between postings.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list contracts *(a)* signed under the private finance initiative over the last six months and (*b*) which he expects to be signed under the private finance initiative over the next three months, and if he will make a statement. [39344]

Mr. Jack: The two largest individual contracts that have been signed in that period are for the new national insurance recording system and the Midland Metro light rail project. In addition, the contract to supply a new train service on the Northern line was signed some six and a half months ago. In the next three months, contracts are expected to be signed for, among others, the first tranche of design, build, finance, operate roads, two privately financed prisons and two hospital projects.

In addition to this, numerous small PFI deals have been signed at local level primarily in health sectors and information technology.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39865]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Four executive agencies—the Royal Mint, the Valuation Office, Paymaster and the Central Statistical Office—are responsible to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. My right hon. and learned Friend is in contact with the heads of these agencies as appropriate. To date this year, he has met personally the head of the Central Statistical Office.

Retired People (Income Tax)

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the number of persons over retirement age who paid income tax in the latest financial year for which figures are available; and how many were liable to pay more than £500 in income tax. [40706]

Mr. Jack: It is estimated that in 1995–96 there will be around 10 million people aged 65 or over, about 3 million of whom will pay income tax. Personal allowances available to people aged 65 or over ensure that only 1.8 million will be liable to pay more than £500 in income tax.

Unemployment (Sheffield)

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer by what percentage unemployment has changed in each of the Sheffield parliamentary constituencies since July 1987. [40979]

Mrs. Angela Knight: The information requested is given in the table:

Unadjusted claimant unemployment

Parliamentary constituency	*Percentage change*[1] *July 1987–September 1995*
Sheffield Central	–33.2
Sheffield Attercliffe	–35.2
Sheffield Brightside	–32.9
Sheffield Hallam	–31.8
Sheffield Heeley	–34.8
Sheffield Hillsborough	–30.9
Total Sheffield constituencies	–33.2

[1] The figures are based on unadjusted data and are therefore subject to seasonal influences as well as changes in the coverage of the count.

SCOTLAND

Ministerial Visits

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if it is the practice of his Department to give prior notice to right hon. and hon. Members when he or a Minister from his Department attends an official engagement or organises an official visit to their constituencies and if he will make a statement. [39156]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Arrangements are in place within my Department to give right hon. and hon. Members notice when I or any other Minister from my Department attends an official engagement or organises an official visit to their constituency.

Prisoners (Immigration Status)

Mr. Chisholm: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people are in Scottish prisons for reasons related to immigration status. [38830]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The subject of the question relates to matters undertaken by the Scottish Prison Service. I have asked its chief executive, Mr. E. W. Frizzell, to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from E. W. Frizzell to Mr. Malcolm Chisholm, dated 2 November 1995:

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton has asked me to reply to your Question about the number of people held in prison for reasons related to immigration status.

Information on the number of prisoners held in relation to immigration status is collected on a monthly basis. The average number in August 1995 was 27.

New Departmental Accommodation

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total cost of land procurement, planning designing, constructing and fitting out the new Scottish Office building; how many additional jobs have been created, both directly and indirectly; what is his estimate of the additional accommodation costs or savings which will be achieved in each of the next 10 financial years; and if he will make a statement. [39165]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The building at Victoria quay was purchased by Property Holdings for incorporation into the government estate at a total cost of £46.925 million excluding VAT, which includes the site, construction and professional fees. Fitting-out costs of approximately £14.5 million for occupational services works are being met by the Scottish Office.

It is difficult to estimate the effect of the development on jobs. At the peak of construction activity, there was a work force of 600 on site and during fit-out, an average of 140. Fifteen hundred staff and contractors are working in the building and they and visitors to it will provide custom for local businesses.

My Department estimates that running cost savings of about £3 million a year will be achieved from lower opportunity cost rentals than were payable on the buildings given up, economies of scale, the energy efficient design of the building and its flexibility to respond to changing working patterns. There will also be considerable gains to the operational efficiency of the Department due to the co-location of a large number of staff on a single site.

Temazepam

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his latest estimate of the number of deaths in each of the past five years which were related to the abuse of the drug Temazepam; what estimate he has made of the percentage of those which involved the gel formulation; and if he will make a statement. [39195]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The number of deaths certified as being due to drug misuse for the years 1990 to 1994 is as follows:

1990: 136
1991: 125
1992: 153
1993: 209
1994: 247

With regard to the number of deaths which were related to the abuse of the drug Temazepam, figures where Temazepam was the sole cause of death are not available. However, for the year 1994 the number of deaths where Temazepam was found was 52. Figures for previous years and the percentage of those which involved the gel formulation are not available.

All figures are contained in the report "Collection of Information on Drug Related Deaths by the General Register Office for Scotland", a copy of which is in the Library.

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his latest estimate of the number of people who have had one or more limbs amputated as a result of injecting the gel formulation of the drug Temazepam during each of the past five years. [39183]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Because of the covert nature of the misuse, information on the precise extent of physical injury or damage resulting when Temazepam soft gelatin gel-filled capsules are injected is not held centrally.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39520]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: As the information requested is lengthy, I shall arrange for copies of the lists to be placed in the House Library.

Parliamentary Constituencies

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now publish full constituency data for the new parliamentary constituencies in Scotland. [40207]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not held centrally. The Parliamentary Constituencies (Scotland) Order 1995 gave effect to the proposals of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Scotland, copies of whose report have been placed in the House of Commons Library. The new constituencies do not come into effect, however, until the next general election. Until then, electoral registration officers have a statutory duty to publish registers according to the present constituencies, but they also make preparations to enable the registers to be adapted for use at the next general election.

Wheelchairs

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of new electrically powered wheelchairs supplied by the national health service in Scotland over the past five years. [40260]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Information on the overall number of powered chairs issued in the last five years is not held centrally. Details of the number of indoor/outdoor powered chairs and indoor powered chairs purchased since the provision of special funding in 1992 are set out.

	1992–93	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*
Indoor/Outdoor	313	267	286	[1]93
Indoor	497	409	[1]87	

[1] For six months 1 April 1995 to 30 September 1995.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will review the current criteria for eligibility for electrically powered wheelchairs to be provided by the national health service; [40259]

(2) if he will relax the criteria to enable more national health service patients to qualify for electrically powered wheelchairs in Scotland in future. [40262]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The criteria to determine eligibility for the provision of electrically powered wheelchairs were established in September 1992 in consultation with the clinicians in the artificial limb and appliance centres. Following a review after practical experience of the arrangements, it was decided that these criteria had been too tightly drawn, and they were revised to embrace a wider range of patients. The revised criteria were agreed by all centres in 1994. In view of this recent revision, there are no plans for a further review at present.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the cost of supplying electrically powered wheelchairs by the national health service in Scotland over the past five years; and what plans he has to provide finance for the next three-year period. [40261]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The provision of patient-controlled electrically powered indoor/outdoor wheelchairs was announced in February 1992. Initial funding of £2.5 million was earmarked over the following three years to provide around 1,300 electrically powered wheelchairs for use both indoors and outdoors by severely disabled people. The level of funding to be provided in future years is still to be determined.

Category A Prisoners

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many category A prisoners are currently in the prison system in Scotland; and how many are in each sub-category. [38841]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* The subject of the question relates to matters undertaken by the Scottish Prison Service. I have asked its chief executive, Mr. E. W. Frizzell, to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from E. W. Frizzell to Mr. Seamus Mallon, dated 2 November 1995:

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton has asked me to reply to your Question about the number of category A prisoners held in prison; and the numbers in each sub-category.

As at 20 October 1995 there were 20 category A prisoners held in Scotland. Category A is not divided into sub-categories in Scotland.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40748]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The cost to the Scottish Office of ministerial transport in each of the last five years is as follows:

1991–92: £234,803

1992–93: £224,163

1993–94: £256,270

1994–95: £292,143

1995–96: £150,723 (6 months)

No payments have been made to Ministers for the use of their own vehicles in the past five years.

Homelessness

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish details of which local authorities have benefited from the additional £29 million supplementary capital allocation issued in six bidding rounds between 1991 and 1994 to enable authorities to tackle homelessness; and if he will set out the individual initiatives funded through the allocations, indicating for each individual project *(a)* the local authority through which the allocation is channelled, *(b)* the target client group, *(c)* the number of units provided, *(d)* the physical type of accommodation, *(e)* whether the project provides temporary or permanent accommodation, *(f)* the capital cost of each project, *(g)* whether the project was funded through the housing revenue account or the non-housing revenue account and *(h)* which of the six bidding rounds the project is funded through. [40641]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: Between 1991 and 1993, a total of £22.6 million additional capital allocations were made available to local authorities in response to specific bids made by them. In 1993–94 and 1994–95, further supplementary capital allocations of £4.35 million and £2.62 million respectively were provided to allow authorities to accelerate or enhance the investment plans for the homeless contained in their housing programmes. Information on the distribution of these resources is set out in the table which follows. Detailed information on individual projects in the form requested is not held centrally.

	Additional capital allocations £ million		
Local Authority	*HRA*	*non-HRA*	*Financial year*
Borders			
Berwickshire	0.040	—	1991–92
	0.050	—	1992–93
Ettrick and Lauderdale	0.221	—	1992–93
Roxburgh	0.260	—	1992–93
Tweeddale	0.204	—	1991–92
	0.120	—	1992–93
Central			
Clackmannan	0.350	—	1992–93
	0.100	—	1993–94
Falkirk	0.654	—	1991–92
	0.320	—	1992–93
	—	0.100	1992–93
	0.150	—	1993–94
Stirling	0.260	—	1991–92
	0.200	—	1992–93
	0.110	—	1993–94
Dumfries and Galloway			
Annandale and Eskdale	—	0.228	1992–93
	0.110	—	1993–94
Nithsdale	—	0.100	1991–92
	—	0.400	1992–93
	—	0.130	1993–94
Stewartry	0.085	—	1991–92
	0.125	—	1992–93
	—	0.100	1994–95
Wigtown	—	0.184	1992–93
	—	0.150	1994–95
Fife			
Dunfermline	0.065	—	1991–92
	0.138	—	1992–93
Kirkcaldy	0.343	—	1991–92
	0.227	—	1992–93
	0.174	—	1993–94
North East Fife	0.165	—	1992–93
	0.080	—	1993–94
Grampian			
Aberdeen	0.465	—	1991–92
	—	0.075	1991–92
	0.350	—	1992–93
	0.100	—	1993–94
	0.350	—	1994–95
Banff and Buchan	0.200	—	1991–92
	0.030	—	1994–95
Gordon	—	0.150	1991–92
	0.240	—	1992–93
	0.100	-	1993–94
	0.050	—	1994–95

Local Authority	*Additional capital allocations £ million HRA*	*non-HRA*	*Financial year*
Kincardine and Deeside	0.156	—	1992–93
Moray	0.125	—	1991–92
	0.090	—	1992–93
Highland			
Badenoch and Strathspey	0.300	—	1992–93
	0.150	—	1993–94
	0.020	—	1994–95
Caithness	0.060	—	1992–93
Inverness	0.160	—	1991–92
	0.580	—	1992–93
	0.250	—	1993–94
Lochaber	0.045	—	1991–92
	0.227	—	1992–93
	0.200	—	1993–94
Nairn	0.220	—	1992–93
	0.100	—	1993–94
Ross and Cromarty	0.400	—	1992–93
	0.155	—	1993–94
Syke and Lochalsh	0.150	—	1992–93
Lothian			
East Lothian	0.275	—	1991–92
	0.346	—	1992–93
	0.150	—	1993–94
	0.120	—	1994–95
Edinburgh	0.930	—	1991–92
	0.681	—	1992–93
	—	0.200	1993–94
	—	0.200	1994–95
Midlothian	0.450	—	1992–93
	0.044	—	1993–94
West Lothian	0.208	—	1992–93
	0.100	—	1993–94
Strathclyde			
Argyll and Bute	0.250	—	1991–92
	0.200	—	1992–93
	—	0.220	1993–94
Bearsden and Milngavie	0.124	—	1992–93
Clydesdale	0.040	—	1991–92
	0.270	—	1992–93
	0.110	—	1993–94
	—	0.050	1993–94
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	0.032	—	1991–92
	0.292	—	1992–93
	—	0.130	1993–94
	—	0.132	1994–95
Cumnock and Doon Valley	0.285	—	1992–93
	0.150	—	1993–94
	0.120	—	1994–95
Cunninghame	0.144	—	1991–92
	0.405	—	1992–93
	0.156	—	1993–94
Dumbarton	0.413	—	1991–92
	0.247	—	1992–93
	0.080	—	1993–94
East Kilbride	0.130	—	1992–93
Eastwood	0.190	—	1992–93
	0.080	—	1994–95
Glasgow	0.900	—	1991–92
	0.775	—	1992–93
	0.250	—	1993–94
	0.600	—	1994–95
Hamilton	0.356	—	1992–93
	0.200	—	1994–95
Inverclyde	0.125	—	1991–92
	0.100	—	1992–93
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	0.210	—	1991–92
	0.060	—	1992–93
	0.150	—	1993–94

Local Authority	*Additional capital allocations £ million HRA*	*non-HRA*	*Financial year*
Kyle and Carrick	0.625	—	1992–93
	—	0.150	1994–95
Monklands	0.350	—	1992–93
	0.100	—	1993–94
	0.250	—	1994–95
Motherwell	0.200	—	1991–92
	0.367	—	1992–93
Renfrew	0.318	—	1991–92
	0.600	—	1992–93
	—	0.016	1992–93
Strathkelvin	0.160	—	1991–92
	0.050	—	1992–93
Tayside			
Angus	0.290	—	1992–93
Dundee	0.515	—	1991–92
	0.681	—	1992–93
	0.221	—	1993–94
Perth and Kinross	0.456	—	1992–93
	0.200	—	1993–94
Islands Areas			
Orkney	—	0.135	1992–93
	0.100	—	1993–94
	0.200	—	1994–95
Shetland	0.130	—	1992–93
Western Isles	0.120	—	1991–92
	0.220	—	1992–93
Edinburgh	0.930	—	1991–92
	0.681	—	1992–93
	—	0.200	1993–94
	—	0.200	1994–95
Midlothian	0.450	—	1992–93
	0.044	—	1993–94
West Lothian	0.208	—	1992–93
	0.100	—	1993–94
Strathclyde			
Argyll and Bute	0.250	—	1991–92
	0.200	—	1992–93
	—	0.220	1993–94
Bearsden and Milngavie	0.124	—	1992–93
Clydesdale	0.040	—	1991–92
	0.270	—	1992–93
	0.110	—	1993–94
	—	0.050	1993–94
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	0.032	—	1991–92
	0.292	—	1992–93
	—	0.130	1993–94
	—	0.132	1994–95
Cumnock and Doon Valley	0.285	—	1992–93
	0.150	—	1993–94
	0.120	—	1994–95
Cunninghame	0.144	—	1991–92
	0.405	—	1992–93
	0.156	—	1993–94
Dumbarton	0.413	—	1991–92
	0.247	—	1992–93
	0.080	—	1993–94
East Kilbride	0.130	—	1992–93
Eastwood	0.190	—	1992–93
	0.080	—	1994–95
Glasgow	0.900	—	1991–92
	0.775	—	1992–93
	0.250	—	1993–94
	0.600	—	1994–95
Hamilton	0.356	—	1992–93
	0.200	—	1994–95
Inverclyde	0.125	—	1991–92
	0.100	—	1992–93

Local Authority	Additional capital allocations £ million HRA	non-HRA	Financial year
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	0.210	—	1991–92
	0.060	—	1992–93
	0.150	—	1993–94
Kyle and Carrick	0.625	—	1992–93
	—	0.150	1994–95
Monklands	0.350	—	1992–93
	0.100	—	1993–94
	0.250	—	1994–95
Motherwell	0.200	—	1991–92
	0.367	—	1992–93
Renfrew	0.318	—	1991–92
	0.600	—	1992–93
	—	0.016	1992–93
Strathkelvin	0.160	—	1991–92
	0.050	—	1992–93
Tayside			
Angus	0.290	—	1992–93
Dundee	0.515	—	1991–92
	0.681	—	1992–93
	0.221	—	1993–94
Perth and Kinross	0.456	—	1992–93
	0.200	—	1993–94
Islands Areas			
Orkney	—	0.135	1992–93
	0.100	—	1993–94
	0.200	—	1994–95
Shetland	0.130	—	1992–93
Western Isles	0.120	—	1991–92
	0.220	—	1992–93

1. HRA: Housing revenue account expenditure on authority's own stock.

2. Non-HRA: non-housing revenue account expenditure on other housing provision.

Market Testing

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the health services that have been market tested by, or notified to, his Department and won by the private sector indicating *(a)* the location and *(b)* the organisation winning the tender. [40619]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The list of contracts won by the private sector following market testing in the NHS in Scotland is set out in the table:

Health board area	*Service type*	*Contractor (Number of contracts)*
Argyll and Clyde	Hotel Services	Mediguard (1)
	Painting	John Miller and Son (4)
		Capital Decorator (2)
		Trident Main Services (1)
	Grounds Maintenance	Russell Landscape (1)
Ayrshire and Arran	Hotel Services	Mediguard (1)
	Painting	Baxter and Gillespie (4)
		Moss Painting (2)
	Financial	Bank of Scotland (1)
	Transport	Cochrane Leasing (1)
		Turner Hire Drive (1)
	Vehicle Maintenance	Maconochies of Kilmarnock (1)
	Supplies	Meadowhead Stores (1)
Dumfries and Galloway	Estates Maintenance	Crossan Electrical (1)
Fife	Catering	Sodexho (1)
	General Ancillary	Initial Healthcare (1)
		Mediguard (2)
Grampian	Domestic	Mediguard (4)
	Car Parking	Securiguard Ltd. (1)
	Internal Audit	Coopers and Lybrand (1)
	Occupational Health	RGIT Health Ltd. (1)
	Care Management	CHS (1)
Greater Glasgow	Domestic	Hospital Hygiene (2)
		Sunlight (1)
		Initial Healthcare (4)
		Olscot Ltd. (3)
	Catering	Sodexho (1)
	Portering	Sunlight (4)
		Mediguard (1)
		Hospital Hygiene (2)
		Olscot Ltd. (1)
	Painting	HAT Painting Ltd. (4)
		McLean and Speirs Ltd. (3)
		Fitzroy Building (1)
	Grounds Maintenance	P and D Services (1)
		CBC Lands Division (4)
		OCS Cleanmaster Ltd. (1)
	Financial	Bank of Scotland (1)
Highland	Laundry	John O'Groat Co. Ltd. (2)
Lanarkshire	Portering	Sunlight (1)
		Pall Mall Services (1)
		Hospital Hygiene (1)
	Multi-Services	Sunlight (1)
		Initial Healthcare (2)
	Catering	Mediguard (1)
	Estates Maintenance	Serco Services Ltd. (1)
	Painting	HPC Coating (2)
		Bell Decorating (1)
Lothian	Multi-Service	Sodexho (1)
	Domestic	Initial Healthcare (1)
	Catering	Sodexho (1)
		Mediguard (1)
	Hotel Services	Initial Healthcare (1)
	Painting	HAT Painting Ltd (1)
	Estates Maintenance	Drake and Scull (1)
	Engineering	Drake and Scull (1)
Shetland	Hotel Services	Gardner Merchant (1)
Tayside	General Ancillary	Talorplan (1)
	Car Parking	Securicor Guard Service (1)
	Laundry	Gordons (1)
	Wheelchair Technical Support	Archibald Young (1)

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years.

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Since the enactment of the Bankruptcy (Scotland) Act 1985, there has only been one case of sequestration, in 1992, in which the Secretary of State for Scotland was the petitioning creditor.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many individuals in *(a)* his Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies receive annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeding (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in each year since 1985–86. [40872]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies and NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pensions scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules which have been deposited in the Library of the House.

No individual in my Department or its agencies has received over £100,000 annual remuneration in the specified period. One employee in a non-departmental public body will receive marginally in excess of £100,000 in the financial year 1995–96.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the *(a)* lowest *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40873]

Lord James Douglas Hamilton *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. On this basis, the information requested is as follows:

	Year	*Highest full-time salary £*	*Lowest full-time salary £*
Department	1994–95	95,000–99,999	4,000–4,999
	1995–96	95,000–99,999	4,000–4,999
Agencies	1994–95	55,000–59,999	4,000–4,999
	1995–96	75,000–79,999	4,000–4,999
NDPBs	1994–95	95,000–99,999	—
	1995–96	100,000–104,999	—

The lowest salaries in the table are given to 16-year-olds in the most junior grades. Information on the lowest-paid salary paid in an NDPB could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Nurse Call Bell Systems

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what guidelines cover the operation of nurse call bell systems in NHS hospitals; and if he will make a statement. [39804]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is for individual trusts in Scotland, in the light of local circumstances, to determine their operational arrangements for nurse call systems and to ensure that they are brought to the attention of their staff during training and ward orientation. Technical guidance on call systems is contained in health technical memoranda 2015 "Bed Head Services", a copy of which will be placed in the Library.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Gallie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is in a position to make a statement for a second round of bidding under the Scottish renewables obligation. [41845]

Mr. Kynoch: Following a consultation exercise earlier this year about the first order, the proposed second order would oblige ScottishPower and Hydro-Electric to secure more—about 70 to 80 MW—of their output from renewable sources. The consultation exercise showed broad support for the Government's approach to developing renewable energy.

The first order led to 30 quality renewables projects with a total capacity of 76 MW securing contracts with ScottishPower and Hydro-Electric. I am now minded to make a second order under the Scottish renewables obligation in 1996. I hope that this proposed second order will again attract technically sound and innovative projects which will be even more competitive on price. If so, the second order is likely to be about the same size as the first. I see this as an opportunity for the renewables industry to show that it is responding to the challenges which it faces.

My Department will be issuing further guidance shortly for prospective applicants. The two Scottish public electricity supply companies are currently assembling information and guidelines for parties interested in submitting schemes into SRO2. Applicants are invited to make contact now with the relevant Scottish company ie the one in whose area the development is proposed, to discuss any aspect of the process.

Electricity Supplies

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many households in Scotland are estimated to be without a mains electricity supply. [41203]

Mr. Kynoch: My right hon. Friend does not make such estimates.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Electromagnetic Radiation (Power Lines)

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what research he has been informed of on the relationship between electromagnetic radiation from power lines and cancer; and if he will make a statement. [39809]

Mr. Eggar: The most recent advice received about the alleged link between electromagnetic fields from power lines and cancer is a statement issued in March 1994 by the National Radiological Protection Board, based on a set of Scandinavian studies. These studies did not establish that exposure to EMF was a cause of cancer, although they provided some evidence to suggest that the possibility exists in the case of childhood leukaemia. A five-year study of the incidence of childhood cancers, taking into account a range of possible causes, is being conducted by the UK Co-ordinating Committee on Cancer Research, the results of which are expected in 1997.

Trade Union Right Commissioner

Mr. Byers: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what overseas visits were carried out by the Commissioner for Rights of Trade Union Members and for Protection Against Unlawful Industrial Action during 1994–95; and what was the cost, duration and purpose of each visit. [40933]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: None.

Renewable Energy

Dr. Michael Clark: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is yet able to make a statement on the outline arrangements for the fourth round of bidding for electricity from renewable sources of energy, known as NFFO-4. [41647]

Mr. Page: Following consultation earlier this year with over 50 associations and individual bodies with an interest in non-fossil fuel obligation orders in respect of renewable energy, I can now announce my outline policy proposals.

Government policy is to work towards 1,500 MW DNC—declared net capacity—of new renewables-based generation capacity in the UK by 2000—and I shall continue with this broad aim. From current assessments, my Department expects that a total of 900 MW will commission and generate electricity under the first three renewables NFFO orders in England and Wales, from current Scottish and Northern Ireland—Sottish renewable order and Northern Ireland NFFO—orders, from prospective future SRO and NI-NFFO orders, and from capacity built outside NFFO/SRO arrangements. On this basis, a further 600 MW would be required to deliver the 1,500 MW policy and it is likely that this will be met by future orders for England and Wales. However, the working assumption is that only about two-thirds of projects, and capacity contracted under future NFFO arrangements will proceed to commissioning, with the implication that the level of obligations set in future orders beyond NFFO-3 will need to be about 50 per cent. higher than the capacity likely to be commissioned. I therefore expect that new NFFO orders for England and Wales of about 900 MW will be required to deliver the 600 MW of operational capacity. To the extent that it appears in later years that more or less capacity will commission under earlier NFFO orders or outside NFFO arrangements, I shall take that into account in setting the policy for future NFFO arrangements.

I have considered the representations made to my Department on past and future arrangements, and have taken into account the practical considerations in making a series of further orders. I propose to make a fourth renewables order—NFFO-4—in early 1997 in respect of the 12 regional electricity companies in England and Wales in their capacity as public electricity suppliers, and one further order in 1998. I currently expect each of these orders to be for approximately 400 MW to 500 MW of new capacity, but will review these levels in the light of further estimates of capacity likely to come forward under the third order—NFFO-3—the quality and cost of the proposal received, and the expected degree of convergence towards the market price represented by those proposals, relative to average and marginal prices paid under NFFO-3. This new round of bidding for electricity from renewables, launched today, is expected to stimulate further convergence between electricity prices under NFFO and the market price for electricity—bringing electricity from renewables closer to the point where they can compete in the open market against conventional generation. I expect proposals to be even more competitive than under NFFO-3. I will be taking into account estimates of the percentage of projects in each technology band likely to go forward to commissioning in NFFO-4, but on the basis of past experience would expect the fourth order to lead to construction and operation of a total of 300 MW to 400 MW of new capacity from all technology bands.

In setting out the prospective technology bands, I have taken into account the extent to which available resources have or would be taken up by existing NFFO contracts, the extent of demonstration provided by those contracts, and the Department's priorities attached to demonstrating the use of other renewable energy fuels and technologies.

For the NFFO-4 order, I am considering separate bands for new generating stations, based on

> Wind power: split into two bands, ie large windframs and small-clusters/single-machines, but with the split point at less than the 1.6 MW DNC used for NFFO-3;
>
> Hydro: from stations with a total capacity of less than 5 MW DNC;
>
> Landfill gas: from licensed sites where tipping was being carried our prior to 22 July 1993;
>
> Energy crops and/or forestry waste: by gasification-by-partial-combustion or pyrolysis;
>
> Municipal and industrial waste by fluidised-bed combustion: including the use of non-gaseous sewage-matter (up to 10 per cent. on a dry-weight basis);
>
> Municipal and industrial waste with combined-heat-and-power technology: including the use of non-gaseous sewage-matter (up to 10 per cent. on a dry-weight basis)
>
> Agricultural and food-processing waste by anaerobic digestion: food-processing waste limited to a maximum of 20 per cent. on a dry-weight basis.

During the parliamentary passage of the Environment Bill, my right hon. Friend the then Minister for the Environment and Countryside stressed that the Government attached great importance to CHP schemes to help carry forward their energy efficiency policies. He explained that that was why the Government were seeking a power to include in a future NFFO/renewables order a technology band defined by reference to heat as well as electricity. The Environment Act, with the new power, became law before the summer recess. The new power enables me to consider a band based on municipal and industrial waste with combined heat and power. This gives generators with suitable schemes, with prospects of supplying substantial quantities of heat, the opportunity to bid into a specific CHP band. If suitable schemes come forward at a competitive price, I should be prepared to use the new power to include such a band.

In order to promote diversity among developers of renewable energy projects, I reserve the right, as in NFFO-3, to limit the number of projects or capacity for which any particular developer can gain contracts in this fourth round of bidding.

As with NFFO-3, my intention is that the NFFO-4 order should run for 15 to 20 years—as from early 1997. This would enable the RECs to offer generators premium payments for up to 15 years, with the difference between the NFFO contract price and the pool price being financed through the fossil fuel levy, paid by licensed electricity suppliers and reflected in electricity bills.

I understand that the regional electricity companies expect to select projects through a competitive tendering process and that contracts will be offered to successful bidders at their bid price.

I am discussing prospective arrangements with the Director General of Electricity Supply and the regional electricity companies, to whom I shall in due course provide further guidance about my proposals in respect of the proposed NFFO—4 order. Confirmation of my outline policy proposals on NFFO—4, and the details of that further guidance to the RECs, will be published shortly in "Renewable Energy Bulletin No 6"—REB—6. I understand that the RECs expect to initiate the competitive tendering process shortly thereafter.

Those project developers who have not already done so should contact:

Renewable Energy Enquiries Bureau, ETSU, Harwell, OX11 ORA

(tel 01235 432450 or 433601, fax 012335 433131 or 432923 to put their name on the mailing list for REB-6. In addition, those project developers who have not already done so should also register their interest in NFFO-4, by letter or fax to:

Non-Fossil Purchasing Agency Ltd
Bamburgh House
Market Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 6BH
(fax 0191 210 2888 or 0191 210 2887)

Generators with existing NFFO contracts need not register with the NFPA, as they will automatically be sent a copy of the information notes.

The Office of Electricity Regulation has considered what site-specific evidence of the extent of the renewable energy resource it will require from developers when making their technical submissions for NFFO-4. I understand that Offer has decided that:

> developers of wind projects will be required to submit evidence of site wind resource over a minimum period of 12 months, which must include at least 13 weeks continual measurement on site which shall include measurements made over a winter period;
>
> developers of hydro projects will be required to submit evidence of site hydro capacity based on:
>
> i) the mean flow data for the water course covering a period of at least 15 years, available from the Institute of Hydrology; or
>
> i) 15-year rainfall data from a given catchment area, making due allowance for adsorption, run-off and evaporation rates, to calculate the river flow at the off-take point for the generating station; or
>
> iii) on-site data over a period of two years, normalised to the mean average rainfall over a period of at least ten years.
>
> developers of landfill gas projects will be required to submit evidence of on-site pumping trails over a period of not less than 30 days of continual measurement.

The municipal and industrial waste with combined heat and power—MIW/CHP—band is intended for schemes which are capable of delivering substantial qualities of heat. I understand that, to this end, Offer has decided that developers of MIW/CHP schemes will be required to provide evidence of conditional contracts to supply heat—such contracts to be conditional upon their schemes being awarded NFFO contracts and going forward to commissioning—when making their economic/commercial submissions to Offer. The existence of such contracts will form a part of Offer's will-secure test for CHP schemes.

Developers will wish to ensure that they can meet these resource-determination/heat-contract requirements, when preparing their submissions.

The document "Consultation on the NFFO Process—A Summary Report (1995)", which summarises the 53 written submissions, is available from the Renewable Energy Enquiries Bureau at ETSU, at the above address.

The Government expect to decide the policy for the proposed NFFO-5 order after making the NFFO-4 order, in the light of the circumstances at the time. The NFFO-5 order will not necessarily have the same size or technology bands as the proposed NFFO-4 order.

In line with my Department's policy of stimulating use of electronic communications, this statement is being made available via the Internet on the DTI world wide web "server" at "http://www.dti.gov.uk/nffo".

Covert Operational Procurement Exhibition

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other assistance is given by Her Majesty's Government to the COPEX arms exhibition. [40095]

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* No Her Majesty's Government financial or other assistance was given to the covert operational procurement exhibition which was held between 31 October and 2 November 1995 at Sandown park.

Chemical Weapons Bill

Mr. Fabricant: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the outcome of the consultation on the draft Chemical Weapons Bill which was published by his Department on 19 July. [41649]

Mr. Lang: A revised draft taking account of the comments we have received has been published today and I have arranged for copies to be placed in the Library of the House.

EU Industrial Regeneration Funds

Mr. MacShane: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what plans he has for allocation of funds from the EU's Resider II programme to United Kingdom steel regions, following his Department's announcement of the UK's share of the EU industrial regeneration funds; and if he will make a statement. [40834]

Mr. Eggar: The European Commission's proposals of 4 October for the use of the European structural funds community initiatives reserve include an extra 60 mecu for the United Kingdom, and Gibraltar, for Konver, Resider, Rechar and Retex together.

In accordance with articles 11 and 29a of Council regulations 4253/88, as amended by Council regulation 2082/93, the Commission's proposals and draft guidelines for the use of the reserve are to be submitted to the management committee for Community initiatives for an opinion, and for information to the European Parliament; and may then be amended. Only after that will member states be invited by the Commission to send applications for assistance. At that stage, which is unlikely to be reached for some months, the Government will decide how they propose to use whatever definitive allocations to the UK have been decided.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work force, and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41114]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: Breakdown by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—that is, normally those engaged for a period of up to 12 months, but exceptionally up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

Lloyds Bank and Trustees Savings Bank Merger

Mr. Redmond: To ask the President of the Board of Trade when he expects a decision to be made on whether to refer the merger of Lloyds bank and the Trustees Savings bank to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission; and if he make a statement. [40948]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: The Director General of Fair Trading is currently considering the proposed merger and will advise my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade in due course. A decision on whether or not it should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission will be taken once that advice is received.

Small Businesses

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board Of Trade how many small businesses in each sector of the economy there were in each year since 1979. [40966]

Mr. Page: The most recent estimates of the number of small businesses by sector were published in "Small and Medium sized Enterprise (SME) Statistics for the United Kingdom, 1993" which is in the Library of the House. There are no comparable figures for earlier years.

Ethnic Minority Business Initiative

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what plans he has to replace the ethnic minority business initiative. [40964]

Mr. Page: My Department has no plans to replace the ethnic minority business initiative following the transfer of funding from the Home Office to the single regeneration budget. Financial support for ethnic minority initiatives continues to be available within the single regeneration budget administered by the Department of the Environment via regional Government offices. Business links have been established to provide a range of help to individual businesses, including ethnic minority businesses.

Loan Guarantee Scheme

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how much money *(a)* in real terms and *(b)* when adjusted for inflation has been invested in the loan guarantee scheme in each year since 1982–83. [40967]

Mr. Page: The table gives Government expenditure for each year, net of premium income and recoveries, in actual value and adjusted for inflation.

Small firms loan guarantee scheme net expenditure

£ million

	Actual	*Adjusted to 1994 values*
1982–83	10.8	19.1
1983–84	27.2	46.2
1984–85	32.9	53.2
1985–86	27.1	41.3
1986–87	11.5	16.9
1987–88	3.5	5.0
1988–89	3.8	5.1
1989–90	5.6	7.0
1990–91	16.5	18.9
1991–92	27.5	29.7
1992–93	19.2	20.0
1993–94	12.8	13.1
1994–95	16.2	16.2

Cash and Running Cost Limits

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any changes will be made to his Department's cash limits and running cost limit for 1995–96. [41650]

Mr. Lang: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimates, the cash limit for class IV, vote 1—programmes and administration—will be increased by £9,512,000 from £1,233,829,000 to £1,233,341,000. This net increase results from:

(i) the take up of running costs and capital end-year flexibility (£9,470,000, including £200,00 machinery of government transfer from class XVIII, vote 1);

(ii) expenditure relating to the privatisation of the National Engineering Laboratory (£1,633,000);

(iii) capital-related expenditure on videoconferencing (£1,000,000); and

(iv) other miscellaneous changes (£169,000);

offset by a reduction in provision to offset a corresponding increase on class IV, vote 4, £2,760,000. This increase will be charged to the reserve and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Within this total, the gross running cost limit for the Department of Trade and Industry is being increased by £49,665,000 from £314,962,000 to £364,627,000. This change comprises:

(i) the take up of £6,157,000 in running costs end-year flexibility as announced by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995, *Official Report*, columns *776–82* offset by £1,253,000 for an increase in VAT refunds (£53,000) and the reclassification of expenditure (£1,200,000).

(ii) £1,006,000 in respect of the contractorisation of the National Physical Laboratory.

(iii) machinery of government transfers from the former Employment Department (class V, vote 1) in respect of running costs (£38,849,000) and the Office of Manpower Economic (£1,573,000); and

(iv) machinery of government transfers from the Cabinet Office: Office of Public Service (class XVIII, vote 1) of £5,580,000 offset by transfers to class XVIII, vote 1 from class IV, Vote 1, of £2,247,000.

As a result of related machinery of government transfers, the DTI also becomes responsible for administering the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service running cost limit of £22,978,000.

In addition, subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the cash limit for class IV, vote 10 (Office of Gas Supply), will be increased by £1,188,000 from £5,352,000 to £6,540,000 and the gross running cost limit by £1,054,000 from £5,136,000 to £6,190,000. The increase is required for additional staff and running costs—as reflected in the explanatory and financial memorandum of the Gas Bill—for the additional duties placed on the director general by the licensing provisions of the new gas legislation.

Additionally, subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the cash limit for class XVIII, vote 2 (science programme) will be increased by £8,606,000 from £1,284,246,000 to £1,292,852,000. This increase results from the take up of £5,606,000 in capital end-year flexibility as announced by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995, *Official Report*, columns *776-82* and of £3,000,000 which is sought to take forward initiatives to strengthen partnerships with industry. This latter increase will be offset by a reduction in the end-year flexibility entitlement on class XVIII, vote 1 (Cabinet Office: Office of Public Service) running costs.

Electricity Supply

Mr. Tyler: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many households in England and Wales are estimated to be without a mains electricity supply. [41202]

Mr. Page: According to the English house condition survey of 1991, some 2,000 dwellings were without a mains electricity supply. The Welsh Office estimates that in 1993, less than 0.1 per cent. of households in Wales had no mains electricity supply.

Patent Office

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement on the performance of the Patent Office since it became an agency. [41648]

Mr. Ian Taylor: Since the Patent Office became an agency in 1990, it has consistently met its financial objectives and has successfully introduced accruals accounting. It has reduced overhead costs—that is, the cost of common services, by 46 per cent. over five years—and has substantially reduced its overall cost base. Through savings passed on to the customer, fees have been held steady for the last three years. In addition to these financial improvements, it has focused heavily on quality and standards of service to its customers and was awarded a charter mark in 1993.

The Patent Office's performance as an agency has won recognition both within the UK and overseas. In recent years delegations from many different countries—Japan, China, Korea, the former Russian States, New Zealand, Canada and the USA—have visited the office to learn about its management and operational procedures. I therefore welcome the fact that Vice-President Gore referred specifically to the success of the British Patent Office as an executive agency in his decision to make the US Patent and Trademark Office the first of a series of agencies to be transformed into a performance-driven, customer-oriented organisation.

HEALTH

Contraception

Mrs. Bridget Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners have faxes; and what proportion of general practitioners were faxed with details of the warning on the seven brands of contraceptive pill. [39969]

Mr. Sackville: The Committee on Safety of Medicines' advice on oral contraceptives was sent by the Epinet electronic communication system to all directors of public health, who were asked to activate their established cascade arrangements to forward the message to: all family health services authorities to forward to all general practitioners; family planning doctors and nurses; medical directors of all hospital units within the district to cascade to appropriate hospital consultants in particular: obstetricians and gynaecologists; and the chief executive of the health authority. The detailed arrangements for cascading messages are determined locally. Precise information on the number of general practitioners who have faxes and the proportion who received details of the advice by fax is not available, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Asthma

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence he has that asthma attacks increase with increases in car pollution, with particular reference to nitrogen dioxide. [39892]

Mr. Sackville: The latest report of the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants, "Asthma and Outdoor Air Pollution", was published on 19 October. One of the report's main conclusions was that most asthmatic patients are unaffected by exposure to such levels of non-biological air pollution as commonly occur in the United Kingdom. A small number of patients experience clinally significant effects which occasionally require an increase in medication or attention by a doctor. In commenting specifically on exposure to traffic, the report stated that there was a consistent, although modest, association between exposure to traffic and asthma prevalence in children. Traffic pollution was a plausible explanation though socio-economic and other environmental factors could also play important roles. The report also concluded that nitrogen dioxide levels are unlikely to be an important influence on daily variations in asthma occurrence.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Trent Regional Health Authority

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many calls have been made to the NHS helpline in the Trent regional health authority area for each month since its establishment; and how much has been spent in establishing, publicising and administering the helpline. [39444]

Mr. Malone: The tables detail the number of calls which the Trent regional health information service have received since its inception in April 1992 to September 1995 and the full contract price paid to Nottingham community health national health service trust to provide the service.

The contract price includes the cost of publicising and administering the service. There was an established local health information service in Nottingham prior to the establishment of the national HIS network. The contract price for 1991–93 includes a sum of £66,000 to upgrade accommodation, furnishings and IT software prior to Nottingham community health NHS trust taking responsibility for providing the regional HIS.

Illustration of the number of calls received by Trent Regional HIS since it was established in April 1992

Month	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*
April	130	837	849	1,604
May	141	702	864	1,799
June	118	731	1,349	1,893
July	134	685	1,052	1,734
August	129	735	1,033	1,717
September	285	941	1,715	1,917
October	294	750	2,111	n/a
November	393	747	1,951	n/a
December	217	466	1,162	n/a
January	529	700	2,023	n/a
February	1,386	780	1,776	n/a
March	1,110	980	1,916	n/a
Total	4,866	9,054	17,801	[1]10,664

[1] To date.

Illustrates the contract value between Trent regional health authority and Nottingham community health NHS trust for the provision of the regional freephone HIS

Year	*Value of contract*
1992–1993	£177,181 Includes £66,000 contribution towards upgrading accommodation, furniture and IT software.
1993–1994	£137,859 Includes £13,810 for an ethnic development outreach worker in Leicester.
1994–1995	£149,637 Includes £14,402 for an ethnic development outreach worker in Leicester.
1995–96	£155,193

Dental Services

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the number of active registrations of capitation patients for dental treatment in *(a)* Doncaster, *(b)* Barnsley, *(c)* Rotherham and *(d)* Sheffield family health services authorities in the age categories (i) nought to two years, (ii) three to five years, (iii) six to nine years, (iv) 10 to 14 years, (v) 15 to 17 years and (vi) under 18 years as at 30 June for each of the last four years; and what was the take-up for each age group per 100 local population for each of the years. [39469]

Mr. Malone: This information will be placed in the Library.

Salisbury National Health Service Trust

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consideration underlay the decision of Salisbury NHS trust to defer non-urgent elective admissions from Bath and Wiltshire health commission until April 1996; for what reasons it was able to admit similar patients referred by fundholding general practitioner practices; and what representations *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the NHS executive have made to the Salisbury trust about this issue. [40714]

Mr. Sackville: Non-urgent elective admissions from the health commission for Wiltshire and Bath have not been deferred until 1996. Patients from general practitioners whether fundholders or not are having routine operations at the trust. Routine admissions have been slowed to take account of an unexpected 15 per cent. increase in activity. The national health service executive is working closely with the trust to monitor progress.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40741]

Mr. Sackville: The available information is shown in the table. Information for financial years 1991–92 and 1993–94 could be provided only at disproportionate cost. For the financial year 1990–91 I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) on 13 December 1993, *Official Report*, column *474*. No allowances have been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles.

Financial year	*Total amount (£)*
1994–95	280,536
1993–94	281,174

Blood Service Staff

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list the amounts awarded in each of the last three years in performance-related pay to management at the National Blood Authority's plasma fractionation centre; [40700]

(2) if he will list the amounts awarded in each of the last three years in performance-related pay to management at each of the National Blood Authority's establishment. [40701]

Mr. Sackville: These are matters for the National Blood Authority. The hon. Member may wish to contact Mr. J. Adey, the chief executive of the authority, for details.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the number and total year's experience there of employees who left the national blood transfusion service over the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [39810]

Mr. Sackville: A total of 496 staff left the national blood service in the year ending 31 March 1995. Their length of service with the national blood service was as follows:

	Number
Less than a year	136
At least 1 year, but less than 5 years	190
At least 5, but less than 10 years	90
At least 10, but less than 15 years	25
More than 15 years	55

I understand this staff turnover to be within the normal range in the service, in any one year.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on central functions of his Department on *(a)* staff salaries, *(b)* consultancy fees, *(c)* redundancies and *(d)* recruitment, in each of the last five years. [40695]

Mr. Sackville: Separately identifiable running cost expenditure by the Department of Health and its agencies on staff salaries, consultancy fees and recruitment is shown in the table.

£ million

	1990–91	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*
Staff salaries	103	114	127	117	113
Consultancy fees	18.4	24.3	18.4	15.9	18.5
Recruitment	—	—	0.80	0.53	0.37

The Department has had no compulsory redundancies. The cost of voluntary early requirements in 1994–95 was £700,000.

Cambridge Military Hospital

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for health what additional resources will be made available to *(a)* North Hampshire health commission or *(b)* Bath and Wiltshire health commission to take account of the cost of transferring care for NHS patients from the Cambridge military hospital, Aldershot, and the RAF hospital, Wroughton, to NHS provider units. [40715]

Mr. Sackville: I am aware of the difficulties faced by North and Mid Hampshire health commission following the decision by the Ministry of Defence to close the Cambridge military hospital. The health commission has kept me in close touch with its programme for reproviding the Cambridge military hospital services.

The implications for the NHS of the closure of the MOD hospitals are currently being discussed between the health commissions and the NHS executive.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of Cambridge military hospital and its present contribution to health services for NHS patients. [40433]

Mr. Sackville: I refer the hon. and learned Member to the reply given today by the Minister of State for the Armed Forces. The local health authorities are currently working closely with local national health service trusts and general practitioners to ensure that there is no break in local services and these services are provided to patients charter standards.

Conceptions and Births

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the number of *(a)* conceptions and *(b)* births by region and nationally, among girls under the age of 16 years in each of the last 10 years. [40683]

Mr. Sackville: The available information is shown in the table. Full data for 1994 are not yet available.

Live births to girls aged under 16 and conceptions to girls aged under 16 leading to maternities or to abortions under the Abortion Act 1967, by health region of usual residence 1985–94

	1985		*1986*		*1987*		*1988*		*1989*	
	Conceptions	*Live births*	*Conceptions*	*Live births*	*Conceptions*	*Live births*	*Conceptions*	*Live births*	*Conceptions*	*Live births*
England and Wales	n/a	1,401	9,194	1,365	9,135	1,303	8,782	1,261	8,382	1,317
England	n/a	1,306	8,684	1,271	8,590	1,215	8,246	1,190	7,922	1,234
Health Region:										
Northern and Yorkshire	n/a	229	1,422	244	1,329	199	1,371	233	1,339	240
Trent	n/a	149	994	156	961	152	927	135	907	146
East Anglia and Oxford	n/a	106	813	106	816	99	720	94	749	103
North Thames	n/a	135	942	130	936	132	900	125	823	121
South Thames	n/a	144	995	134	963	136	863	131	861	121
South and West	n/a	132	980	117	1,018	127	928	120	918	129
West Midlands	n/a	172	1,215	157	1,155	160	1,111	138	1,029	160
North West	n/a	239	1,323	227	1,412	210	1,426	214	1,296	214
Wales	n/a	95	510	94	545	88	536	71	460	83

	1990		*1991*		*1992*		*1993*		*1994*	
	Conceptions	*Live births*	*Conceptions*	*Live births*	*Conceptions*	*Live births*	*Conceptions*	*Live births*	*Conceptions*	*Live births*
England and Wales	8,634	1,306	7,822	1,426	7,254	1,314	7,243	1,403	n/a	1,353
England	8,111	1,231	7,362	1,335	6,786	1,241	6,790	1,325	n/a	1,251
Health Region:										
Northern and Yorkshire	1,413	265	1,274	245	1,156	233	1,160	243	n/a	201
Trent	898	152	849	160	828	173	818	156	n/a	164
East Anglia and Oxford	724	84	642	111	583	97	522	97	n/a	90
North Thames	845	118	839	130	790	120	755	143	n/a	121
South Thames	904	136	773	150	762	129	812	150	n/a	137
South and West	938	117	778	120	695	125	717	117	n/a	127
West Midlands	1,046	136	987	171	922	157	911	190	n/a	200
North West	1,343	223	1,220	248	1,050	207	1,095	229	n/a	211
Wales	523	75	460	91	468	73	453	78	n/a	102

Boundaries are as at 1 April 1994.

Data for England and Wales do not include events to mothers who are normally resident outside England and Wales.

Conceptions not leading to maternities or to abortions under the Abortion Act 1967 are not included in the statistics, as information about them is incomplete.

Burials and Cremations

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many bodies were buried or cremated by local authorities under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 in each of the past five years. [40587]

Mr. Sackville: This information is not available centrally.

Psychiatric Care

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been killed by someone who has recently had psychiatric care *(a)* in 1995 and *(b)* in each year since 1979. [41109]

Mr. Bowis: This information is not available centrally.

Chilled Foods

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures his Ministry is taking to ensure that chilled foods are safe to eat when bought from retailers. [38928]

Mr. Sackville: We are committed to maintaining high standards of food safety. Revised Food Safety (Temperature Control) Regulations 1995 were brought into force on 15 September 1995. Under the regulations, chilled foods which are likely to be harmful to health, because they support either the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms or the formation of toxins, must be kept at a maximum chill temperature of 8 deg. C. This requirement applies to food retailers. The regulations are enforced at local level by environmental health officers employed by local authorities.

Neuroleptic Drugs

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what have been the results of the prescription and use of neuroleptic drugs for mentally ill people. [39668]

Mr. Bowis: The introduction of neuroleptic drugs has been one of the most significant advances in psychiatry, facilitating the introduction of modern methods of care and enabling many mentally ill people to lead fuller and more productive lives.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have died following inappropriate prescription or dosage of neuroleptic drugs in each year since 1992–93. [39669]

Mr. Bowis: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Ms Squire) on 27 April, *Official Report,* column *621.*

Neurosurgical Units

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the availability of neurosurgical facilities in Sussex. [39801]

Mr. Sackville: I refer the hon. and learned Member to the reply I gave the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 8 June, *Official Report,* columns *307-308.*

Power Lines

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what his assessment is of the risk to health of electromagnetic radiation from power lines; and if he will make a statement; [39800]

(2) what research has been performed on the relationship between electromagnetic radiation from power lines and cancer; and if he will make a statement. [39803]

Mr. Sackville: I refer the hon. and learned Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) on 3 November 1994, *Official Report,* columns *1274-75.*

Nurse Call Bell Systems

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines cover the operation of nurse call bell systems in NHS trust hospitals; and if he will make a statement. [39802]

Mr. Sackville: It is for individual trusts to determine operational policies for nurse call systems in the light of local circumstances. Technical guidance is published in health technical memoranda 2015 "Bed Head Services", a copy of which will be placed in the Library shortly.

NHS Management

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what was the average pay rise of NHS chief executives for the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement; [39806]

(2) what guidelines are in effect concerning the salary and employment conditions of NHS trust chief executives; and if he will make a statement. [39807]

Mr. Malone: Information on average pay rises of national health service chief executives is not available centrally. For those staff employed on the national terms and conditions for general and senior managers, basic salaries were last increased by 2.2 per cent. from 1 September 1994. The effect on the pay scales is set out in health service guideline, HSG(95)7, copies of which are available in the Library.

NHS trust boards are accountable for the proper appointment, appraisal and remuneration of their senior executives and, as in all their functions, boards must have regard to the public service values of accountability, probity and openness enshrined in the codes of conduct and accountability issued to NHS boards in April 1994. The code of accountability requires all national health service boards to establish a remuneration and terms of service committee to exercise proper control of executive board members' remuneration.

Needles

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make needles for the use of administering insulin available on prescription; and if he will make a statement. [39805]

Mr. Malone: Disposable syringes with attached needles are already available on general practitioner prescription.

Hospitals (Voluntary Fundraising)

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his estimate of the total income to the NHS from voluntary fundraising in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [40431]

Mr. Sackville: This information is not available centrally.

Blood Products

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list the final destinations of all blood products from United Kingdom donors which have been sold abroad; and if he will make a statement; [40435]

(2) if he will list all blood products by type, from United Kingdom donors, which have been sold by Bio-Products Laboratory; and if he will make a statement. [40436]

Mr. Sackville: The Bio-Products Laboratory, which is part of the National Blood Authority, offers surplus blood products for sale abroad only after national health service demand is satisfied. The only blood product where present availability significantly exceeds NHS demand is albumin, although small quantities of factor 8 and factor 9 are sometimes surplus to NHS requirements. The products are exported worldwide. This avoids waste of a valuable resource and keeps down costs to the NHS. The alternative would be destruction.

Medical Cost Inflation

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will define medical cost inflation; and what has been the rate of medical cost inflation in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [40416]

Mr. Sackville: The Department has no measure of medical cost inflation. Health service specific inflation is calculated as a combination of hospital and community health services pay and price inflation. Pay inflation is defined as the change in units costs for HCHS staff weighted by the share of expenditure on each staff group. Price inflation is defined as the change in the prices of goods and services in the health service weighted according to the share of expenditure on each area.

The table shows HCHS inflation from 1984–85 to 1993–94.

Year	*HCHS inflation estimate*
1984–85	5.8
1985–86	4.9
1986–87	7.0
1987–88	8.5
1988–89	10.6
1989–90	6.3
1990–91	8.7
1991–92	10.1
1992–93	6.9
1993–94	3.4

GP Fundholding

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the regional variations in the percentage of general practitioners that have become fundholders. [40920]

Mr. Malone: I refer the hon. and learned Member to the reply I gave the right hon. Member for Derby South (Mrs. Beckett) on 24 May, *Official Report*, column *597*.

Anderson Fabry Disease

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what treatment is available through the national health service for patients with Anderson Fabry disease; at which NHS trusts treatment can be obtained; and if he will make a statement. [40921]

Mr. Sackville: Anderson Fabry disease is a rare inherited disorder of metabolism for which there is no known cure. Treatment of the various symptoms of the disease is a matter of clinical judgment and varies according to the individual case. The availability of services for such treatment is a matter for local determination.

Mental Health Act 1983

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many elderly people of pensionable age have made formal complaints of wrongful detention under the mental health Acts in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [40922]

Mr. Bowis: We do not collect this information, but I am advised by the Mental Health Act Commission, which has the statutory duty of protecting the interests of patients detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, that in its experience it is extremely rare for a patient to be detained illegally.

Bradford Hospitals NHS Trust

Mr. Sutcliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many orthopaedic operations will be subcontracted to other hospitals by Bradford Hospitals NHS trust; [41072]

(2) what has been the percentage change in funding available to Bradford hospital NHS trust in the current financial year; and what has been the increase in operations required to be carried out. [41071]

Mr. Sackville: There are matters for Bradford Hospitals national health service trust. The hon. Member may wish to contact Mr. Rodney Walker, chairman of the trust, for details.

Hip Replacement Operations

Mr. Sutcliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are awaiting hip replacement operations in Bradford; and what is the average waiting time. [41075]

Mr. Sackville: This is a matter for Bradford health authority. The hon. Member may wish to contact Mrs. Zahida Manzoor, chairman of the authority, for details.

Orthopaedic Surgeons

Mr. Sutcliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the timescale for recruitment of the target number of orthopaedic surgeons required by Bradford to meet the demand for orthopaedic operations. [41073]

Mr. Malone: This is a matter for Northern and Yorkshire regional health authority. The hon. Member may wish to contact Mr. John Greetham CBE, chairman of the authority, for details.

GP Lists

Dr. Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been removed from their doctor's list by decision of the doctor in each of the last five years. [37636]

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were removed from general practitioner lists by family health services authorities; and if he will indicate the reasons for their removal in 1993–94 and 1994–95. [40664]

Mr. Malone *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Available data held centrally relate only to the years 1992–93 and 1993–94 and are contained in health service indicators, a copy of which is in the Library.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what is the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies. [41078]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 1 November by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary, Office of Public Service, *Official Report*, column *324*.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate the number of individuals in his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeded (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000. [41077]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 1 November, *Official Report*, column *324* by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary, Office of Public Service.

Regulations

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimates he has made of the compliance costs for small businesses of regulations introduced since April 1992. [40480]

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is not available. As part of its approach to producing good regulation, the Government have adopted the deregulation task force's principle of "think small first" which means making sure that regulations will not have a disproportionate impact on small businesses. The Government have incorporated the "small business litmus test" as part of the compliance cost assessment procedure to give practical effect to this principle which is carried out on all regulatory proposals which impact on business. The results of the test are included in individual compliance cost assessments on regulatory proposals which are available in the House Libraries.

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many regulations carried into law since 1979 have been identified by the deregulation unit as suitable for repeal. [39845]

Mr. Freeman: We have identified over 1,000 regulations for amendment or repeal, but information about the date each regulation was carried into law is not centrally held. By adopting the deregulation task force's principles of good regulation—"think small first", proportionality, and goal-based regulation—we aim to get regulation right first time. We believe that the effects of legislation should be regularly monitored and reviewed and changes made if they are justified.

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38596]

Mr. Horam : I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for National Heritage on 1 November, *Official Report*, columns *186–87*.

Recruitment

Mr. Peter Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many applications have been received in the last five years for civil service posts at executive officer grade or above from applicants aged over 45 years; and how many of those were from women. [40212]

Mr. Horam: Since 1991 such departments and agencies have been responsible for their own recruitment, within the framework laid down by the civil service order in Council 1995 and the recruitment code issued by the Civil Service Commissioners. Figures on applicants are not centrally collected. However, in the past five years among external applicants to "fast stream" posts, the average proportion of women applicants has been 41 per cent., and in the last year women have made up 10 per cent. of external applicants for posts at the current grade 5 level and above. No figures are available about the number of applicants aged over 45 years.

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many and what percentage of applications for civil service posts at executive officer grade or above in the last five years by persons aged 45 years or older were successful; and how many of those were from women. [40213]

Mr. Horam: Figures on applicants are not centrally collected. However in the last five years more than 18 per cent. of entrants to the civil service at executive officer level and above have been age 45 and over.

Year	*All entrants at EO level and above*	*Of whom aged 45 and over*	*Of whom women*
1990–91	8,524	1,344	173
1991–92	7,041	1,228	165
1992–93	5,845	1,037	163
1993–94	5,159	1,055	114
1994–95	4,322	998	139

I can add that over the last five years, in external recruitment to "fast stream" posts, women have formed an average of 41 per cent. of applicants and 37 per cent. of successful applicants. In the last four years, women have made up 45 per cent. of successful external applicants for senior appointments. Equivalent figures are not available about the number of applicants aged over 45 years.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

European Structural Funds

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how much has been *(a)* applied for and *(b)* spent under objective 3 of the European structural fund. [40932]

Mr. Forth: The information requested is as follows:

1994:

(a) applied for from the Commission, final total - £352,842,016

(b) paid to applicants so far—£290,645,724

1995:

(a) applied for from the Commission so far—£207,949,790

(b) paid to applicants so far £139,068,016

Student Loans

Mr. Bryan Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what recent discussions her Department has had with lending banks and building societies regarding the provision of student loans. [41131]

Mr. Forth: Such talks have taken place and are continuing. It would be premature to discuss the details now, but any announcement relating to them will be made to the House at the appropriate time.

Skill Needs Survey

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, what was the original date for intended publication of the "Skill Needs in Britain 1995" survey; and when it is now expected to be published. [40931]

Mr. Forth: It was originally planned that the work of this survey should be completed by the end of September. It is now expected that the contractor will publish the report in December.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Egg Production

7. **Mr. Atkins:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress he has made in getting the Commission to move forward its review of the use of battery cages in egg production. [38927]

Mrs. Browning: My right hon. and learned Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has pressed Commissioner Fischler to bring the matter forward during 1996. The Commissioner has indicated that he will try to do this.

Western Waters

14. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress he has made in securing adequate control measures for access to the western waters. [38937]

Mr. Baldry: The agreement at the Fisheries Council last week was a considerable negotiating success in which our essential concerns were met. The control arrangements which will operate in western waters from 1 January 1996 are realistic and will allow effective monitoring and control with a significantly reduced burden on fishermen compared with what would have resulted from the Commission's original proposals.

Fishing

15. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to involve United Kingdom fishermen in discussions on future developments in the industry. [38938]

Mr. Baldry: I hold frequent meetings with representatives of the fishing industry and it is my intention to meet the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations on a regular basis as well as visiting ports and meeting local fishermen.

Norwegian Territorial Waters

16. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many United Kingdom-registered fishing vessels have fished in Norwegian territorial waters in the past three years; and what estimate he has made of the number of fishing vessels from other member states of the European Union fishing those grounds. [38940]

Mr. Baldry: The numbers of UK vessels that have fished in the Norwegian exclusive economic zone are:

284 in 1992
271 in 1993, and
248 in 1994.

We are seeking from the European Commission equivalent figures for other member states.

Mushrooms

17. **Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he is taking to promote British mushrooms. [38941]

Mr. Boswell: We promote mushrooms and all other British produce at every opportunity.

Common Agricultural Policy

18. **Sir Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimate the EU Commission has published about CAP spending in 1996; and what is the legal limit of such spending. [38943]

Mr. Baldry: The 1996 draft budget for common agricultural policy expenditure has been set at the level of the guideline of 40,828 million ecu or £34,069 million. This is the legally binding ceiling on CAP expenditure.

19. **Mr. Callaghan:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many cases of CAP fraud were recorded in the EU in 1994. [38945]

Mr. Baldry: In 1994, there were 1,610 cases, valued at £313 million, of CAP irregularities, which include fraud, reported across the Community.

24. **Mr. Llew Smith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what will be the total cost of the CAP in 1996. [38950]

Mr. Baldry: The 1996 draft budget for the common agricultural policy has been set at the level of the guideline of 40,828 million ecu, £34,069 million. The CAP also imposes a cost on consumers but the scale of this cannot be assessed in advance.

Mr. Couchman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the average change in the price of foodstuffs arising from the common agricultural policy. [41448]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Recent reports that the prices of milk, sugar and beef are more than doubled by the common agricultural policy are exaggerated and misleading. They appear to be based on an inaccurate understanding of the OECD's consumer subsidy equivalent. This is a measure of the subsidy element in farm gate prices and relates to the degree to which farm gate prices exceed reference or "world" prices. The recently published estimates wrongly apply the CSE percentage for various commodities to retail prices instead of to farm gate prices. Because the farm gate price is only a fraction of the retail price, the effect of the CAP on the latter is necessarily considerably lower. This would be smaller still if it were possible to take account in calculating CSEs of the fact that world prices would be higher in the absence of the CAP.

We have placed in the Library a note demonstrating that overall costs of the CAP to United Kingdom citizens in 1993 were about £4 per person per week, of which about £3 is due to higher food prices. Even this estimate is likely to be on the high side because the effects of the CAP on world prices have not been taken into account. However the cost of the CAP, and its effect on food prices, is one of the reasons why the Government are pressing for its reform.

Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances

20. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about the level of hill livestock compensatory allowances. [38946]

Mr. Boswell: On 26 October, I met the members of the Hill Farm Advisory Committee. The level of hill livestock compensatory allowances was discussed. Later today, Agriculture Ministers will meet representatives of the farming unions in the context of the autumn review of economic conditions in the hills and uplands which considers the rates of payment and conditions for the HLCA scheme in the approaching year. In addition, officials have met a number of other organisations whose members have an interest in the HLCA scheme to hear their views on this subject.

23. **Mr. Gallie:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement in the importance of hill livestock compensatory allowances to the maintenance of communities in remote areas. [38949]

Mr. Boswell: It is difficult to determine precisely the importance of hill livestock compensatory allowances to the maintenance of communities in remote areas. However, the deadline in the labour force on agricultural holdings in the less-favoured areas over recent years has been slower than the decline in other areas. The contribution which the HLCA scheme makes to hill farm output has declined from 9 per cent. in 1992–93 to 6 per cent. in 1994–95. Other direct subsidies are now much more significant than they were; direct headage payments to livestock farmers in the hills and uplands are expected to amount to £615 million, of which £107 million will come from HLCA payments.

Fish Conservation

21. **Mrs. Ewing:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to ensure that control systems applicable to fish conservation measures are equally applicable throughout EU countries. [38947]

Mr. Baldry: The Commission is responsible for ensuring that member states have in place effective systems for monitoring compliance with the common fisheries policy. Its powers of audit were enhanced in 1993 and the Commission will shortly be reporting on the enforcement performance of member states during 1994.

Dairying

22. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of the dairy industry to discuss employment levels in the industry. [38948]

Mr. Baldry: My right hon. Friend the Minister regularly meets representatives of all sides of the agriculture industry, including the dairy sector, to discuss issues of importance to them.

Food Safety

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures are in place to prevent meat from animals with tuberculosis from entering the human food chain. [38931]

Mrs. Browning: The Fresh Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995 deal comprehensively with the meat supply aspects of this important issue of food safety and consumer protection in Great Britain.

Agricultural Land

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what percentage of agricultural land is currently in food production; how many acres this represents; and if he will make a statement. [39340]

Mrs. Browning: The provisional results for England from the June 1995 agricultural census show an estimated 8,818,000 hectares, of land to be devoted to crop production, involving bare fallow, grassland and rough grazing. This is 90 per cent. of agricultural area. The remaining 10 per cent. 995,000 hectares is accounted for by set-aside scheme land, woodland and all other land on agricultural holdings.

Statistics of previous years are available in "The Digest of Agricultural Census Statistics" which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Fish Stocks

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will apply to the structural fund for a subsidy for British fishermen for loss of fishing opportunities owing to inadequate quotas. [40601]

Mr. Baldry: Structural fund assistance may be used only to finance measures to offset the loss of income suffered as a result of a temporary cessation of fishing activities caused by unforeseen and non-repetitive events. Under the principle of relative stability, the UK has a guaranteed percentage share of the annual total allowable catches agreed in EU and north Atlantic waters. But the actual level of TACs reflects the pressure of fishing effort on available stocks. The UK is providing a total of £53 million for decommissioning to help reduce this pressure.

Forestry

Mrs. Ewing: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list all Forestry Commission woods currently for sale in England; and if he will make a statement on the targets for the disposal of land by *(a)* area and *(b)* projected income. [40675]

Mr. Boswell *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply which my hon. Friend, the Under-Secretary for Scotland gave the hon. Member for Sherwood (Mr. Tipping) on 25 October, *Official Report,* columns *685-87.* As set out in the Government's expenditure plans 1995–96 to 1997–98, the Forestry Commission plans to sell about 15,000 hectares of forest land in each of the next three years, and expects to receive a total of about £60 million from the sale of forest land and surplus properties during that period. The Commission expects about 15 per cent. of these sales to be in England.

TRANSPORT

Road and Bridge Maintenance

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list *(a)* the number of kilometres of motorway renewed, *(b)* the number of kilometres of trunk road renewed, *(c)* the number of bridges assessed for structural capacity and *(d)* the number of bridges strengthened by his Department in each of the financial years since 1989–90 including plans for the current year. [41194]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 2 November 1995:

> As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr. John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will list *(a)* the number of kilometres of motorway renewed, *(b)* the number of kilometres of trunk road renewed, *(c)* the number of bridges assessed for structural capacity and *(d)* the number of bridges strengthened by his Department in each of the financial years since 1989-90 including plans for the current year.
>
> The information requested for financial years 1989–90 to 1992–93 can be found in "Transport Report 1994–The Government's Expenditure Plans 1994–95 to 1996–97", Cm 2506, presented to Parliament in March 1994. For subsequent years the figures are as follows:-

	1993–94 outturn	*1994–95 outturn*	*1995–96 plans*
Motorway renewal (nlks[1])	234	277	134
Other Trunk Road renewal (nlks[1])	293	563	261
Bridges assessed	1,793	1,254	820
Bridges strengthened	46	164	86

[1] Nearside lane kilometres.

Driving Tests

Mr. Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 27 October 1995 to the hon. Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice), *Official Report*, column *865*, what percentage of people taking the driving test fail after the *(a)* first, *(b)* second, *(c)* third, *(d)* fourth, *(e)* fifth, or *(f)* at their sixth or subsequent attempts. [41058]

Mr. Norris: This is an operational matter for the Driving Standards Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from B. L. Herdan to Mr. Peter Bottomley, dated 2 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your Question about the percentage of people taking the driving test who fail. We do not routinely collect this information as it does not directly affect the operation of the Agency.

For consistency of testing, and in fairness to the candidate, it is preferable if the examiner is not made aware of the number of previous attempts a candidate has made at a test. The overall failure rate on driving test in the last two financial years was:

1993–94: 52%

1994–95: 53%

As part of our third Customer Survey, completed in March this year—the results of which were published in July, we asked a random sample of all our customers whether it was their first test or a repeat attempt. Of 1,187 people in the sample who had recently taken their driving test, 29% (340) had just failed and of these failures 26% (88) were at the first attempt, 34% (114) at the second, 21% (72) at the third, 9% (30) at the fourth, 6% (19) at the fifth and 5% (17) were at their sixth or subsequent attempt.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish the results of his survey on illegally operated heavy goods vehicles; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [41196]

Mr. Norris: A report on the Vehicle Inspectorate's survey of illegally operated heavy goods vehicles will be made available by the end of this year. A copy will be placed in the Library of the House.

Artillery Ranges

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) pursuant to his answer of 19 July 1995, *Official Report*, column *1323*, when he will write to his hon. Friend; [41034]

(2) when his research project at the Transport Research Laboratory on the effects on drivers of sudden noise from artillery ranges will be completed. [41132]

Mr. Watts: The Transport Research Laboratory has completed its research programme and expects to finalise its report shortly. The Highways Agency will provide my hon. Friend with a copy of the report as soon as it is available.

Road Improvement Schemes

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the number of contracts awarded and their value for major improvement schemes on the trunk road and motorway network in each financial year since 1989–90, including plans for the current year. [41195]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 2 November 1995:

As you know, John Watts has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport, to list the number of contracts awarded and their value for major improvement schemes on the trunk road and motorway network in each financial year since 1989–90 and our plans for the current year.

The number and value of contracts for major improvement schemes awarded in each of the past 5 financial years is shown in the table below. The contracts included are those worth in excess of £5m and the total contract values are those at the time of contract award.

Financial year	*Number of contracts*	*Value of contracts*
1990/91	27	£515m
1991/92	20	£500m
1992/93	14	£543m
1993/94	29	£762m
1994/95	13	£555m

Our plans for the current year are set out in Annex B of the Agency's Business Plan for 1995/96 a copy of which I enclose for your information.

I also enclose a copy of the first Annual Report of the Highways Agency which sets out the progress made in the first full year of its existence.

Shipping (Waste Audit)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce mandatory checks, by way of a waste audit, for all ships calling at British ports. [40412]

Mr. Norris *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* This is an operational matter for the Marine Safety Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from R. M. Bradley to Mr. David Hinchliffe, dated 2 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your Question about mandatory checks, by way of a waste audit, for all ships calling at British Ports.

Internationally agreed regulations within the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78) require that properly maintained oil record books are available for inspection on ships. Oil tankers are required to carry records of their cargo and bilge pumping operations whilst other ships are required to have a record of bilge pumping. To ensure that these requirements and other safety measures are met, the United Kingdom (UK), in co-operation with European neighbours, has introduced port state control procedures. Under these procedures port state control inspectors can, by examining the book, trace the fate of all oils loaded on board ships.

Recent amendments to the international regulations (MARPOL 73/78) include a requirement for garbage record books. The UK has been at the forefront of that development and it is anticipated that requirements will be transposed into UK statute when they come into effect in 1997. Other recent amendments to MARPOL 73/78 will call for additional monitoring of potentially polluting shipboard operations. The effects of those amendments will be audited to establish whether further controls are necessary.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department,

(ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40869]

Mr. Norris *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly the highest and lowest full time salaries fell within the following bands:

	1994–95 £	*1995–96* £
Central Department		
Highest	95,000 to 99,999	95,000 to 99,999
Lowest	under 5,000	5,000 to 9,999
Agencies		
Highest	100,000 to 104,999	100,000 to 104,999
Lowest	under 5,000	under 5,000

Information for non-departmental public bodies is not immediately available and I will write to you separately with those figures.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many individuals in *(a)* his Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies received annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeding (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in each year since 1985–86. [40868]

Mr. Norris *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the department, agencies and NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pension scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules which have been deposited in the Library of the House. In the Department and its agencies only one person currently receives an annual remuneration above £100,000. This was also the case in 1994–95 and 1993–94. Before that no-one received £100,000 or more. No one has received £200,000 or above.

Information for non-departmental public bodies is not immediately available. I will write to the hon. Member separately with those figures.

Oil Dumping at Sea

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he intends to take to prevent tankers dumping oil at sea following the recent pollution incident at Flamborough Head. [39337]

Mr. Norris *[holding answer 27 October 1995]:* This is an operational matter for the Marine Safety Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from R. M. Bradley to Mr. Elliot Morley, dated 2 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your Question about the recent pollution incident at Flamborough Head.

The UK operates routine aerial surveillance to detect and deter illegal discharges. This was identified by Lord Donaldson in his report on the prevention of pollution from merchant shipping as an important tool in deterring vessels from discharging illegally.

The UK, as a member of the Bonn Agreement, works closely with other contracting States to conduct joint surveillance of the North Sea. At the forth North Sea Conference in June, Ministers agreed to work on ways of making aerial surveillance a more effective deterrent against illegal discharges. The UK is also committed, together with other North Sea states, to the aim of designating the North Sea a special area for the purposes of oil pollution. Special area status will mean that all oil discharges in the North Sea will be illegal once the agreement is implemented.

Ferry Safety

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have been killed while travelling on board United Kingdom ferries over the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [40303]

Mr. Norris: Four.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff are employed on ferry safety inspections; and if he will make a statement. [40304]

Mr. Norris: This is an operational matter for the Marine Safety Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from R. M. Bradley to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 2 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your Question about the number of staff employed on ferry safety inspections.

All Marine Safety Agency (MSA) surveyors, with the exception of fishing vessel surveyors, are available to carry out port state and flag state inspections, but the number of surveyors engaged on inspections will vary from district to district according to the availability of ships for inspection and other duties. Surveyors are not restricted to carrying out inspections within one district. Concentrated inspections involve surveyors from outside the region in which the inspection takes place and the team inspecting fish factory ships anchored off Lerwick may be comprised of surveyors from regions outside Scotland. For this reason, it is more accurate to give figures not by district, but for the MSA as a whole.

In 1994/95, 75 MSA surveyors were engaged in survey and inspection work, out of a total of 129 surveyors in post.

Night Flights

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he has taken to limit night flights in the south-east; what is *(a)* the current and *(b)* the proposed fine for flying at the wrong hours and on the wrong course. [40712]

Mr. Norris: My right hon. Friend may specify restrictions on aircraft taking off or landing at aerodromes designated for the purposes of section 78 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982. The only airports so designated are Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. For all other airports, such as Luton and London City, night restrictions may be imposed voluntarily by the airport operator or may be imposed by planning conditions.

Since 24 October 1993, night restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted have comprised a maximum number of movements which can be made at each airport each season with a quota, related to an aircraft's noise classification on take-off or landing, as a supplementary control designed to encourage the use of quieter aircraft. The movements limits and quotas apply during the night quota period from 2330 to 0600. There are also restrictions on the noisiest types of aircraft from 2300 to

2330 and from 0600 to 0700 to provide further protection. Further details are set out in the annex to my announcement of 16 August 1995, a copy of which was placed in the House Library. Monitoring returns are provided by the airport companies to their respective airport consultative committees.

At the designated airports, my right hon. Friend also prescribes noise preferential departure routes and sets noise limits for departing aircraft. There are no statutory powers to penalise poor track keeping on the noise preferential routes. Financial penalties for infringements of the noise limits are imposed by the airport companies under their charging powers. The financial penalties for breaches of the night noise limit—102 PNdB, 89 dBA—are £500 for exceeding the limit by 3dB or less and £1,000 for breaches of more than 3dB. On 3 October, we published a consultation paper proposing a 2dB reduction in the night limit and a 3dB reduction in the daytime limit plus an improvement in monitoring efficiency by increasing the number of noise monitors and improving their location.

City of Nottingham Authority

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what changes will take place on transport matters when the city of Nottingham becomes a unitary authority; and if he will make a statement. [40914]

Mr. Norris: On becoming a unitary authority, the city of Nottingham would become a highway and traffic authority, with direct responsibility for the local roads in its area. In exercising these and its existing responsibilities we would expect the new authority to work closely with its neighbours at the strategic level to deliver improved local transport services.

Robin Hood Railway Line

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect on the Robin Hood railway line of price competition between bus companies covering the route; and if he will make a statement. [40913]

Mr. Norris: I am aware of the very keen price competition between bus operators covering the route of the Robin Hood line, in particular between Hucknall and Nottingham. Nottinghamshire county council, which has sponsored the reopening of the Robin Hood line, is closely monitoring the position.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the EC, *(c)* the county council, *(d)* local councils and *(e)* other partners have put into the Robin Hood line to date; and what amounts will have been paid by the completion of the line. [40987]

Mr. Norris: The capital cost of constructing stages 1 and 2 of the Robin Hood line has been around £23 million. My Department has so far provided £6.5 million from the coal regeneration fund towards the construction of stage 2 and £367,000 towards the construction of Bulwell station in stage 1. Around £4.5 million is expected from the EC and the majority of the remainder has been provided by Nottinghamshire county council, which is the sponsor of the scheme, with contributions from the district councils. My Department is currently considering the case for further resources to cover capital cost increases on stage 2.

Traffic Wardens

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what policies exist or are proposed to transfer the functions of traffic wardens to local authorities. [40983]

Mr. Norris: The Road Traffic Act 1991 provided for the decriminalisation of most non-endorsable on-street parking offences and for local authorities to take over enforcement responsibilities from traffic wardens. The new arrangements apply in all London boroughs, although traffic wardens continue to enforce parking controls on red routes. The Government published guidance in May this year for local authorities outside London on how to apply to the Secretary of State to take on this responsibility.

Local Authority Transport Policy Funding

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what changes have taken place in the Government's policy on financing local authority transport policies since 1979. [40981]

Mr. Norris: The most recent change in the Government's approach to the financing of local transport was the introduction of the package approach to funding in 1994–95. This enables local authorities to submit bids for packages of measures covering all forms of transport, and to do so in partnership with each other if they wish.

Information on earlier changes to the local transport financing system could be produced only at disproportionate cost. My Department publishes guidance on funding to local authorities in its annual transport policies and programme circulars, copies of which are deposited in the Library of the House.

Nottingham Light Rapid Transit System

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what decisions are outstanding by his Department that are delaying the building of the light rapid transit system in Nottingham. [40984]

Mr. Norris: My Department has, at present, no outstanding decisions to make on the Nottingham express transit scheme. DOT officials have provisionally agreed Nottingham's section 56 appraisal and look forward to working closely with the recently appointed NET project development group over the coming year. Government funding for this scheme will of course depend on confirmation of the case for funding, the resources available at the time and the quality of competing bids for other local transport schemes.

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38610]

Mr. Norris: I refer to the answer given by the Minister for National Heritage on 31 October 1995, *Official Report*, columns *186–87.*

Severn Bridge

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what monitoring is in place to ensure that any fracturing of the strata due to compressive forces, or from other causes, as a result of the construction and subsequent use of the new Severn bridge is brought to *(a)* his Department's and *(b)* public attention; what investigations were undertaken prior to its construction to determine the risk of damage to underlying strata and fresh water resources; and what indemnity has been agreed to cover any such damage and for the Government to undertake corrective measures. [40139]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. William Ross, dated 2 November 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr. John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport, what guarantees or undertakings for compensation where given by the Government to *(a)* contractors, *(b)* companies and *(c)* consultants involved with the construction and use of the new Severn Bridge crossing in respect of (i) pollution and (ii) future pollution to the supply of fresh water from the aquafissure Big Spring Severn Tunnel for supply to industrial and commercial undertakings.

No guarantees or undertakings for compensation were given by Government to any of the contractors, companies or consultants involved in the construction and use of the new Severn Bridge in respect of pollution or future pollution to the supply of fresh water from the Great Spring.

Any claims for compensation arising out of a breach of the Concessionaire's obligations under the Concession Agreement would be met by the Concession Company, Severn River Crossing Plc, under the terms of its Concession Agreement with the Secretary of State.

This situation applies both during the construction period and for the duration of the subsequent operation period which under the terms of the Concession Agreement is for a maximum of 30 years from April 1992.

Guarantees, undertakings and assurances in relation to monitoring and/or compensation were however given during the passage of the enabling legislation, the Severn Bridges Act 1992, to third parties who could be adversely affected by any pollution to the fresh water in the Great Spring that was attributed the construction of the new Severn Bridge. Such parties included British Rail, Welsh Water, NRA and Messrs Whitbreads.

Mr. Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what guarantees or undertakings for compensation were given by the Government to *(a)* contractors, *(b)* companies and *(c)* consultants involved with the construction and use of the new Severn bridge crossing in respect of (i) pollution and (ii) future pollution to the supply of fresh water from the aquafissure Big Spring Severn tunnel for supply to industrial and commercial undertakings. [40142]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. William Ross, dated 2 November 1995:

As you know, John Watts has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport what monitoring is in place to ensure that any fracturing of the strata due to compressive forces, or from other causes, as a result of the construction of, and the subsequent use of the new Severn Bridge is brought to (a) his Department's and (b) public attention; what investigations were undertaken prior to its construction to determine the risk of damage to underlying strata and fresh water resources; and what indemnity has been agreed to cover any such damage and for the Government to undertake corrective measures.

Monitoring systems are in place to monitor the effects of the new bridge on both the Severn Rail Tunnel and the Great Spring. These are provided by Severn River Crossing (SRC) Plc under the terms of the Concession Agreement. The regular and frequent results of the monitoring exercise are provided to all parties concerned including their Government Agent on behalf of the Secretary of State. There are no specific arrangements to bring the results of the monitoring to the attention of the public.

The Government commissioned consultants to report on the risks and likelihood of damage to the Great Spring prior to the project being put out to tender. The Consultant's view that the risks would be minimal was accepted.

It would be for SRC to take corrective action should any damage occur as a result of a breach of their obligations under the Concession Agreement. The Concessionaire is required to hold the Secretary of State fully protected and indemnified in respect of any such damage.

If no breach was involved then the onus and cost would fall on the Government.

Traffic Generation Report

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road schemes evaluated or re-evaluated so far in the light of the traffic appraisal unit's guidance following the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment report on traffic generation have been treated as complex or less complex in terms of guidance. [40588]

Mr. Watts: So far, the Highways Agency has considered 56 schemes in the light of the SACTRA report on induced traffic. The provisional assessments indicate that 12 are complex, 26 are intermediate and 18 are simple.

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many schemes currently in the national road programme he expects to categorise as complex when they are evaluated in the light of the guidance from the traffic appraisal unit following the SACTRA report on traffic generation. [40590]

Mr. Watts: In respect of the national road programme as a whole, the Highways Agency is undertaking SACTRA-induced traffic assessments for all schemes at the appropriate stage in their preparation. So far, 12 of the 56 schemes considered have been provisionally assessed by the agency as complex. But it would not be right to extrapolate that trend to the whole programme, in which there are approximately 300 active schemes. The induced traffic assessments have to be done on a scheme-by-scheme basis and we will not know the overall picture until this work has been completed.

Solent Light Dues

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers the inspector considering the Western Solent inquiry has, if the Western Solent comes under the control of a competent harbour authority, to direct that authority to make arrangements for the transfer of buoyage and the waiving of light dues for Isle of Wight ferries and other vessels. [40369]

Mr. Norris: The inspector would have no powers to direct any harbour authority to arrange for the transfer of buoyage responsibilities or the waiving of light dues for any vessel.

Fishing Vessels

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vessels on the United Kingdom register of fishing vessels are owned by interests based in the Netherlands. [39364]

Mr. Norris: This is an operational matter for the Marine Safety Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from R. M. Bradley to Dr. Gavin Strang, dated 2 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your Question about he number of UK registered fishing vessels owned by interests based in the Netherlands.

Unfortunately this information is not available. When the Merchant Shipping (Registration of Ships) Regulations 1993 came into force on 21 March 1994, the only eligibility requirement for companies wishing to register fishing vessels on the UK register was that they be incorporated in a member state of the European Economic Area with a place of business in the UK. It is therefore no longer necessary for the Register of Shipping and Seamen to know the nationality of shareholders and thus the information you require is not collected.

Channel Tunnel Rail Link

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will respond to the sixth report from the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, "The Channel Tunnel Rail Link and Exceptional Hardship", HC270. [41506]

Sir George Young: The Government responded yesterday to the Chairman of the Committee. A copy of the response has been placed in the Library.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 3 November 1995

ENVIRONMENT

Planning Policy Guidance

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the revised guidance paper No. 6 will be published. [40684]

Sir Paul Beresford: There have now been over 500 responses to the draft revised planning policy guidance note on town centres and retail developments. These are now being considered carefully. I hope to publish the final version on PPG6 early next year.

Local Government Debt, Manchester

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the current level of debt for each local authority in Greater Manchester; what was the figure for each year since 1988–89; and what are the equivalent figures for the whole of the Greater Manchester metropolitan area. [41099]

Sir Paul Beresford: The information from 1991 to 1995 is as follows:

Level of debt for each local authority in Greater Manchester

£ million

	At 31 March 1991	*At 31 March 1992*	*At 31 March 1993*	*At 31 March 1994*	*At 31 March 1995*
Bolton	215	216	146	152	157
Bury	117	115	82	80	87
Manchester	1,275	1,382	1,326	1,277	1,173
Oldham	274	274	242	242	258
Rochdale	248	278	212	204	209
Salford	450	467	403	376	425
Stockport	165	156	116	104	123
Tameside	248	262	186	183	188
Trafford	113	109	81	82	89
Wigan	276	278	250	237	244
Greater Manchester	3,381	3,538	3,045	2,937	2,953

1. The amounts include long-term borrowing undertaken in accordance with approvals issued under local authority capital finance legislation, and also temporary debt (less than one-year) to cover cash flow shortages.
2. Outstanding amounts for longer term borrowing are not collected regularly. There have been three surveys—in 1991, 1993 and 1994. Figures for 1992 and 1995 have been estimated using data on flows of longer term borrowing collected quarterly.
3. Part of the decrease in debt between 1992 and 1993 can be attributed to the commutation of the PWLB debt which took place in October 1992.

Trust Councils

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to introduce trust councils into local authority management. [41013]

Sir Paul Beresford: We have no plans for a trust councils initiative.

English Nature

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which members of the council of English Nature have management agreements with English Nature; and where. [41475]

Mr. Clappison: None of them.

DEFENCE

Laser Weapons

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many laser weapons that *(a)* have the potential to blind enemy troops and *(b)* the potential to disrupt their eyesight temporarily are possessed by the United Kingdom forces; and what development plans his Department has in this area.

Mr. Arbuthnot: I have nothing to add to the information contained in the letter from my noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Defence to the hon. Member dated 17 August 1995, a copy of which I have placed in the Library of the House.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40737]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40865]

Mr. Arbuthnot *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time civilian salaries in the Department, agencies and NDPBs fell within the band:

1994–95: Less than £5,000
1995–96: Less than £5,000

The highest full-time civilian salary in the Department fell within the band:

1994–95: £95,000—£99,999
1995–96: £95,000—£99,999

The highest full-time civilian salary in agencies fell within the band:

1994–95: £145,000—£149,999
1995–96: £145,000—£149,999

The highest full-time civilian salary in NDPBs fell within the band:

1994–95: £85,000—£89,999
1995–96: £85,000—£89,999

The highest military salary fell within the band:

1994–95: £115,000—£119,999
1995–96: £120,000—£124,999

and the lowest military salary fell within the band:

1994–95: £5,000—£9,999
1995–96: £5,000—£9,999

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many individuals in *(a)* his Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies received annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeding (i) 100,000, (ii) 200,000 and (iii) 300,000 in each year since 1985–86. [40864]

Mr. Arbuthnot *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Those who received annual remuneration above the sums specified, excluding pension benefits, in the years in question were:

(i) Exceeding £100,000

	Department	*Agencies*	*NDPBs*	*Military*
1985–86 to				
1990–91	0	0	0	0
1991–92	0	1	0	1
1992–93	0	1	0	2
1993–94	0	1	0	2
1994–95	0	1	0	2

(ii) and (iii)—no staff in the Department, agencies, NDPBs or the armed forces received remuneration in excess of £200,000 in the years in question.

Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies and NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pensions scheme or armed forces pensions scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the rules which have been deposited in the Library of the House.

PRIME MINISTER

Opposition Parties (Civil Service)

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Prime Minister what are the conventions whereby civil service Departments take steps to consult the Opposition about their policies towards the end of a Parliament; and when such steps are planned to be taken before the end of the current Parliament. [40883]

The Prime Minister: The convention has been that, by authority of the Prime Minister, towards the end of a Parliament or when a general election has been called, Opposition parties may arrange, with the authority of their party leaders and through the head of the civil service, contacts with senior civil servants. These arrangements are designed to allow briefing on factual questions on departmental organisational changes which Opposition parties have in mind or which may result from Opposition party policies. Any exchanges would be confidential. Following the last general election, I told the leader of the Opposition that I would be content to authorise confidential exchanges between senior civil servants and Opposition spokesmen from January 1996.

Copex Arms Exhibition

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Prime Minister what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other assistance is given by Her Majesty's Government to the Copex arms exhibition. [40094]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 27 November 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given yesterday by my right hon. Friend the President of the Board Trade.

Duke of Windsor (Papers)

Mr. Mackinlay: To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to his answer of 26 October, *Official Report,* column 747, how many other documents relating to the conduct of the Duke of Windsor during world war two are held by Her Majesty's Government. [40678]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* British official papers in question have been released to the Public Record Office with the exception of a few items, which will be re-reviewed under the open government initiative and released at the appropriate time.

Lockerbie

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations Her Majesty's Government have received from the Arab League in relation to Libyan sanctions and Lockerbie. [39290]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* None.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work force; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41123]

Mr. Hanley: Breakdowns by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—normally those engaged for a period of up to 12 months, but exceptionally up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

Hong Kong Overseas Public Servants

Mr. Gallie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Hong Kong overseas public servants. [41764]

Mr. Hanley: We plan to introduce legislation as soon as time allows. Copies of a draft Hong Kong (Overseas Public Servants) Bill are being made available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Foreign Affairs Council

Mr. Congdon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council on 30 October. [41696]

Mr. David Davis: The A points listed in document 11057/95, which will be deposited in the Library of the House as soon as it is available, were adopted unanimously.

The Council took note of resolutions in documents 9914/95 (PE-RE 61) and 10679/95 (PR-RE 67). A copy of these documents will be deposited in the Library of the House as soon as they are available.

An Association Council with Turkey took place. The Council decided on the implementation of the EU/Turkey Customs Union agreement.

The presidency noted Latvia's application to join the EU, lodged in Madrid on 27 October. The Council agreed on a formal acknowledgment referring to the procedure laid down in article 0 of the treaty.

The Council reached agreement on participation in the Euro-Mediterranean conference at Barcelona on 27 November.

The Council discussed a draft association agreement with Morocco. A special Foreign Affairs Council is to be convened on 10 November with the aim of reaching final agreement, preceded by discussion in the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

The Commission presented a communication on strengthening EU-Mexico agreement. This was remitted to COREPER for further discussion.

The Commission presented a draft Council decision for conclusion of the EU/Mercosur inter-regional framework agreement, which was remitted to COREPER.

The presidency reported on the Troika visit to the middle east. The head of the EU electoral unit reported on preparations for election monitoring. The Commission's communication on relations with the Palestinians was remitted to COREPER for detailed examination.

The Council discussed the setting up of the World Trade Organisation appellate body.

The Council discussed EU/US relations in preparation for the EU/US summit on 3 December.

The Council adopted a policy paper on former Yugoslavia, covering civilian aspects of implementation of an eventual peace settlement. The Council reaffirmed its support for the EU Mostar administrator's continuing efforts to unify the city.

LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT

Official Solicitor

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department when the present Official Solicitor commenced his appointment; by what mechanism the appointment is *(a)* made and *(b)* terminated; and what is the official address of the post. [40702]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The present Official Solicitor commenced his appointment on 1 August 1993, following an open competition. The appointment is statutory and is made by the Lord Chancellor under section 90 of the Supreme Court Act 1981. Under the provisions of the 1981 Act, as amended by the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990, the postholder has tenure until the completed year of service in which he or she attains the age of 62. In addition, the 1981 Act provides that the Lord Chancellor may remove the appointee from office on account of misbehaviour or on account of inability to perform the duties of the office. The official address of the post is:

The Official Solicitor to the Supreme Court
Official Solicitor's Department
81 Chancery Lane
London WC2 1DD

Acts of Parliament

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list those Acts of Parliament since 1979 which have not been brought into force either fully or in part. [40481]

Mr. John M. Taylor: On the basis of information available up to 27 October 1995, the following are the Public General Acts of Parliament since 1979, which, as at 1 November 1995, have not been brought into force either fully or in part:

Antarctic Minerals Act 1989 (c.21)
Smoke Detectors Act 1991 (c.37)
Osteopaths Act 1993 (c.21)
Road Traffic (Driving Instruction by Disabled Persons) Act 1993 (c.31)
Civil Evidence (family Mediation) (Scotland) Act 1995 (c.6)
Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (c.10)
Road Traffic (New Drivers) Act 1995 (c.13)
Land Registers (Scotland) Act 1995 (c.14)
Geneva Conventions (Amendment) Act 1995 (c.27)
Landlord and Tenant (Covenants) Act 1995 (c.30)

The following Acts are not yet in force but are due to come into force fully or in part on fixed dates in 1996:

Motor Cycle Noise Act 1987 (c.34)

Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 (c.12)

Merchant Shipping Act 1995 (c.21)

Shipping and Trading Interests (Protection) Act 1995 (c.22)

Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Act 1995 (c.23)

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Afghanistan

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further assistance he proposes to give to Afghanistan, in light of recent developments in that country and following the new inter-agency consolidated appeal from the United Nations. [41959]

Mr. Hanley: Following a detailed review of aid to Afghanistan by an ODA-led mission earlier this summer and in light of the UN appeal launched in October, my right hon. and noble Friend the Minister for Overseas Development has approved a package of further assistance amounting to £3.5 million, which will be provided through a number of UN agencies, as well as the International Red Cross and some UK-based non governmental organisations.

HEALTH

Retirement Ages

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the average retirement age of national health service employees, per professional group, in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [40437]

Mr. Sackville: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the NHS Pensions Agency under its chief executive, Mr. A. F. Cowan. I have asked him to reply to the hon. and learned Member.

Letter from A. F. Cowan to Mr. Alex Carlile, dated 3 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Health has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question as it falls within my area of responsibility.

Data is held centrally on the average age at retirement for the members of the NHS Pension Scheme in England and Wales over the period 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1994, split by broad professional groups. A more detailed breakdown by year of retirement is only available at disproportionate cost. The first table shows the average age at retirement in normal health excluding redundancies; the second table shows the average age on retirement in ill-health only.

Average age on normal retirement 1989–1994, excluding redundancies

Professional group	*Male*	*Female*
Administrative staff and hospital medical staff (excluding female nurses)	64	62
Mental health officer (non manual)	60	60
Manual workers (excluding MHO's)	64	61
Mental health officer (manual)	56	60
Medical Practitioner	63	63
Dental Practitioner	63	63
Female nurse, physiotherapist, midwife or health visitor	—	60

Average age on ill-health retirement only

Professional Group	*Male*	*Female*
Administrative staff and hospital medical staff (excluding female nurses)	51	51
Mental health officer (non manual)	49	49
Manual workers (excluding MHO's)	53	52
Mental health officer (manual)	50	50
Medical Practitioner	54	52
Dental Practitioner	51	49
Female Nurse, Physiotherapist, midwife, health visitor	—	50

GP Fundholding

Ms Jowell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the amount of money being held on behalf of fundholders at regional level by region for *(a)* 1992–93, *(b)* 1993–94 and *(c)* 1994–95. [36797]

Mr. Malone: The information requested is shown in the table. By 1994–95 there were 8,889 general practitioner fundholders covering 34 per cent. of the population, with budgets totalling £2.8 billion. Savings available for spending totalling £84 million—equivalent to 3 per cent. of 1994–95 budgets.

In any one year, a large proportion of the retained savings will date from the previous year and will not therefore be available for use until the final audit of fundholders' accounts has been completed. Savings may be retained for up to four years to be used for the benefit of patients of the practice.

	1992–93		*1993–94*		*1994–95*	
Region	*Number of GP fundholders*	*Net cumulative savings available for spending (£ million)*	*Number of GP fundholders*	*Net cumulative savings available for spending (£ million)*	*Number of GP fundholders*	*Net cumulative savings available for spending (£ million)*
Northern and Yorkshire	596	1.9	1,023	7.2	1,236	16.9
Trent	312	1.5	740	3.0	1,045	7.2
Anglia and Oxford	363	1.8	722	5.0	1,067	10.4
North Thames	349	1.7	705	3.6	894	7.2

Region	1992–93 Number of GP fundholders	1992–93 Net cumulative savings available for spending (£ million)	1993–94 Number of GP fundholders	1993–94 Net cumulative savings available for spending (£ million)	1994–95 Number of GP fundholders	1994–95 Net cumulative savings available for spending (£ million)
South Thames	387	2.3	749	3.5	1,345	8.6
South and West	442	1.3	755	4.5	1,103	9.1
West Midlands	322	2.5	687	5.7	1,098	14.7
North West	388	1.8	759	4.3	1,101	10.2
England	3,159	14.8	6,140	36.7	8,889	84.4

Source:

Regional offices.

Notes:

Savings spent in previous years or voluntarily returned to health authorities during the audit process are not included in the figures.

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38601]

Mr. Bowis: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of National Heritage on 31 October, *Official Report*, columns *186-87*.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list, for each NHS trust in the Trent region, those *(a)* chairmen and *(b)* non-executive directors who currently reside outside the boundaries of the district health authority in which that trust is situated. [38975]

Mr. Malone: For the latest information I refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave to the hon. Member for Sherwood (Mr. Tipping) and the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) on 2 November 1994, *Official Report*, columns *1231-32*. This information is not routinely collected. In order to provide the answers given on 2 November 1994, a special exercise was conduced. To update this information would mean repeating that exercise and incurring a disproportionate cost of approximately £7,000.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make it his policy to collate centrally the names of NHS trust chief executives who resign, or whose contracts are terminated together with the name of the trust involved and the amounts paid for loss of office; and if he will make a statement; [39545]

(2) if he will make it his policy to hold centrally records on how many employees of NHS trusts have been *(a)* dismissed, *(b)* made redundant, *(c)* given early retirement and *(d)* had their contracts revoked with compensation in excess of (i) the NHS redundancy provision, (ii) £100,000 gross and (iii) £250,000 gross; and if he will make a statement. [39543]

Mr. Malone: No.

Royal Hallamshire Hospital

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what current research the Royal Hallamshire hospital, Sheffield is carrying out for his Department; and what research it has carried out during the last 12 months. [39568]

Mr. Malone: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *35-37*.

Prescription Drugs

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list the 50 most expensive and 50 least expensive prescription drugs available in the NHS; what is the cost of each to the NHS; and how many prescriptions for each have been issued during the last 12 months for which records are available; [40698]

(2) what was the cost to the National Health Service of each of the 50 most commonly prescribed drugs for the latest available 12-month period; and how many prescriptions for each drug were issued. [40697]

Mr. Malone: The information requested cannot be supplied as it contains data which are confidential.

Cancer Specialists

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time cancer specialists are working in the NHS; in what specialties; and what were the corresponding numbers in each of the last five years. [40699]

Mr. Malone: The available information is shown in the table by grade for cancer specialties in England at 30 September each year.

Hospital medical staff by grade for cancer specialties in England at 30 September each year

Numbers

	1989 Medical oncology	1989 Clinical oncology	1989 Palliative medicine	1990 Medical oncology	1990 Clinical oncology	1990 Palliative medicine	1991 Medical oncology	1991 Clinical oncology	1991 Palliative medicine
All staff	100	520	30	100	530	40	120	550	50
Consultant	30	210	10	40	210	20	50	220	20
Staff grade[1]	—	—	—	—	0	—	—	10	—
Associate specialist	—	10	—	—	10	—	0	10	—

Hospital medical staff by grade for cancer specialties in England at 30 September each year

Numbers

	1989			*1990*			*1991*		
	Medical oncology	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*	*Medical oncology*	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*	*Medical oncology*	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*
Senior registrar	10	60	0	10	70	0	20	70	10
Registrar	10	80	0	10	80	0	20	80	0
Senior house officer	20	100	10	20	100	10	20	100	10
House officer	0	20	—	0	10	—	0	10	—
Other staff	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hospital practitioner	—	10	—	0	10	0	0	10	0
Clinical assistant	20	50	10	20	50	10	20	60	10

Numbers

	1992			*1993*			*1994*		
	Medical oncology	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*	*Medical oncology*	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*	*Medical oncology*	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*
All staff	160	530	80	170	520	100	190	560	130
Consultant	50	220	20	60	230	30	80	250	40
Staff grade[1]	—	10	0	0	20	0	0	20	0
Associate specialist	—	10	—	—	10	—	—	10	—
Senior registrar	20	50	10	30	50	20	30	50	20
Registrar	30	80	10	20	70	10	20	80	20
Senior house officer	30	100	10	30	100	10	20	100	10
House officer	10	10	—	10	10	—	0	10	—
Other staff	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hospital practitioner	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clinical assistant	20	50	20	30	40	30	30	40	30

[1] Staff grade is a new grade from 1989. — signifies a zero value.

O = signifies a number between '0' and '5'.

All figures are rounded to nearest '10'.

Whole time equivalents

	1989			*1990*			*1991*		
	Medical oncology	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*	*Medical oncology*	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*	*Medical oncology*	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*
All staff	70	450	20	70	460	30	80	480	30
Consultant	20	190	10	20	190	10	30	200	10
Staff grade[1]	—	—	—	—	0	—	—	10	—
Associate specialist	—	10	—	—	10	—	0	10	—
Senior registrar	10	50	0	10	60	0	20	60	0
Registrar	10	80	0	10	80	0	10	80	0
Senior house officer	20	100	0	20	100	10	20	100	10
House officer	0	20	—	0	10	—	0	10	—
Other staff	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hospital practitioner	—	0	—	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clinical assistant	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	10	0

Whole time equivalents

	1992			*1993*			*1994*		
	Medical oncology	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*	*Medical oncology*	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*	*Medical oncology*	*Clinical oncology*	*Palliative medicine*
All staff	120	460	60	120	450	70	140	490	80
Consultant	30	200	20	40	200	20	60	220	30
Staff grade[1]	—	10	0	0	10	0	0	10	0
Associate specialist	—	10	—	—	10	—	—	10	—
Senior registrar	20	50	10	20	50	20	30	50	20
Registrar	20	80	10	10	70	10	20	80	10
Senior house officer	30	100	10	30	100	10	20	100	10
House officer	10	10	—	10	10	—	0	10	—
Other staff	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hospital practitioner	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clinical assistant	10	10	0	10	10	10	10	10	10

[1] Staff grade is a new grade from 1989. — signifies a zero value.

O = signifies a number between '0' and '5'.

All figures are rounded to nearest '10'.

Psychiatric Patients

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many new beds have become available for psychiatric patients in NHS hospitals in 1995 and in each year since 1979; [41107]

(2) how many psychiatric patients have been moved from hospitals that have been closed down to alternative NHS hospitals in 1995 and in each year since 1979; [41105]

(3) how many psychiatric patients have moved from hospitals that have closed down to private psychiatric hospitals in 1995 and in each year since 1979. [41104]

Mr. Bowis: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current number of beds in private psychiatric hospitals; and what is was in each year since 1979. [41106]

Mr. Bowis: Information on the current number of beds in private hospitals in 1993–94 designated for mental illness and people with learning disabilities is published in "Private hospitals, homes and clinics registered under section 23 of the Registered Homes Act 1984", copies of which are available in the Library.

Prior to 1993–94, the data did not differentiate between hospitals/clinics and nursing homes.

Ballon Angioplasty

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if his Department has participated in the research carried out by Dr. Julian Gunn, Professor David Cumberland and Professor David Crossman in respect of patients suffering from angina after receiving balloon angioplasty; and if he will make a statement. [40952]

Mr. Malone: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *35–37*.

Ecstasy

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what research his Department has commissioned to discover whether the drug Ecstasy is demethylenated by human cytochrome P.4502D6 (CYP 2D6); and if he will make a statement; [41004]

(2) what research his Department has commissioned to discover whether the drug Ecstasy is a substitute for human CYP 2D6; and if he will make a statement. [41005]

Mr. Malone: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *35–37*.

Residential Care Homes

Mr. Butcher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the extent to which the conditions imposed on private residential homes and nursing homes in Coventry are within the scope of legal requirements or his Department's guidelines. [40897]

Mr. Bowis: Responsibility for the regulation of private residential care homes and nursing homes lies with the local authority and health authority respectively. It is for them to ensure that homes comply with statutory requirements and to develop local standards for registration. Guidance issued recently to authorities promotes sensible, pragmatic and consistent approaches in setting standards.

Individual Treatments

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received concerning his intention to remove grommets from the list of approved treatments; and what reasons were given for their removal. [41110]

Mr. Malone: No list of approved treatments exists. Health authorities and general practitioner fundholders are responsible for assessing the needs of the people they serve and deciding what treatments and services are required to meet those needs, within the framework of national priorities. Decisions about individual treatments are a matter for the individual clinician together with the patient, based on an assessment of clinical need, and taking account of available evidence of effectiveness.

Laryngectomies and Tracheotomies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will create a body that is able to answer questions and concerns from people who have undergone laryngectomies and tracheotomies. [39679]

Mr. Sackville: Surgeons and other professional staff in hospital ear, nose and throat departments are available to answer questions and address the concerns of patients undergoing this treatment. The National Association of Laryngectomy Clubs also provides advice and has branches attached to a number of hospitals which specialise in laryngectomies.

NHS Administration Costs

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the change in administration costs in the NHS since 1989–90; and how he intends to achieve the 5 per cent. cut in health authority spending on administration he announced on 11 October. [41516]

Mr. Malone: The table sets out health authority administration expenditure from 1989–90 to 1993–94, the latest year available. I expect the national health service executive regional offices to agree with individual authorities figures for the cost of running the authority for 1996–97 which will, in aggregate, deliver the 5 per cent. cash savings my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 11 October 1995.

Health authority administration expenditure 1989–90 to 1993–94

	£ million
1989–90	691
1990–91	871
1991–92	786
1992–93	900
1993–94	1,069

Source:
Summarised annual accounts of regional health authorities, district health authorities, special health authorities for the London postgraduate hospitals and family health services authorities/family practitioner committees.

Notes:
1. The figures represent the total revenue expenditure on pay and accommodation costs of staff of all disciplines and their support staff employed at headquarters levels.

2. RHA, DHA and SHA costs are reported in the accounts as "Authority administration and purchasing expenses". This includes capital charges from 1991–92. FHSA/FPC administration costs are those reported in the accounts as revenue administration costs and represent that part of the total expenditure which is not medical, dental, ophthalmic or pharmaceutical.

3. Changes in the years in the roles and responsibilities of family practitioner committees, which became family health services authorities in 1990, RHAs and DHAs, which started to transfer provider functions to NHS trusts in 1991–92, together with changes in accounting policies, particularly the inclusion of capital charges in health authorities' administration and purchasing expenditure, mean that the figures are not comparable.

Employment of Children

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, further to his announcement of 30 October *Official Report* column *42-43* regarding changes in child employment law, if he will publish details of the representations he has received recommending that the limit on children's work of two hours on a Sunday be increased to between five and eight hours; and if he will list the organisations and their papers submitted in support of this proposed change to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, as amended. [41388]

Mr. Bowis: The consultation I announced on 30 October is intended to provide us with the views of others on what in our view would be a sensible change to the current law.

Public Health Link

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health by what procedure general practitioners will be notified in the case of immediate category of notification procedure on the public health link system being activated. [41512]

Mr. Sackville: Following consultation with the profession, the chief medical officer wrote to all doctors on 24 February 1994 setting out the new arrangements for communications with the profession (PL CMO(94)3). Where there is a need to send information very quickly to doctors, the public health link system is activated. The message is transmitted electronically to district directors of public health who have the responsibility for forwarding it, with the minimum of delay, to the relevant health professionals. Every district has set up its own locally determined mechanisms for cascading the information. For example, some general practitioners would receive the information electronically via a local e-mail system, others by fax, others by courier, and in some instances the message could be conveyed by a telephone call.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of whether the public health link system of communications which uses the EPINET system will operate satisfactorily if the immediate category of notification procedure needs to be activated. [41511]

Mr. Sackville: The public health link system was set up in February 1994, following consultation with the profession and in response to a recognised need to get important urgent information to doctors. The system was first tested on 6 July 1994 when a test message was sent to district directors of public health to cascade to all doctors. This test message enabled districts to assess their local arrangements.

Since then the cascade system has been activated a further seven times, for example to provide information about Ebola virus and plague. The system has generally been welcomed and has worked well, though it is recognised that it is very difficult for each district to get information to each and every doctor within a few hours. Each use of the cascade has provided a valuable opportunity to assess and revise the local and central arrangements for cascading information. A list of the cascade messages, and chief medical officer letters and updates, is included in the annual report "On the State of the Public Health", copies of which are available in the Library.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whom he intends to consult in his review of the public health link procedure for notifying general practitioners that he announced in his statement to the House of 23 October, *Official Report,* columns 701–10, when he expects to conclude the review; and if he will publish the results. [41513]

Mr. Sackville: The review of arrangements for communicating urgent information to all doctors has already started. The results of the review will be discussed with the profession. We shall ensure that the conclusions from that review will be acted upon.

Dental Services

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by family health services authority the number of people registered with NHS dentists in England in *(a)* December 1993, *(b)* July 1994, *(c)* December 1994 and *(d)* July 1995. [41514]

Mr. Malone: This information will be placed in the Library.

Waiting Times

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement regarding the waiting times for patients of general practitioner fundholders and the patients of general practitioners who are not fundholders in the North and Mid-Hampshire health commission area. [41515]

Mr. Malone: This information is not available centrally.

WALES

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40749]

Mr. Hague: The information is not readily available in respect of all transport and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The cost of ministerial use of the official car service, a significant element of ministerial travel arrangements, over the five years is as follows:

1990–91: £144,209

1991–92: £158,535

1992–93: £170,062

1993–94: £174,069

1994–95: £176,452

Ministers who use their own vehicles are paid normal civil service rates. The cost in 1994–95 was £1,020 and in 1995–96 to date, £915. The cost of the previous three years is not readily available.

Council House Sales

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales he will list by local housing authority, *(a)* the amount each authority has used from the sale of council houses since April 1981 to pay off its debts, *(b)* the amount each authority currently has on deposit from the sale of council houses and *(c)* the amount saved in interest payments on debts in the case of *(a)* and the amount received in interest in the case of *(b)*. [40689]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The available information is given in the following tables.

£000

Authority	*Usable receipts from the sale of council houses available at 31 March 1995*	*Outstanding loan debt as at 31 March 1995*
Alyn and Deeside	521	35,067
Colwyn	569	27,763
Delyn	0	32,279
Glyndwr	456	11,980
Rhuddlan	397	27,743
Wrexham Maelor	992	74,603
Carmarthen	776	35,755
Ceredigion	1,170	21,618
Dinefwr	608	28,115
Llanelli	0	47,698
Preseli Pembrokeshire	2,597	41,828
South Pembrokeshire	1,209	21,090
Blaenau Gwent	2,199	103,856
Islwyn	390	50,848
Monmouth	3,585	45,849
Newport	7,642	122,004
Torfaen	2,660	83,132
Aberconwy	247	20,265
Arfon	0	29,695
Dwyfor	303	15,939
Meirionnydd	0	10,635
Ynys Mon	246	53,675
Cynon Valley	0	52,914
Merthyr Tydfil	345	64,194
Ogwr	633	74,913
Rhondda	0	87,253
Rhymney Valley	0	71,738
Taff Ely	532	41,957
Brecknock	1,188	31,614
Montgomeryshire	689	23,199
Radnorshire	399	13,239
Cardiff	7,053	183,971
Vale of Glamorgan	6,702	60,004
Port Talbot	0	40,166
Lliw Valley	0	39,742
Neath	0	39,981
Swansea	242	135,631
Clwyd	n/a	145,656
Dyfed	n/a	118,889
Gwent	n/a	171,914
Gwynedd	n/a	80,160
Mid Glamorgan	n/a	134,775
Powys	n/a	57,412
South Glamorgan	n/a	171,374
West Glamorgan	n/a	170,118
Dyfed /Powys Police Authority	n/a	4,377
Gwent Police Authority	n/a	4,050
North Wales Police Authority	n/a	3,179
South Wales Police Authority	n/a	11,306
Total Districts	44,350	1,901,954
Total Counties	n/a	1,050,298
Total Police Authorities	n/a	22,912
Total Wales	44,350	2,975,164

Source:

Local authority returns.

Failure to use sale proceeds to redeem existing debt would have resulted in correspondingly higher outstanding loan debt and correspondingly increased interest charges paid by council taxpayers in Wales.

European Regional Development Fund

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the technical meeting between his officials and those of the regional development directorate of the European Commission in relation to the supply of information material to the Welsh Office reduced grant in aid to the Welsh Development Agency and the additionality principle. [37814]

Mr. Hague *[holding answer 19 October 1995]:* I am pleased to say that the Commission has now accepted that European structural funds are properly spent in Wales and has released all previously blocked resources. Agreement has also been reached on improving the presentation of European regional development fund support made to the WDA and other public bodies in Wales.

Veterinary Services

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the availability of Welsh Office veterinary services in mid Wales. [39808]

Mr. Hague: The Government's veterinary field service provides veterinary services throughout Great Britain. VFS officers are employed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, but on a wide range of subjects, state veterinary service officers working in Wales do so on my behalf, in view of my responsibilities for matters such as farm animal health, welfare and meat hygiene.

A review of the VFS earlier this year recommended an improved and streamlined management structure, and the Government announced on 4 May a number of changes to the VFS. In future there will be fewer, larger VFS divisions, altering from four to three in Wales. The future VFS divisional offices in Wales will be located at Cardiff, Carmarthen and Caernarfon. The present VFS divisional office at Llandrindod Wells will remain as an area office, as will the current area office at Ruthin. The number of front-line veterinary and technical staff will stay the same.

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the cost of the assisted places scheme in Wales for each of the last three years for which figures are available. [40466]

Mr. Hague: Expenditure in Wales on the assisted places scheme for each of the financial years 1992–93 to 1994–95 was £2,457,230, £2,621,261 and £2,771,504 respectively.

Primary School Pupils

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many primary school pupils were taught in classes of more than 30 pupils, in total and as a percentage of all pupils, in each local authority in *(a)* January 1994 and *(b)* January 1995. [40429]

Mr. Hague: On the basis of provisional January 1995 schools census figures, there were some 67,800 pupils in ordinary classes of more than 30 in maintained primary schools in Wales in January 1994 and approximately 72,500 in January 1995; these pupils represented 26.5 per cent. of all pupils in ordinary classes in January 1994 and 28.0 per cent. in January 1995.

Information on the basis of individual local authorities is not currently available.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average annual cost of educating a primary school pupil in a class of 30 pupils. [40430]

Mr. Hague: The information requested is not available centrally.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

AGCO-Massey Ferguson Merger

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what discussions he or his officials have had regarding the AGCO takeover of certain Massey Ferguson operations in Coventry; and what notification he has received of expected job losses. [41284]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: None. In the first instance, it is for the Director General of Fair Trading to consider and advise my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade on all qualifying mergers under the Fair Trading Act 1973. That advice would take into account all relevant factors.

Investment (United States)

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what initiatives he has taken to attract United Kingdom firms to invest in the United States of America; and if he will make a statement. [40576]

Mr. Nelson: United Kingdom companies have a long history of investing in the United States. It is the most popular destination for direct investment overseas and the United Kingdom is the largest foreign investor in the United States.

My Department encourages British companies to consider the investment option in drawing up strategies for doing business with American companies. As one element of the "North America Now" trade promotion campaign we have a programme of help for United Kingdom companies seeking strategic partners in north America.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will estimate the number of individuals in his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeded (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000, (iii) £300,000 in (1) 1985–86, (2) 1990–91, (3) 1992–93, (4) 1994–95 and (5) 1995–96. [40815]

Mr. Jonathan Evans *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the department, agencies and NDPBs. No individual—in the Department, its agencies or its NDPBs has received remuneration, excluding pension benefits, above £100,000 in any of the years specified.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40816]

Mr. Jonathan Evans *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time salary in all three organisations fell within the band:

1994–95: £4,000–£8,999
1995–96: £4,000–£8,999

The highest full-time salary relating to civil servants in agencies fell within the bands:

1994–95: £65,000–£69,999
1995–96: £70,000–£74,999

and in the Department:

1994–95: £95,000–£99,999
1995–96: £95,000–£99,999

The highest full-time salary relating to non-civil servants in NDPB's fell within the band:

1994–95: £95,000–£99,999
1995–96: £95,000–£99,999

New Parliamentary Building

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Chairman of the Accommodation and Works Committee, pursuant to his answer of 23 October, *Official Report*, column *460*, what percentage of existing contracts have gone to British firms; when he expects the award of the cladding contract to be announced; and how many *(a)* UK cladding firms and *(b)* other firms have been invited to tender for the cladding contract. [40682]

Mr. Ray Powell: Many of the companies which are invited to tender for the new parliamentary building contracts are multi-national in either their ownership or their operations, or both. Consequently it is not possible to provide a precise answer about the use of "British firms".

Of the three major contracts let to date, two went to a British-based company. Numerous smaller contracts have been awarded for work which has been carried out almost entirely in the UK although the companies may not have been UK owned.

The tender list for the fenestration units reflected the fact that the cladding industry tends to be dominated by continental European companies. Initially, five companies were invited to tender at least two of which have a significant UK presence. Negotiations are still underway to determine which of the offers is the most competitive in terms of both time and cost. An announcement is not expected this year.

SCOTLAND

Waverley Court, Paisley

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his best estimate of the total cost to the public purse of keeping Waverley court at Foxbar in Paisley empty for six years following a decision by Scottish Homes to dispose of it to the private sector; what were the costs in terms of *(a)* lost rental income, *(b)* resettlement allowances, *(c)* decoration payments, *(d)* removal expenses, *(e)* furniture storage expenses, *(f)* other rehousing payments and costs, *(g)* staff time in developing the package, *(h)* staff time in consultation with individual tenants or groups of tenants, *(i)* staff time in briefing, consulting, guiding and instructing outside bodies, *(j)* staff time in working with potential developers, *(k)* loss of rental income for the whole period, *(l)* all consultancy fees relating to the building during the whole period and *(m)* other costs; what will be the cost of demolishing the building and clearing the site; what action he intends to take to ensure such events cannot occur again; and if he will make a statement. [39188]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: The information requested is a matter for Scottish Homes and I have asked its chairman, Sir James Mellon, to write to the hon. Member.

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will seek a meeting with the chairman of Scottish Homes to discuss the cost to the public purse of its decision to evacuate Waverley court at Foxbar in Paisley six years ago; if he will instruct an investigation into the circumstances which caused Scottish Homes to seek disposal of the building to the private sector without first checking that private sector financiers were willing to lend or enter into mortgages on the property or its component parts; if he will instruct the board of Scottish Homes to instruct disciplinary investigations arising from the performance of its officials in this episode; and if he will launch a full-scale investigation into the loss of public funds; [39189]

(2) if he will launch a public inquiry into the possible misuse of public funds, maladministration and negligence of Scottish Homes in relation to Waverley court at Foxbar in Paisley. [39173]

Mr. Robertson: My right hon. Friend is aware of the corrrespondence between the hon. Member and the chairman of Scottish Homes and has no plans to initiate any inquiry into the matter.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list visits made by him and each of his Ministers since they were appointed to the Scottish Office, and if he will make a statement. [39207]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Since taking up my present appointment I have made one visit overseas. This was to the Fisheries Council in Luxembourg on 26 October. Details of visits undertaken by other Scottish Office Ministers are given in the table.

Date	*Location*
Lord James Douglas-Hamilton	
15 September to 19 September 1995	Helsinki
8 October to 10 October 1995	Stockholm
Mr. Raymond Robertson MP	
17 October 1995	Brussels
Mr. George Kynoch MP	
26 August to 31 August 1995	Taiwan
24 October to 29 October 1995	USA
Earl of Lindsay	
3 October 1995	Cologne
30 October to 2 November 1995	Washington

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what grants or other financial assistance have been awarded by the Scottish Office, in the financial year 1995–96, to organisations representing children with specific speech or language disorders; and what assistance has been given to organisations representing children with other physical disadvantages. [40170]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: A range of organisations represent children with special educational needs, including children with physical disadvantages and also speech and language disorders. Funding has been given by the Scottish Office to the following organisations in this area in the current financial year.

Organisation	*Amount* £
Children in Scotland	170,000
Disability Scotland	275,592
*en*ABLE	25,755
Epilepsy Association of Scotland	3,500
Family Fund	2,270,600
Royal National Institute for Deaf People	30,000
Royal National Institute for the Blind	27,000
Scottish Association for the Deaf	7,993
Sense Scotland	47,083
Scottish Council for Spastics	24,000
Spinal Injuries Scotland	15,372

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which of the organisations listed as useful contacts in the Scottish Office parents' guide to special educational needs *(a)* provide a helpline to families on record of needs, *(b)* provide written guidance or advice to supplement the official literature on record of needs arrangements and procedures and *(c)* provide support or speak for parents of children at record of needs meetings or appeals. [40169]

Mr. Robertson: The 27 organisations listed in the parents' guide to special educational needs provide a variety of advice and assistance to parents of children and young persons with special educational needs. Detailed information on the services offered by each of the organisations listed is not held centrally; however, their telephone numbers are listed.

Organisation	*Telephone numbers*
Association for all Speech Impaired Children	0171–236 3632 0171–236 6487
Barnardo's	0131–334 9893
British Red Cross Society	0141–332 9591
Catholic Education Commission	0141–943 0494
Children in Scotland[1]	0131–228 8484
Church of Scotland	0131–225 5722
Disability Scotland	0131–229 8632
Dyslexia Institute	0141–334 4549
Epilepsy Association of Scotland	0141–427 4911
ENABLE[2]	0141–226 4541
Linking Education and Disability (LEAD)	0131–339 5408
National Deaf Children's Society	0171–229 9272
National Federation of Blind of the UK	01924–291313
Royal Institute for the Blind	0171-388 1266
Royal National Institute for the Deaf	0171-387 8033
Royal National Institute for the Blind	0131–225 6242
Royal National Institute for the Deaf	0141–332 0343
Scottish Association for the Deaf	0131–556 8137
Scottish Consumer Council	0141–226 5261
Scottish Council for Spastics	0131–337 9876
Scottish Dyslexia Association	01786–446650
Scottish Downs Syndrome Association	0131–313 4225
Scottish National Federation for the Welfare of the Blind	01463–233663
Scottish Society for Autistic Children	0131–557 0474
Scottish Spina Bifida Association	0131–332 0743
SENSE IN SCOTLAND	0141–221 7577
Spinal Injuries Scotland[3]	0141–440 0960

[1] Formerly Scottish Child and Family Alliance.

[2] Formerly Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped.

[3] Formerly Scottish Spinal Cord Injury Association.

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what grants or other financial assistance have been awarded by the Scottish Office, in the financial year 1995–96, to organisations currently listed in the Scottish Office parents' guide to special educational needs to enable them to equip themselves with the necessary information to offer appropriate advice or guidance to parents. [40173]

Mr. Robertson: Of the organisations listed in the current edition of a parents' guide to special educational needs, those shown have received funding from the Scottish Office in the current financial year. It is not possible to say what proportion of the funding shown is used by the organisations for provisions of advice or guidance to parents of children with special educational needs. Detailed information on that aspect is a matter for the individual organisation concerned.

Organisation	*Amount (£)*
Children in Scotland	170,000
Disability Scotland	275,592
enABLE	25,755
Epilepsy Association of Scotland	3,500
Royal National Institute for Deaf People	30,000
Royal National Institute for the Blind	27,000
Scottish Association for the Deaf	7,993
Scottish Consumer Council	20,500
Sense Scotland	47,083
Scottish Council for Spastics	24,000
Spinal Injuries Scotland	15,372

New Homes

Mr. Chisholm: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many new homes have been started by *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* housing associations in each year since 1974; and what is his estimate of the likely number of starts in 1995–96 and 1996–97. [39929]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Raynsford) on 24 October, *Official Report*, column *510*.

Beaufort Dyke

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the full nature and extent of the independent marine survey of the Beaufort dyke area announced by his Department on 24 October with particular reference to *(a)* sonary soundings, *(b)* investigation by divers, *(c)* other physical checks and *(d)* video investigations; if he will undertake to publish the report in full; and if he will make a statement. [40221]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* The Under-Secretary with responsibility for industry—my hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Kynoch)—told the House on 24 October, that the routine monitoring survey, planned for next spring by the Department's marine laboratory, Aberdeen to determine the effect on the marine environment of the munitions dump sites in the Beaufort dyke area, would be brought forward to mid-November this year. In view of the Government's concern for public safety over the arrival of large quantities of phosphorus canisters on the foreshore of the Clyde estuary and surrounding islands, the survey has been extended in an attempt to identify their source and whether they were disturbed by recent pipeline trenching operations in the area. The fisheries research vessel Clupea will undertake the survey in mid-November. The work will comprise:

> analysis of sea bed sediment samples and a trawl survey to confirm that there has been no environmental contamination resulting from munitions dumping;
>
> exploratory under-water television studies and side-scan sonar investigations to confirm the distribution of any dumped munitions;
>
> analysis of commercially exploited fish and shellfish species to ascertain the presence of contaminants that may be related to dumping activity;

The survey will not include investigation by divers.

The results of the survey will be published when available.

Forestry Commission

Mrs. Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people are employed by the Forestry Commission on *(a)* a part-time and *(b)* a full-time basis in (i) Scotland, (ii) England, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland. [40670]

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* The number of people employed by the Forestry Commission is:

Country	*Part-time employees*	*Full-time employees*
Scotland	166	1,859
England	161	1,315
Wales	45	474

These figures do not include contractors working in Forestry Commission forests.

The Forestry Commission does not operate in Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much land *(a)* in acres and *(b)* in percentage terms is owned by the Forestry Commission in (i) Scotland (ii) England (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland. [40671]

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* The information is as follows:

Country	*Forestry Commission land (acres)*	*Percentage of total land in each country*
England	660,000	2.1
Scotland	1,700,000	8.9
Wales	331,000	6.5

The Forestry Commission does not manage land in Northern Ireland.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Higher Education

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the proportion of young people from Northern Ireland entering higher education in *(a)* 1993–94 and *(b)* 1994–95; and if he will make a statement. [29023]

Mr. Ancram: The proportion of young people from Northern Ireland entering higher education was 36.4 in 1993–94 and 37.2—provisional—in 1994–95.

Fold Housing Association

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to what extend the figure in the Department of the Environment approved rules of 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. of tenants in the Fold Housing Association being actively able to help its fellow tenants is being met; and what assessment he had made of the adequacy of the target figure. [40559]

Mr. Moss: Information on Fold Housing Association's target balance between active and less active tenants in sheltered housing is not collated or monitored by the Department. The need for such a balance is currently being considered in a review of the social housing needs of older people which is jointly being carried out by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations. It is hoped that the report will be produced before the end of this year. I will arrange for copies to be forwarded to the hon. and learned Member and placed in the Library.

Tuition Fees (Grants)

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many students from Northern Ireland have their tuition fees paid while attending educational institutions in the Irish Republic; [40560]

(2) what are the estimated savings to the Northern Ireland budget from the 1996–97 academic year onwards arising from students from Northern Ireland at public sector educational institutions in the Irish Republic no longer being required to have their tuition fees paid by education and library boards in Northern Ireland; and how many students in the last year have been paid grants in respect of their applications meeting the eligibility requirement of United Kingdom residence and schooling in the Irish Republic during the last three years. [40561]

Mr. Ancram: In the 1994–95 academic year tuition fees were paid for 1,622 students from Northern Ireland attending education institutions in the republic of Ireland. Final figures are not available for the current academic year.

The savings referred to are estimated at £1.7 million in the 1996–97 financial year and at £2 million in both the 1997–98 and 1998–99 financial year.

Some 583, 891 and 1,370 Northern Ireland students attending institutions of higher education in the Republic of Ireland were in receipt of maintenance grant in the last three academic years.

Graduates

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was *(a)* the number of Northern Ireland graduates, *(b)* the number and proportion of graduates recruited in the Northern Ireland civil service, *(c)* the number of recruits overall, *(d)* the number and proportion of the total who were graduates and were taken on in jobs where a degree was an eligibility requirement, *(e)* the number and proportion of recruits to the general and administrative grades where a degree was a requirement and *(f)* the number of graduates recruited to grades where a degree was not an eligibility requirement in each of the last three years. [40562]

Sir John Wheeler: The number of Northern Ireland graduates for 1992–93 and 1993–94, and the number of recruits overall and details of graduates recruited to permanent non-industrial posts in the Northern Ireland civil service for 1992–93, 1993–94 and 1994–95 are set out in the following table:

	1992–93	Per cent.	1993–94	Per cent.	1994–95	Per cent.
(a) Number of NI graduates[1]	3,843	—	4,220	—	n/a	—
(b) Number and proportion of graduates recruited to NI Civil Service	277	7.2	102	2.4	99	n/a
(c) Number of recruits overall to NI Civil Service[2]	1,554	—	633	—	540	—
(d) Number and proportion of recruits where degree required	132	47.6	36	35.3	40	40.4
(e) Number and proportion of recruits to general and administrative grades where degree required	6	2.2	6	5.9	1	1.0
(f) Number of graduates recruited where degree not required	142	—	66	—	54	—

[1] Northern Ireland domiciled graduates from Northern Ireland universities. Figures not yet available for 1994–95.

[2] Non-industrial permanent recruits. Includes recruits who obtained a degree since appointment.

Community Alarms

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consultation he had with health and social services boards or trusts prior to issuing guidance to social security offices which led to applicants requiring community alarms being refused community care grants to purchase them; and when he intends to rectify the situation. [41474]

Mr. Moss: Responsibility for the subject in question has been delegated to the Social Security Agency under its chief executive, Mr. Alec Wylie. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Alec Wylie to Mr. Clifford Forsythe, dated 3 November 1995:

I have been asked to reply to your recent question on the provision of Community Care Grants for Community Alarm Systems.

I should first of all assure you that there has been no recent change in policy regarding the provision of grants from the Social Fund for Community Alarm systems. The position is that the Health and Social Service Boards/Trusts (HSSB/Ts) are responsible for the provision of a wide range of services under the government's community care policies. This provision can include community alarm systems, but it is a matter for the individual Boards to decide what resources should be made available from their overall budget for any particular form of help.

Social Fund Community Care Grants complement these provisions and a person who is getting Income Support may be entitled to a grant for the purchase of a Community Alarm System. In considering awards, Social Fund Officers must look carefully at all the circumstances of each individual case including the possibility that help may be available from another source such as the HSSB/Ts. Thus the need for close liaison between the Social Security Agency and the local social services departments.

Internal procedural guidance on this subject was issued earlier in the year but unfortunately some offices did not interpret this correctly and applicants were wrongly advised to contact the HSSB/Ts for help. Steps have already been taken to ensure that all applications for Community Care Grants for community alarms are handled correctly. In addition, offices have been asked to identify and review those cases which were incorrectly handled.

I hope this helps explain the position for you.

Bankruptcy Petitions

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40514]

Sir John Wheeler *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Responsibility for the subject in question has been delegated to the Rate Collection Agency under its chief executive, Mr. D. W. Gallagher. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from D. W. Gallagher to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 2 November 1995:

You asked the Secretary of State how many Petitions for Bankruptcy have begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years.

The numbers of Petitions for Bankruptcy and Winding-Up actions begun by the Rate Collection Agency for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years is as follows:

1991–92: 27

1992–93: 147

1993–94: 92

1994–95: 94

1995–96: 60

I hope you find this information helpful.

TREASURY

Unemployment

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the level of unemployment among 16 to 24-year-olds from ethnic minority backgrounds in each year since 1992–93. [39677]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Estimates from the labour force survey are shown in the table.

ILO unemployed persons aged 16 to 24 from ethnic minority groups Great Britain

Spring	Number
1992	76,000
1993	77,000
1994	74,000
1995	76,000

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the level of unemployment among 16 to 24-year-olds in each year since 1992–93. [39676]

Mrs. Knight *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* Claimant unemployment by age, for the months of January, April, July and October, and ILO unemployment by age, for the quarters spring, summer, autumn and winter, can be obtained from the NOMIS database accessed by the House of Commons Library.

Bank of Credit and Commerce International

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the progress of litigation between the liquidators of BCCI and the Bank of England. [41332]

Mrs. Knight: The matter is before the court and it is not possible to comment further in these circumstances.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next intends to meet the Governor of the Bank of England to discuss the liquidation of BCCI and the issue of the liquidators' writ against the Bank of England. [41333]

Mrs. Knight: My right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor and the Governor meet regularly to discuss a range of issues.

Tax Evasion

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many full-time equivalent staff were employed by the Inland Revenue on tax evasion investigations and at what cost in each of the last five years. [37923]

Mr. Jack: Approximate numbers of staff units—full-time equivalent staff—and their cost, are as follows:

	Staff units	*Cost £m*
1990–91	3,200	103
1991–92	3,400	115
1992–93	3,500	124
1993–94	3,800	137
1994–95	4,400	166

The figures for 1994–95 cannot be compiled on a basis exactly comparable with earlier years, owing to a change in the way these figures are maintained. Unlike previous years, they include details of staff employed on all employer compliance work.

Pension Schemes

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the average contribution to personal or occupational pension schemes by employees *(a)* under 40 years old, *(b)* between 40 and 50 years old and *(c)* over 50 years old, expressing the figures both in cash terms and as a percentage of gross income. [39092]

Mr. Jack: Latest provisional information for 1995–96 is as follows:

Age	*Average contribution to a personal or occupational pension scheme £*	*As a percentage of Gross income*	*Income from employment*
Under 40	800	4.5	4.5
Between 40 and 50	1,100	5.0	5.5
Over 50	1,200	5.5	6.5

Public Appointments

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list the public appointments for which his Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating in each case the duration of the appointment, the date when a new appointment is due, and the salary; [39431]

(2) if he will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which his office makes appointments in the county of South Yorkshire, with the total annual budget of each body and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years. [39468]

Mrs. Angela Knight: The Chancellor's Departments and agencies make no appointments to non-departmental public bodies in the county of South Yorkshire.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work force; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41111]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Breakdowns by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—normally those engaged for a period of up to 12 months, but exceptionally up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

Child Benefit

Mr. Peter Bottomley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of employment changes each year to parents of children eligible to child benefit. [41139]

Mrs. Angela Knight: The latest available estimates from the labour force survey show that in spring 1994 there were 9.3 million parents in Great Britain who were eligible to claim child benefit—with a child aged zero to 15 or 18 or under full-time education. Among those in this group who were in employment in both spring 1993 and spring 1994, 757,000 changed their employment at least once during the intervening period.

Regional Expenditure

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide a breakdown for the current financial year for each standard planning region in England, for expenditure on *(a)* agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry, *(b)* trade, industry, energy and employment, *(c)* road and transport, *(d)* housing, *(e)* other environmental services, *(f)* law, order and protection services, *(g)* education, *(h)* national heritage, *(i)* health and personal social services and *(j)* social security. [41050]

Mr. Waldegrave: No information is currently available on expenditure in 1995–96 attributed to each English standard planning region. An annual exercise to collect regional figures for general Government expenditure for one outturn year only is carried out annually. A functional breakdown of regional expenditure will be given for financial year 1993–94 in the statistical supplement to the "Financial Statement and Budget Report", which will be published in March 1996.

Michael Allcock

Mr. Byers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if Ministers have signed public interest immunity certificates in the case of Inland Revenue *v.* Michael Allcock. [38195]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 24 October 1995]:* No Treasury Minister has signed public interest immunity certificates in connection with the prosecution of the Inland Revenue employee, Michael Allcock, which is being conducted by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Capital Allowances

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the cost of tax relief in the latest available year for capital allowances to businesses with gross profits of *(a)* £1 million, *(b)* £2 million, *(c)* £3 million, *(d)* £4 million, *(e)* £5 million and *(f)* £10 million. [40770]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The latest estimates for 1995–96 are:

£ million

Business with gross profits (lower limit)	*Cost of Tax relief for capital allowances*
[1]0	3,500
1	500
2	500
3	300
4	300
5	1,100
10	9,000
Total	15,200

[1] Includes businesses with current year losses.

Economic and Finance Council

Ms Quin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the EU ECOFIN Council of 23 October. [40114]

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* I represented the United Kingdom at the Economic and Finance Council of the European Union in Luxembourg on 23 October.

The Council welcomed Finland's convergence programme.

The Council agreed, in principle, that a single, short report on employment prepared by representatives of the Economic Policy Committee, the Commission and the Social Affairs Council be submitted to the Madrid European Council.

The Council considered a communication from the Commission on the approximation of excise duty rates, in which all that is proposed is further detailed consultation.

The Council discussed the loan guarantee fund and specifically the level of the guarantee from the Community budget for European investment banks external lending. Most member states agreed that the level of the guarantee should be reduced from 100 per cent. to 75 per cent. It was decided that further work was required on the conditions of the guarantee.

The Council mandated the Committee of Perparent Representatives and the financial questions working group to continue work on a Commission proposal for a directive on a carbon/energy tax, providing a framework for those member states wishing to levy such a tax.

There were discussions with the Finance and Economic Ministers of the central and east European countries on banking and financial issues.

National Lottery

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if it is his policy to review the 12 per cent. tax rate set in relation to expenditure on the national lottery; and if he will make a statement; [40831]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effect on the annual total tax yield as a consequence of the establishment and tax treatment of the national lottery; if he will publish his Departments assessment; and if he will make a statement. [40826]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* The then Chancellor, the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Thames (Mr. Lamont), said in his Budget statement on 16 March 1993, *Official Report* column 192:

> "I have taken into account the level of tax on other forms of gambling and the extent to which spending is likely to be diverted from other taxed activities. Much, of course, will depend on how the lottery develops and I shall keep the position under review, but for the first year of its operation, I propose that national lottery tickets should be taxed at a rate of 12 per cent.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor has kept the position under review, but I cannot anticipate his Budget statement.

Pay Review Bodies

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when *(a)* the recommendations of the pay review bodies and *(b)* the Government's conclusions on the pay review bodies will be published. [40732]

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* We expect to publish the pay review body reports by early February as usual, and to give the Government's response at the same time.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Fisheries Council

Ms Quin: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the outcome of the EU Fisheries Council of 26 October. [40116]

Mr. Baldry *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Medway (Dame P. Fenner) on 31 October, *Official Report*, columns *213–14*.

Late Payment (Small Businesses)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how often his Department and each agency within it has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. [40535]

Mr. Boswell *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* The information is not available in the format requested. From 1991 to 1994 prompt payment performance was measured by a manual sampling process, not restricted to small businesses. This sampling established MAFF's overall payment performance including payments to farm businesses, many of which will be small businesses, as:

1990–91: not recorded

1991–92: 77 per cent.

1992–93: 85 per cent.

1993–94: 85 per cent.

1994–95: n/a—see below

During 1994 MAFF was in the process of installing a computerised payments system and as a result consistent, statistically valid data on prompt payment performance could not be collected. Data emerging from the new system indicate 85.41 per cent. of all payments made by MAFF in the first quarter of 1995–96 were made by the due date. Strategies are in place to provide more refined data from 1 April 1996, including performance on payments to small business; and to use these data to secure further improvements in MAFF's prompt payment record.

Responsibility for this matter is delegated to agencies, and I have asked the chief executives to reply direct.

Letter from Johnston McNeill to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 3 November 1995:

As Chief Executive of the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS), your question regarding payment of invoices has been passed to me for reply with regard to this Executive Agency. As you may know, the MHS was established on 1 April this year. Therefore, we do not have sufficient data to provide you with an answer, such information would be collated after a full year of operation. [40535]

I can advise you, however, that the MHS is committed to payment of all invoices within timescales agreed with our suppliers. We have procedures in place to monitor payments to ensure that this is adhered to. In particular, we pay careful attention to the payment of our veterinary contractors. We have 176 practices supplying the majority of our veterinary services in meat plants. It is important to us that we maintain good working relations with these practices, many of which are small firms. We realise that one of the best ways of doing this is through prompt payment of their bills and ensure that this is done.

Letter from T. W. A. Little to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 3 November 1995:

The Minister has asked me to reply to your question on the timing of invoice payments to small businesses. [40535]

Over the last five years, the policy of the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (known as the Central Veterinary Laboratory until 30 September 1995) has been to pay all invoices within 30 days. Where we know that we are dealing with a small business, we aim to pay within 5 to 10 days. We are not aware of any failures to apply this policy although, clearly, in cases of disputes with suppliers, settlement will tend to take a little longer.

Letter from Professor P. I. Stanley to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 3 November 1995:

You asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food about the number of times his Department and Agencies have failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days in each of the last five years. The Central Science Laboratory (CSL) became a MAFF executive agency in April 1992 and the Minister has asked me to reply to you in respect of the period since then, as this is an operational matter for which I am responsible. [40535]

When CSL invoices are paid no differentiation is made between the size of businesses and so, the information is not available in the form you have requested. However since 1993 the Agency has measured overall prompt payment performance by manual sampling of supplier invoices. This sampling indicates that the percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of the invoice date has been as follows:

1993/94: 80%

1994/95: 90%

1995/96: 86%

Letter from G. K. Bruce to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 3 November 1995:

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has asked me to reply, in respect of the Pesticides Safety Directorate (PSD), to your question about payment of invoices to small businesses. [40535]

The Pesticides Safety Directorate was established as an Agency on 1 April 1993. We continue to rely on the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to effect our payments and up to the time of our relocation to York in October 1994 it was not possible to identify our payment processing performance separately from that of our core Department. Since our relocation we have put in place a system to monitor performance on a sample basis. Our records show that so far during 1995/96, 98% of all valid invoices and 100% of invoices to small businesses have been paid within 30 days of receipt.

Letter from Phillip Needham to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 3 November 1995:

The Minister of Agriculture has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question (Number 1953) in which you asked how often each Agency has failed to pay invoices due to small businesses within 30 days for the last five years. [40535]

ADAS was formed as a Next Steps Agency in 1992. In our Report and Accounts 1994/95 (which is lodged in the library of the House of Commons), we state that it is our policy to pay suppliers against invoice within agreed trading terms.

Unfortunately, we could not extract the information you require without disproportionate costs to this agency.

Letter from Dr. J. M. Rutter, to Mrs. Barbara Roche, dated 3 November 1995:

The Minister has asked me to reply to your question about the time taken by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) to pay invoices due to small businesses, as this is an operational matter for which I am responsible.

In arranging payment of invoices, we make no distinction between those due to small or large businesses, but aim to pay them all within 30 days or the terms of the invoice if less. Since the VMD was established as a Next Steps Agency in April 1990, payment of invoices has been carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on our behalf. Information on core MAFF payment performance contained in the reply to your question from the Minister, therefore also embraces that for the VMD.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Doncaster Prison

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have been relocated to Doncaster because of disturbances at other establishments since Doncaster prison was opened; what was their grade; and if he will make a statement. [40950]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 3 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the number of prisoners who have been relocated to Doncaster because of disturbances at other establishments since Doncaster prison was opened; their grade, and if he will make a statement.

Doncaster prison received a number of convicted prisoners from Everthorpe prison after a disturbance there on 2/3 January 1995. Doncaster has also received other individual prisoners involved in disturbances at other prisons, but these figures are not recorded locally or at Prison Service headquarters.

Clacton Police Station

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his Department was notified by Essex police force that a time capsule was being buried beneath Clacton police station on 23 August; what was the cost of the operation; what was placed in the capsules; and if he will make a statement. [40951]

Mr. Maclean: Neither I nor my Department would expect to be notified about such a local matter. I understand that the capsule, which cost £50, was buried in the foundations of the new police station now being constructed in Clacton at no additional cost to the building project. It contains some 29 items among which are a photograph album of the old station, handcuffs, fingerprinting kit, custody record and a book of comments by serving staff. Although the decision is an entirely local one, it seems to me an entirely suitable and inexpensive way of preserving for posterity the hard work and endeavours of these local police officers who serve their community so well.

Boot Camps

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the planned regimes for the proposed boot camps. [40639]

Miss Widdecombe: On 18 September, my right hon. and learned Friend announced details of the new high intensity training regime to be introduced next June at Thorn Cross young offender institution. The regime will have discipline and hard work as its foundation and the emphasis will be on personal responsibility underlined throughout by very strict standards of behaviour. A typical day will begin at 6 am sharp with drill followed by an intensive schedule of training, education, work and other physical activity. The day will end with lights out at 10 pm.

Discussions are taking place between officials from the Prison Service and Ministry of Defence about the possibility of establishing a young offender institution at the military corrective training centre at Colchester.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what estimates he has made of the proportion of asylum seekers originating from *(a)* Sri Lanka and *(b)* Nigeria who reached the United Kingdom via a last point of departure in the European continent in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement on the practice of interrupted travel to the final destination; [40708]

(2) what proportion of applications for asylum from nationals of *(a)* Sri Lanka, *(b)* Nigeria and *(c)* Algeria are made by persons already resident in the United Kingdom as visitors, tourists and students; and if he will make a statement. [40707]

Mr. Kirkhope: The number of applications made by nationals of Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Algeria and the percentages of when the application was made is given in the table.

Information on the number of applications for asylum from people who reached the United Kingdom via another European country is not separately identifiable.

Asylum applications of nationals of Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Algeria, January to September 1995

	Sri Lanka	*Nigeria*	*Algeria*
Total asylum applications	1,510	4,550	1,409
Applied in-country of which:			
those with leave to remain	7 per cent.	14 per cent.	12 per cent.
out-of-time applications	4 per cent.	20 per cent.	8 per cent.
illegal entrants and means of entry unknown	38 per cent.	47 per cent.	68 per cent.
Applied at port of entry	51 per cent.	19 per cent.	12 per cent.

Female Prison Escapees

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many female prisoners have *(a)* escaped from an establishment, *(b)* escaped from an escort, *(c)* attempted to escape from an establishment, *(d)* attempted to escape from an escort, *(e)* absconded from an establishment and *(f)* absconded from an escort, in each of the last three years. [40640]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. George Howarth, dated 3 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking how many female prisoners have (a) escaped from an establishment; (b) escaped from an escort; (c) attempted to escape from an establishment; (d) attempted to escape from an escort; (e) absconded from an establishment; and (f) absconded from an escort, in each of the last three years.

The information is given in the attached table. There are no absconds from escort—only escapes.

	Escapes from establishment	*Escapes from escort*[1]	*Attempted escape from escort*	*Attempted escape from escort*	*Abscond from establishment*
1 April 1992–31 March 1993	6	9	—	4	126
1 April 1993–31 March 1994	1	8	—	2	126
1 April 1994–31 March 1995	5	6	2	6	174
1 April 1995–30 September 1995	—	2	—	1	54

[1] Includes escapes from the court escort service which would have been the responsibility of the police service in previous years (1 in 1993).

1. Figures for escapes from escort exclude recaptures within 15 minutes provided that no further offence has been committed.

2. Figures for attempted escapes and attempted escapes from escort include those recaptured within 15 minutes where no further offence was committed.

Prison Officers

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the total numbers of *(a)* prison officers, *(b)* senior officers, *(c)* principal officers and *(d)* prisoner custody officers, in the Prison Service; if he will list the number and percentage of each grade who are identified as of ethnic minority origin; and if he will make a statement. [40455]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. George Howarth, dated 3 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the number of staff in the prison officer grades and equivalents in the Prison Service and the number of those who are of ethnic minority origin.

The information for 3 October 1995 is given in the following table.

Grade	*Total number*	*Number from ethnic minorities*	*Per cent of total*
Prison Officer	19,539	476	2.4
Senior Officer	3,531	43	1.2
Principal Officer	1,332	8	0.6

On the same date there were 728 prisoner custody officers at contractually managed prisons, of whom 23 (3.16%) were from ethnic minorities.

DNA Samples

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the 11,000 DNA samples referred to in his speech of 12 October and held by the national centre were taken from *(a)* persons suspected of crime, *(b)* persons subsequently convicted of crime and *(c)* other persons; how many of these persons have been notified that their samples continue to be held; and for how long they will be held. [39957]

Mr. Maclean: A precise breakdown of the samples held on the national DNA database on 12 October is not available.

The database currently contains approximately 11,200 profiles from samples taken from individuals under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, as amended, and approximately 600 profiles from crime scene samples. Profiles derived from samples taken from people who are not suspected of crime but who volunteer to participate in mass screenings are not held on the database.

On the retention of samples, I refer the right hon. Member to the reply given to his question on 31 October, *Official Report,* column *166.*

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38602]

Mr. Kirkhope: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Minister of State, Department of National Heritage on 31 October, *Official Report,* columns *186–87.*

African National Congress Office (Bombing)

Mr. Hain: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of Thursday 22 June, *Official Report,* column 471, if he will give a progress report on the investigation into the bombing of the London office of the ANC in 1982; and he will place a copy of the report, when complete, in the Library. [41133]

Mr. Howard: I understand that, as part of this continuing investigation, officers from the Metropolitan police service hope to travel to South Africa this month to interview several people, after which they would submit a further report to the Crown Prosecution Service. Such reports cannot be made public for legal reasons, but the police will write to the hon. Member on conclusion of the investigation.

Football Clubs (Police Charges)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) for what reasons football clubs in different parts of the country are charged different hourly rates for police officers of comparable rank; [41177]

(2) what was the hourly rate charged to *(a)* Manchester United FC and *(b)* Chelsea FC for the presence of (i) a chief superintendent, (ii) a superintendent, (iii) a chief inspector, (iv) an inspector, (v) a police sergeant, and (vi) a police constable; and if he will give the reasons for the differences between *(a)* and *(b).* [41205]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The Police Act 1964 gives discretion over charging for police special services to the local police authority. Home Office guidance, based on Audit Commission recommendations, is that charges should be set at the level which will enable full cost recovery to be achieved. We would therefore expect charges to vary where the force incurs higher costs, for example in paying London weighting and London allowance or in paying rest-day rates to officers who are deployed on overtime.

The charges currently payable by Manchester United FC and by Chelsea FC are set out in the table:

Rank	*Hourly charge payable*[1]	
	By Manchester United FC to Greater Manchester Police[2] *£*	*By Chelsea FC to the Metropolitan Police* *£*
Constable	29.91	28.63
Sergeant	35.17	34.75
Inspector	43.34	43.88
Chief Inspector	46.96	47.25
Superintendent	58.36	53.50
Chief Superintendent	63.33	57.50

[1] Charges (exclusive of VAT) as at 1 September 1995. Rates may vary on public holidays or if the force is given reduced notice that the match is to be played.

[2] Greater Manchester police have recently revised their estimates of the full cost of their special services. Better estimates of central overheads (together with the recent police pay rises) have resulted in a 20 per cent. increase in charging rates.

TRANSPORT

Marine Safety Agency

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Marine Safety Agency's budget has been over the last five years; what it is for 1996–97 and if he will make a statement. [40305]

Mr. Norris: The Marine Safety Agency was established on 1 April 1994 and the gross budgets for the first two years of operation are as follows:

1994–95: £31.7 million

1995–96: £30.8 million

The budget for 1996–97 has not yet been settled.

Flags of Convenience

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the trends in the use of flags of convenience. [40366]

Mr. Norris: Shipowners are free to choose the flag under which their ships operate and will be influenced in their choice by a number of factors. Internationally, there has been a trend over the last 25 years for greater use of open registers. We are aiming to improve the competitive position of British shipping and to make the use of the Red Ensign more attractive through a range of positive measures outlined to the House by the then Secretary of State on 21 April 1994, *Official Report*, columns *1077–78*. However, while flag states may legitimately seek to encourage ships onto their registers, we do not believe that it is acceptable for shipowners to register ships with flag states which do not have the capability of supervising the safety of their ships, or which do not do so effectively.

The Government are determined to take a strong line against substandard shipping whatever flag it flies. Accordingly, the Marine Safety Agency inspects 30 per cent. of foreign ships visiting UK ports and also publishes monthly lists of those ships which are detained. We also fully support work in the International Maritime Organisation to improve compliance with international conventions.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40743]

Mr. Norris: The cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years has been :

1995–96: £125,000 (First 6 months of current financial year)

1994–95: £288,000

1993–94: £286,000

1992–93: £280,000

1991–92: £219,000

1990–91: £186,000

Motor mileage allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles. The cost in the current and previous two financial years is as follows. Information before that is not available.

1995–96: None to date

1994–95: £43.26

1993–94: £56.12

Transport Policies and Programmes

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy on allowing unspent TPP to be carried over into the next financial year. [41003]

Mr. Norris: Under the TPP system, the Department of Transport makes capital allocations for local transport infrastructure by means of transport supplementary grant, grant under section 56 of the Transport Act 1968, annual capital guideline, and supplementary credit approval. The allocation of TSG in the annual local transport settlement is adjusted to take account of the amount underspent in past years. As section 56 grant is paid in arrears, the question of unspent resources does not arise. ACG is a borrowing approval that can be used on any local authority service. It is not recoverable and authorities have wide discretion over its use. SCA is allocated for a specific financial year. Local authorities are required to surrender the unused portion of their allocation.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures are taken by his Department to ensure that sites of special scientific interest are not damaged by road development. [40990]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 3 November 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr. John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport, what measures are taken by his Department to ensure that Sites of Special Scientific Interest are not damaged by road development.

My Department has a long standing policy of keeping trunk roads away from protected areas such as Sites for Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), so far as is reasonable possible. When it is not possible to avoid such areas, every effort is taken on minimise landtake from the affected site and, where possible, measures are provided to reduce adverse effects.

Bus Stop Information Displays

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the experiments known to his Department on bus stop information displays using satellite links; and what his Department is doing to promote them. [40999]

Mr. Norris: My Department is aware of experiments using satellite-based systems in Birmingham, Ipswich and Nottingham. Passenger information systems sponsored by local authorities are eligible for funding through the transport policies and programme system.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list for each of the last five years the budget for his departmental expenditure and the percentage of gross domestic product spent on transport. [40994]

Mr. Norris: The information required on departmental expenditure can be found in the relevant "Financial Statement and Budget Report".

Gross domestic product is a measure of output while much transport expenditure is intermediate. Total transport expenditure is thus not calculated as a component of GDP. However, a separate exercise has estimated total expenditure on transport including intermediate expenditure. The estimated expenditures expressed as a percentage of GDP, at market prices, for 1990 to 1994, are as follows:

1990: 18 Per cent.
1991: 17 Per cent.
1992: 18 Per cent.
1993: 18 Per cent.
1994: 17 Per cent.

Spending Decisions

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what proposals he has to devolve spending decisions on transport to *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* regions; [41008]

(2) what transport decisions are taken at regional level rather than at central or local government levels. [40982]

Mr. Norris: We take full account of advice from the Government offices for the regions on transport decisions relevant to them, for example on the allocation of transport resources for capital investment by local authorities. There are no plans further to devolve decisions to the regional offices.

Local authorities have a wide range of transport powers and responsibilities. They are responsible for taking their own decisions on transport spending priorities within the total resources available to them.

Rail Charges

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what rights of appeal exist when a rolling stock company or Railtrack imposes large increases on rail operators. [41002]

Mr. Watts: Initial leases for vehicle fleets, agreed between the passenger rolling stock companies and the train operators, are in place and are at a fixed price. Renewals will be negotiated between the parties in a competitive market.

Access contracts between Railtrack and train operators are approved by the Rail Regulator. The operators can appeal to the regulator if they consider that the charges proposed by Railtrack are unreasonable.

Motor Cycles

Mr. Cann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government in respect of the Barton/Metten compromise agreed between motor cyclists' representatives and the European Parliament, at the Council of Ministers meeting in November relating to the European multi-directive COM (93) 449-COD 470 of 30 November 1993. [41224]

Mr. Norris: We expect to be considering the amendments to the motor cycle multi-directive proposed by the European Parliament at the November Council of Ministers.

The Government have made clear their view that anti-tampering measures should be required only for mopeds and learner motor cycles. The Government consider that the noise and emission standards contained in the draft directive generally represent the appropriate levels for all categories of mopeds and motor cycles.

Passenger Transport Executives

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which are the five largest cities in the United Kingdom without a passenger transport executive. [41330]

Mr. Norris: Measured by population, the five largest cities in the United Kingdom without a passenger transport executive are Edinburgh, Bristol, Cardiff, Belfast and Leicester.

Buses

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the average age of the bus fleet operated by *(a)* private bus companies and *(b)* municipal undertakings. [41283]

Mr. Norris: The records held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency show that, at the end of 1994, public service vehicles in the bus taxation class having nine or more seats had an average age of just under 10 years. The split of the average age of the fleet between private bus companies and municipal undertakings is not readily available.

M66 Manchester Outer Ring Road

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when tenders will be let for construction of the main carriageway of the M66 Manchester Outer Ring Road; and what is the reason for the delay. [39987]

Mr. Watts *[holding reply 30 October 1995]:* There has been no unexpected delay. I hope to be in a position to award a contract for the first part of the remaining main carriageway, (Contract 1) around the turn of the year. Tenders for the second part (Contract 3) are yet to be sought.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

National Vocational Qualifications

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many pupils qualified for NVQs in *(a)* retail, *(b)* manufacturing, *(c)* the car industry, *(d)* fast fit cars, *(e)* golf, *(f)* restaurants, *(g)* travel agents, *(h)* tailoring, and *(i)* equine activities in each of the last five years. [38795]

Mr. Paice: Data are not available in the form requested. The following table shows the number of full national vocational qualification certificates, including expired NVQs, awarded in each of NCVQs framework areas up to the end of 1994.

Table 1: Numbers of full NVO certifications: awards by framework area

	prior to 1991	1991	1992	1993	1994
Total awards (000s)	57	110	152	201	238
Tending animals and plants	[1]—	1	3	5	9
Extracting/providing natural resources	0	[1]—	1	2	3
Constructing	5	2	10	23	28
Engineering	1	3	7	15	25
Manufacturing	1	3	5	7	8
Providing goods and services	20	33	36	48	58
Health, social and protective services	6	21	7	12	18
Providing business services	24	47	83	89	87
Communicating	0	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Developing/extending knowledge/skill	0	0	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—

Source:

NCVQ.

Note:

[1]— Less than 500.

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary for State for Education and Employment what is the percentage of the relevant age group in each EU country which has passed a national vocational qualification type qualification in each of the past five years. [38797]

Mr. Paice: The total number of national vocational qualifications awarded in the UK between their launch and the end of 1994 is about 758,000 according to figures supplied by NCVQ. Data are not available on the number of individuals gaining such awards; nor are data available in a comparable form for other EU member countries.

Total NVQs awarded in the United Kingdom to 31 December 1990: 58,294; total awarded in 1991: 111,235; total awarded in 1992: 152,114; total awarded in 1993: 202,426; and total awarded in 1994: 239,780.

Barnsley and Doncaster Training and Enterprise Council

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the reason given by Barnsley and Doncaster TEC for making an operating loss for the financial year 1993–94, and if she will make a statement. [38631]

Mr. Paice: The information relating to the operating surplus/deficit made by Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council is available in the TEC's annual report for 1993–94. A copy of this report is held in the Library.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, how many *(a)* adults and *(b)* young people on average participated in the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC training scheme in each month in the past two years; and if she will indicate the average percentage of those who gained qualifications. [38981]

Mr. Paice: The number participating in youth training and training for work in the Barnsley and Doncaster Training Enterprise Council area are given in the following table. The table also includes information on those gaining qualifications.

Barnsley and Doncaster TEC

	1993–94	*1994–95*
Youth Training		
Average number in-training	4,040	3,710
Percentage of leavers gaining a qualification or credit towards one:	52 per cent.	(January–December 1994) 53 per cent.
Training for Work		
Average number in-training	3,460	3,130
Percentage of leavers gaining a qualification or credit towards one:	39 per cent.	(January–December 1994) 45 per cent.

Source:

TEC management information returns, YT and TFW national follow-up surveys.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment to what extent Barnsley and Doncaster TEC is involved in *(a)* the open learning credits initiative and *(b)* the skill choice initiatives; what achievements have been made under the programme; what yearly funding it has received to date; and when the initiative will end. [39011]

Mr. Paice: Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council did not take part in either the open learning credits pilots or the skill choice initiative.

The open learning credits pilots were run in 1993–94 to trial the use of open learning for unemployed people. There were 14 pilots involving 17 TECs and two local enterprise councils. Total funding for the pilots was £2.97 million. The purpose of the pilots was to trial the use of open learning for unemployed people. The pilots were fully evaluated and identified a number of benefits including choice, flexibility, high levels of client satisfaction and the opportunity to target particular client groups.

Skill choice was a two-year initiative run in 1993–94 and 1994–95. There were 14 TECs and three local enterprise companies involved and total expenditure was £19. 5 million. The aim of the initiative was to help individuals, mainly those in employment, to purchase the vocational guidance and assessment services of their choice. The total number of individuals helped over two years was 250,000, and employers participating in the initiative reported significant economic benefits.

Evaluation reports for both programmes have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what discussions she has had with her colleagues in increasing the funding of Barnsley and Doncaster TEC. [38982]

Mr. Paice: There are no plans to increase the allocation of funds to Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council in the current financial year. However, the TEC along with others, may benefit from additional resources available through funds already committed for national/regional competitions between TECs. These include performance-related funding, skills challenge and the achievement of additional qualifications through youth training.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to extend or amalgamate the boundaries of the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC, and if she will make a statement. [39048]

Mr. Paice: I am not aware of any plans to extend or amalgamate the boundaries of Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council. It is for TECs themselves to propose any structural change.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if Barnsley and Doncaster TEC uses adult training credits within its training for work provision; and if she will make a statement. [39451]

Mr. Paice: The information requested is operational information on the Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council and the question would be best addressed to the TEC to answer.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is the estimated number of people who have found permanent work during the last 12 months as a result of training at the Barnsley and Doncaster TEC. [39453]

Mr. Paice: In 1994, 43 per cent. of those leaving training for work from Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council were in a job six months after leaving. In the same period, 50 per cent. of youth training leavers were in a job.

As the information comes from surveys, it is possible to give only percentages not actual numbers.

School Buildings

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, pursuant to her answer of 19 October concerning amendments to the regulations to school buildings, which of the bodies she lists favoured removal of any regulatory standard; which provisions she now proposes to remove and when; and by what means she announced her own views. [39319]

Mrs. Gillan: The Department issued a consultation letter on 14 August 1995. Responses were requested by 18 October 1995 and are now being analysed. We will, of course, give careful consideration to respondents' views before making any decisions on the final shape of the regulations.

Nursery Education

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the number and percentage of *(a)* three-year-olds and *(b)* four-year-olds in local education authority maintained pre-school provision in each authority, at the latest date for which figures are available. [39118]

Mr. Robin Squire: Information on pupils aged three and four in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in each local education authority in England in January 1995 is shown in the following table. The Department does not publish information on participation rates of individual age cohorts by local education authority.

Pupils aged three and four in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained primary schools in each local education authority in England—January 1995 (provisional)

	Pupils (age at 31 August1994)		*Percentage of population aged three and four at 31 December 1994*
	[1]three	*[2]four*	
Camden	845	4	25
Greenwich	2,229	746	48
Hackney	1,898	11	35
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,069	271	46
Islington	1,473	80	37
Kensington and Chelsea	603	153	27
Lambeth	1,603	490	31
Lewisham	1,869	612	37
Southwark	2,323	91	42
Tower Hamlets	2,456	267	58
Wandsworth	2,056	54	35
Westminster	801	187	31

Pupils aged three and four in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained primary schools in each local education authority in England—January 1995 (provisional)

	Pupils (age at 31 August1994)		*Percentage of population aged three and four at 31 December 1994*
	[1]three	*[2]four*	
Barking and Dagenham	2,046	6	46
Barnet	2,024	44	32
Bexley	1,413	6	23
Brent	2,459	17	37
Bromley	162	2	2
Croydon	1,999	12	21
Ealing	3,143	7	46
Enfield	1,620	3	22
Haringey	2,354	50	44
Harrow	1,006	3	18
Havering	464	3	9
Hillingdon	1,430	1,923	49
Hounslow	2,362	0	40
Kingston upon Thames	1,028	14	35
Merton	1,860	387	55
Newham	2,925	1,206	52
Redbridge	970	310	20
Richmond upon Thames	653	1	18
Sutton	816	1,147	41
Waltham Forest	1,738	899	39
Birmingham	10,471	17	34
Coventry	1,910	0	24
Dudley	2,626	11	37
Sandwell	3,844	136	54
Solihull	1,877	3	36
Walsall	3,505	2	59
Wolverhampton	3,175	6	54
Knowsley	2,336	23	62
Liverpool	4,941	4	46
St. Helens	1,489	3	35
Sefton	2,290	5	36
Wirral	2,156	1	26
Bolton	2,703	3	41
Bury	1,448	0	30
Manchester	5,116	1,764	54
Oldham	2,455	3	37
Rochdale	2,074	10	33
Salford	2,922	22	53
Stockport	1,972	3	27
Tameside	2,377	1	39
Trafford	2,056	30	43
Wigan	2,050	4	25
Barnsley	1,975	869	48
Doncaster	3,647	1	44
Rotherham	2,176	1,110	46
Sheffield	3,888	1,473	42
Bradford	5,142	634	44
Calderdale	1,945	1	36
Kirklees	3,985	31	40
Leeds	7,147	549	47
Wakefield	3,389	976	54
Gateshead	1,675	2	36
Newcastle upon Tyne	2,761	7	39
North Tyneside	2,306	0	55
South Tyneside	1,971	3	53
Sunderland	3,300	1	42
Avon	4,844	52	21
Bedfordshire	3,010	2,003	32
Berkshire	3,043	3,721	32
Buckinghamshire	1,785	1,201	16
Cambridge	2,174	8	12
Cheshire	4,528	75	21
Cleveland	7,179	5	60
Cornwall[3]	1,393	175	15
Cumbria	2,971	40	25
Derbyshire	6,515	2,168	38
Devon	1,998	855	12
Dorset	726	0	5
Durham	6,356	29	46
East Sussex	1,424	54	10
Essex	1,604	981	7
Gloucestershire	27	0	0
Hampshire	1,750	67	5
Hereford and Worcester	868	770	9
Hertfordshire	6,734	2,673	34
Humberside	6,343	2,308	38
Isle of Wight	150	3	7
Kent	1,853	43	5
Lancashire	7,235	24	21
Leicestershire	3,119	1,913	21
Lincolnshire	1,917	33	14
Norfolk	1,119	119	7
North Yorkshire	3,096	489	22
Northamptonshire	3,024	4	18
Northumberland	2,411	7	41
Nottinghamshire	7,807	4,995	50
Oxfordshire	1,668	1,521	19
Shropshire	1,332	669	18
Somerset	521	2	5
Staffordshire	6,602	94	25
Suffolk	1,650	1,422	17
Surrey	2,423	345	12
Warwickshire	2,109	4	17
West Sussex	828	308	7
Wiltshire	397	158	4
England[3] [4]	277,376	46,064	27

[1] Includes pupils who became four years of age by 1 January 1995.

[2] Excludes pupils who became five years of age by 1 January 1995.

[3] Includes Isles of Scilly.

[4] Includes Corporation of London.

Funding, Dorset

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what has been the *(a)* increase in Government funding on education in Dorset and *(b)* the inflation rate since (i) 1979 and (ii) 1990; and if she will make a statement. [38973]

Mr. Robin Squire: The information is not available in the form in which it has been requested. I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy in the Library.

Teachers' Pay

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the average point on the teachers' pay scale at which teachers were appointed in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools, for each year since 1988. [39115]

Mr. Robin Squire: The points on the qualified teachers' pay scale at which new entrant classroom teachers were typically appointed in England for the financial years 1988–89 and 1993–94 are shown in the following table:

Typical scale or spine point[1] [2] to which new entrants were appointed in:

Financial Year	*Primary schools* *Point*	*Secondary schools* *Value* *£*	*Point*	*Value* *£*
1988–89	4	8,859	4	8,859
1989–90	4	9,390	4	9,390
1990–91	4	10,503	4	10,503
1991–92	3	11,502	4	12,051
1992–93	3	12,366	3	12,366
1993–94[3]	2	12,633	2	12,633

[1] At least 50 per cent. of new appointees are placed either on or below this point.

[2] In the academic years 1988–89 to 1990–91 teachers, other than head teachers and deputies, were paid on an 11 point incremental main scale. From 1 December 1991 the main scale was shortened to 10 points. From 1 September 1993 the Government introduced a new common 18-point pay spine for classroom teachers. In the academic years 1988–89, 1989–90 and 1990–91 the point of entry for a teacher with a good honours degree was point 4; and ordinary degree was point 2; a non-graduate was point 1.The point of entry in 1991–92 and 1992–93 for a teacher with a good honours degree was point 3; others were point 1. The point of entry in 1993–94 for a teacher with a good honours degree was point 2; others were point 0. For each of the years shown further discretionary points could be gained for various reasons, eg recruitment and retention.

[3] Data for 1993–94 are estimated.

Public Appointments

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which her Department makes appointments in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating the total annual budget and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years. [39422]

Mr. Robin Squire: The Secretary of State for Education and Employment makes appointments to:

(a) The Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities (Sheffield and Rotherham)

(b) The Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities (Wakefield, Barnsley and Doncaster)

CEPDs do not hold budgets. Their functions are financed by the Employment Service out of regionally held budgets.

The press committees were constituted in April 1994 and will run for three years. Each committee consists of a chairman and up to 13 members.

(c) The Further Education Funding Council regional committee (Yorkshire and Humberside)

The FEFC regional committee has no separate budgets. Its functions are financed from the FEFC's central budget.

The committee consists of 11 members and a chairman. The current chairman was appointed in April 1993 and the 11 members in October 1993.

Temporary Teachers

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make it her policy to collate centrally the number of temporary teachers paid on a daily rate who are employed by each *(a)* college and *(b)* university in England for longer than 26 weeks during each year; and if she will make a statement. [39506]

Mr. Robin Squire: My right hon. Friend has no plans to collate such information.

Nursery Education Vouchers

Sir Thomas Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what response she has had from the Metropolitan borough of Stockport about taking up the voucher scheme for nursery education. [39609]

Mr. Paice: The Metropolitan borough of Stockport has responded to the consultation papers which cover elements of the nursery education voucher scheme. The council has resolved not to participate in phase 1 of the scheme.

Local Education Authority Administration

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is the level of administrative or overheads expenditure per pupil in the local education authorities in *(a)* Suffolk, *(b)* Cambridgeshire and *(c)* Norfolk for the last three years available. [39615]

Mr. Robin Squire: The table shows, at 1994–95 prices, the gross costs per pupils of expenditure on central administration recorded by *(a)* Suffolk, *(b)* Cambridgeshire and *(c)* Norfolk education authorities for 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94, the latest year for which figures are available. These figures have not been adjusted for any changes of function. The figures may not be comparable between LEAs of differing local accounting practices.

Central administrative gross expenditure per pupil (pre-primary/primary, secondary and special 1994–95) prices

LEA	*1991–92* *£*	*1992–93* *£*	*1993–94* *£*
Suffolk	160	169	100
Cambridgeshire	145	124	128
Norfolk	94	142	86
England	146	160	138

Free School Meals

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many assisted pupils qualified for free school meals for the most recent years for which figures are available. [40484]

Mrs. Gillan: The information requested is shown in the table and relates to the last three academic years and to England only.

Assisted places scheme

Academic year	*Numbers of assisted pupils qualified for free school meals*
1992–93	3,002
1993–94	3,521
1994–95	3,867

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is the total amount paid under the assisted places scheme for *(a)* uniform grant, *(b)* school travel grant and *(c)* travel grant for visiting universities for the most recent years for which figures are available. [40483]

Mrs. Gillan: The information requested is given in the following table and relates to participating schools' expenditure in the last three academic years in England only. Figures for travel grant to enable assisted pupils visit universities for the purpose of interviews are not collected separately: they are subsumed in the total for school travel grants.

Assisted places scheme

£000

Academic year	*Total cost of uniform grants*	*travel grants*
1992–93	813	1,639
1993–94	869	1,878
1994–95	940	2,123

School Governors

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what progress has been made in encouraging parents to become school governors, and if she will make a statement. [40573]

Mr. Robin Squire: The governing bodies of all maintained schools must include parents governors, elected by the parents of pupils at the school, as one means of giving parents power to influence the nature and quality of the education their children receive. It is increasingly recognised that governors, including parent governors, play a key part in deciding the conduct and development of their school. The available evidence suggests that most schools are able to find sufficient parent and other governors to serve. The Government are grateful for the time, effort and commitment which governors devote, and we will continue to encourage parents and other members of the local community to undertake this demanding but rewarding task.

Employment Service Client Advisers

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if performance-related management of client advisers in the Employment Service is related to the number of unemployed within the area of their work. [39673]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from D. J. Lifton to Mr. Jim Cunningham, dated 3 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me, in the absence of the Chief Executive, to reply to your question about the performance management of client advisers in the Employment Service (ES).

It may help if I briefly outline the performance management system which operates in the ES. Effective performance management is vital if we are to achieve our business objectives as set out in the Annual Performance Agreement between the Secretary of State and the ES. Agreement and achievement of performance and development objectives for everyone in the ES, including client advisers, plays a critical part in our performance management arrangements and the achievement of these business objectives.

Client advisers, like all other people in the ES, need to understand what they are required to achieve throughout the year. Performance targets and standards are set and used to ensure that our business objectives are met, value for money is delivered and individuals are properly rewarded for their performance.

Each client adviser:

has key responsibilities and operational objectives based on the Agency's and the individual Jobcentre's operational plans. These operational plans are derived from the Annual Performance Agreement and take account of the number of unemployed people nationally and within the locality;

agrees with their line manager how their performance is to be measured;

agrees personal development objectives where necessary to sustain and enhance their performance; and

has regular reviews with their line manager to assess achievement against operational and developmental objectives. During these reviews external factors, notably changes in their local labour market will be taken into account.

I hope this is helpful and assures you that the performance management of our advisers is part of a comprehensive system which takes into account all the factors that are likely to be relevant.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment in what circumstances unemployed volunteers claiming the jobseeker's allowance are able to continue their voluntary employment; and what benefits they will be entitled to between ending voluntary work and starting paid employment. [39681]

Mr. Forth: Claimants will be able to undertake voluntary work while in receipt of a jobseeker's allowance as long as they are actively seeking work and available for work at 48 hours' notice. If they decide to stop undertaking voluntary work, they will have to be immediately available for work; in other respects, their benefit entitlement will not be affected. On starting paid employment of more than 16 hours a week, they may be eligible for a range of in-work benefits, depending on their individual circumstances.

Area Cost Adjustments

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list the level of area cost adjustment expressed as a percentage add on to the primary and secondary standard spending assessments that receive area cost adjustment, the value of the London weighting as a percentage of average teacher and pay, and the amounts of any other qualifiable costs taken into account in determining the area cost adjustment in each authority that receives area cost adjustment. [38171]

Mr. Robin Squire *[holding answer 20 October 1995]:* The information requested on the level of the area cost adjustment is set out in the "Local Government Finance Report (England) 1995–96", a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Some care must be taken in drawing conclusions about the area cost adjustment using information on teachers' salaries and London weightings.

All the employment groups relevant to the local authority labour market for education have to be taken into account—not just teachers—since the area cost adjustment has to take off non-teaching costs, which account for about a third of education labour costs.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Chronic Bronchitis and Emphysema

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many applications his Department's Benefits Agency offices in the Doncaster and Mexborough area have received during the last 12 months in respect of chronic bronchitis and emphysema; of those how many have *(a)* been accepted on first application, *(b)* been refused, *(c)* gone to appeal and *(d)* been accepted following an appeal; and what were the figures for the previous 12 months. [39439]

Mr. Roger Evans: The administration of industrial injuries disablement benefit is a matter for Mr. Peter Mathison, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member with such information as is available.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 2 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Social Security has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about how many applications the Benefits Agency offices in the Doncaster and Mexborough area have received during the last 12 months in respect of chronic bronchitis and emphysema; of those how many have (a) been accepted on first application, (b) been refused, (c) gone to appeal and (d) been accepted following an appeal; and what were the figures for the previous 12 months.

Not all the information requested is available. This is because figures for the number of claims made for chronic bronchitis and emphysema, also known as PD D12, since the end of the initial twelve month take-on period have been collected separately and in a slightly different format. The take-on period lasted from September 1993 to October 1994.

It is also not possible to provide specific information about the number of appeals against decisions on PD D12 claims as these are not kept separate from other prescribed diseases.

The available information is shown in the enclosed tables. The information in the first three columns of Table 1 was collected at Area Directorate level. The information in columns four and five was collected at the Disability Benefit Centre (DBC) at Leeds. Table 1 covers the South Yorkshire and Humberside areas which include Doncaster and Mexborough.

From 3 October 1994, the number of claims for PD D12 has been recorded at District Office level. The offices at Doncaster East and Doncaster West form the Doncaster District. Mexborough, Rotherham, Goldthorpe and Wath-on-Dearne offices form the Rother and Dearne District. Table 2 shows the information for those two Districts.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Table 1: September 1993–October 1994

		Successful	Failed (reason)		
Area	Claims	20 year rule	20 year rule	Lung test[1]	[1]CAT 1 PNEUMOCONIOSIS
South Yorkshire and Humberside	6,521	773	171	6,551	3,957

[1] These figures were collected by the disability benefits centre at Leeds. Leeds DBC also dealt with other areas so the figures do not equate exactly.

Table 2: October 1994–September 1995

Area	Claims	Successful	Failed (all reasons)
Doncaster	92	16	112
Rother and Dearne	141	21	187

Note:

Tables include claims received but not decided within the period.

Source:

100 per cent. count, figures are subject to amendment.

Benefits Agencies, South Yorkshire

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list each Benefits Agency office in South Yorkshire indicating *(a)* the number of employees and *(b)* the number of claimants receiving benefit through these offices; and how many each office had paid out by way of (i) crisis loans and (ii) community care grants under the social fund in each of the last four years. [39443]

Mr. Roger Evans: The administration of the social fund is a matter for Mr. Peter Mathison, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member with such information as is available.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 2 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Social Security has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for a list of the Benefit Agency offices in South Yorkshire indicating (a) the number of employees and (b) the number of claimants receiving benefit through these offices; and how many each office had paid by way of (i) Crisis Loans and (ii) Community Care Grants under the Social Fund in each of the last four years.

With the formation of the Benefits Agency in April 1991, offices were grouped into Districts and figures for each branch office cannot be given separately. Annex A - C gives information for each District in South Yorkshire.

The latest available data for the number of employees in South Yorkshire is provided at Annex A at District level.

Annex B gives the latest available number of customers receiving benefits as at 30 September 1995 and the latest available figures for Income Support as at 31 August 1995. You should note that a customer may receive more than one of the benefits listed.

The number of customers in each office that had been paid a Crisis Loan or a Community Care Grant during the last four years is not available. This is because information on the Social Fund is not kept by customer but by applications made to the Fund. Annex C provides details of the number of successful applications.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

Annex A: The number of employees in each district in South Yorkshire

As at 30 September 1995

District	*Employees*
Rother and Dearne	389
Sheffield East	340
Sheffield West	292
Barnsley	234
Doncaster	306

Annex B: Customers in receipt by benefit type in each district in South Yorkshire

As at 30 September 1995

District	*Incapacity benefit*	*Maternity benefit*	*Severe disablement benefit*
Rother and Dearne	18,588	42	2,716
Sheffield East	9,444	58	1,799
Sheffield West	10,155	81	1,539
Barnsley	14,469	62	1,409
Doncaster	15,323	68	2,070

Customers in receipt of income support in each district in South Yorkshire

As at 31 August 1995

District	*Income support*
Rother and Dearne	38,686
Sheffield East	36,037
Sheffield West	33,261
Barnsley	22,451
Doncaster	30,718

Annex C: Number of CL and CCG Awards made by each district in south Yorkshire from April 1991 to March 1995

District	*CCG Awards*	*CL Awards*
1991–92:		
Rother and Dearne	2,950	2,704
Sheffield East	3,102	7,295
Sheffield West	2,345	5,886
Barnsley	2,009	2,243
Doncaster	1,818	3,456
1992–93		
Rother and Dearne	3,167	2,902
Sheffield East	3,244	7,494
Sheffield West	2,473	6,176
Barnsley	2,080	2,489
Doncaster	1,511	3,810
1993–94		
Rother and Dearne	3,153	2,839
Sheffield East	3,243	7,723
Sheffield West	2,273	5,912
Barnsley	2,211	1,818
Doncaster	1,784	4,144
1994–95		
Rother and Dearne	1,746	1,841
Sheffield East	1,560	4,064
Sheffield West	970	3,396
Barnsley	1,157	1,135
Doncaster	888	2,118

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list by location each of his Department's benefit agencies (*a*) districts and (*b*) directorates that cover the postcode areas of (i) Doncaster and (ii) Mexborough; and if he will indicate in his answer the postcodes concerned. [39558]

Mr. Evans: This is a matter for Peter Mathison, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member with such information as is available.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 2 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Social Security has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the postcodes covered by the Benefit Agency's districts and directorates in Doncaster and Mexborough.

The enclosed Appendix A lists the names and addresses of the offices in Doncaster and Mexborough and the postcodes they cover. This should, however, only be used as a general guide because local offices are not organised by postcode but on a geographical basis. In some instances postcode areas are covered by more than one District.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

Appendix A

Postcodes areas covered by the Doncaster East, Doncaster West and Mexborough offices. To be used as a guide only:

Doncaster East Benefit office,
St Peters House,
Princes Street,
Doncaster,
DN1 3NY

Postcodes DN1
Postcodes DN2
Postcodes DN3
Postcodes DN4
Postcodes DN5
Postcodes DN7
Postcodes DN8
Postcodes DN9 (Part)
Postcodes DN10 (Part)
Postcodes DN14 (Part)

Doncaster West District office,
Castle House,
Princegate,
Doncaster,
DN1 3XT

Postcodes DN1
Postcodes DN2
Postcodes DN4
Postcodes DN5
Postcodes DN6
Postcodes DN11
Postcodes DN12
Postcodes DN14 (Part)

Postcodes S66 (Part)
Postcodes WF8 (Part)
Mexborough Benefit office,
Crown Buildings,
Adwick Road,
Mexborough,
S64 OBD
Postcodes DN5
Postcodes DN12
Postcodes S63
Postcodes S64

Child Support Agency

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much of the maintenance claimed as new maintenance by the Child Support Agency would have been due under pre-CSA agreements. [40315]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Ann Chant. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Miss Ann Chant to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 2 November 1995:

I am replying to your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Social Security about child maintenance.

Between launch in April 1993, and August 1995, as a direct result of Child Support assessments, the Agency has collected or arranged maintenance totalling £300m. It is not possible to say how much of this maintenance would have been due under pre-CSA agreements.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much of the Child Support Agency's outstanding debt is attributable to type A interim assessments. [40318]

Mr. Mitchell: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Ann Chant. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Miss Ann Chant to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 2 November 1995:

I am replying to your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Social Security about how much of the Child Support Agency's outstanding debt is attributable to Category A interim maintenance assessments (IMAs).

Of a total outstanding debt of £700m at the end of August 1995, it is estimated that £456m was the result of IMAs.

It is not possible to further break down the £456m debt by category of IMA, but the vast majority of this debt can be attributed to category A IMAs. This is because the other types of IMAs (Category B, C and D) are used in circumstances where the absent parent is most likely to be cooperating with the Agency.

Since 18 April 1995, IMAs have been converted to full maintenance assessments (FMAs) from the effective date of the assessment, as soon as the absent parent provides sufficient information for this to be done. FMAs are generally much lower than IMAs and it follows that much of the IMA debt is provisional.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will provide a breakdown of the child maintenance assessments issued to absent parents who have previously paid no maintenance including nil and minimum assessments. [40319]

Mr. Mitchell: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Ann Chant. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Miss Ann Chant to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 2 November 1995:

I am replying to your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Social Security requesting a breakdown of child maintenance assessments. This information is available for parents with care receiving Income Support.

Whilst it is not possible to provide a breakdown relating to absent parents, an estimated figure for parents with care is available and is set out in the table attached. This is produced based on five percent samples of Income Support and Child Support Agency cases, taken in February 1993 and August 1995 respectively.

Most of the cases included in these samples will be Income Support taken on in the first year of the Agency, when it was estimated that around 50 per cent of those cases *taken on* were not already receiving maintenance. This proportion has increased to an estimated 77 per cent. since April 1994. We would expect the percentage *assessed* who were not previously receiving maintenance (38.95%) to increase in future samples as Income Support data for 1994 and 1995 becomes available.

I hope this is helpful.

Maintenance assessed at August 1995 for parents with care who received no maintenance whilst on Income Support in February 1993	*Number of cases (000s)*	*As a percentage of the 333,500 cases assessed at August 1995 who were in receipt of Income Support in 1993*
(a) £0 to £2.35	60	17.97
(b) £2.36 to £4.99	1	0.30
(c) £5 to £9.99	2	0.60
(d) £10 to £19.99	4	1.20
(e) £20 to £29.99	5	1.50
(f) £30 to £39.99	6	1.80
(g) £40 to £49.99	7	2.10
(h) £50 to £59.99	8	2.40
(i) £60 to £69.99	4	1.20
(j) £70 to £79.99	3	0.90
(k) £80 or more	29	8.69
Total	129	38.95

Note:

The table may include some instances where maintenance was paid to the DSS in respect of the claimant and/or dependant(s) at February 1993 and some cases where there was no entitlement to maintenance at February 1993.

Number of cases include interim and full maintenance assessments.

Bank of Credit and Commerce International

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what has been the total amount of moneys paid by his Department to the liquidators of BCCI, Touche Ross, in respect of staff mortgage interest payments for each year since 1991 and for each month since 1 January 1995. [41287]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The information is not available.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 6 November 1995

LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT

Mental Incapacity

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will make a statement on the proposed legislation by the Law Commission on mental incapacity; and if he will make a statement. [41357]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The Government have welcomed the Law Commission's report on mental incapacity as an important contribution to the debate on decision making where a person lacks capacity to make decisions for themselves. The Government recognise, however, that the report raises important and sensitive issues of principle. We set up an interdepartmental working group to co-ordinate consideration of the report on 15 March 1995. The group produced an initial report for Ministers by its target date of 1 September. Ministers are considering the group's report with that of the Law Commission.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department when he expects to complete his consideration of the draft Mental Incapacity Bill; and if he will make a statement. [41589]

Mr. Taylor: The Government set up an interdepartmental working group to co-ordinate consideration of the Law Commission report on 15 March 1995. The group produced an initial report for Ministers by its target date of 1 September. Ministers are now considering the group's report with that of the Law Commission.

Frederick West (Memoirs)

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what representations he has received regarding the proposals by the Official Solicitor *(a)* for the publication of the memoirs based on the confession of the late Frederick West and *(b)* for the proceeds of such publication to go to the West family. [40691]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The Lord Chancellor's Department has received five separate representations regarding proposals by the Official Solicitor *(a)* for the publication of the memoirs based on the confessions of the late Frederick West and *(b)* for the proceeds of such publication to go to the West family. In addition, an early-day motion on this subject has been tabled.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Electro-shock Weapons

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Attorney-General, pursuant to his answer of 3 July, *Official Report*, column 76, what further progress has been made in the investigation into matters relating to British Aerospace and the export of electro-shock equipment. [41482]

The Solicitor-General: The police have submitted a report to the Crown Prosecution Service which has been considered. No decision will be made regarding the institution of criminal proceedings until the conclusion of the separate inquiries being conducted by the Strathclyde police.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Attorney-General, pursuant to his Department's letter of 11 September, if the Strathclyde police have completed their investigations into the allegations made in the Dispatches programme in respect of the export of electro-shock equipment involving ICL Technical Plastics Ltd. of Glasgow. [41434]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have been asked to reply since the question relates to a Scottish police investigation. The inquiries being conducted by Strathclyde Police into these allegations are being pursued with due expedition but are not, as yet, concluded.

TREASURY

Inflation

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average inflation rate between October 1974 and May 1979 and May 1979 to date; and if he will make a statement. [40679]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Between October 1974 and May 1979 the average rate of inflation, as measured by the retail prices index, was 15.1 per cent. per annum. This compares with 6.4 per cent. for the period May 1979 to September 1995, the latest month for which information is available.

Pensioners

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many pensioners in each standard region of the United Kingdom, in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and for the United Kingdom as a whole, are exclusively or very largely dependent on state pension; and if he will express that figure as a percentage of the overall number of pensioners. [40456]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Data on the number of pensioners mainly dependent on state pension are not available. The figures show, for the standard regions, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom as a whole, the number of retired households mainly dependent on state pensions and other state benefits as a percentage of all retired households, as estimated from the 1994–95 family expenditure survey. The figures are subject to sampling variations.

Retired households mainly dependent on state pensions and other state benefits as a percentage of all retired households

	Percentage
United Kingdom	45
England	45
North	50
Yorkshire and Humberside	48
North West	46
East Midlands	50
West Midlands	51

Retired households mainly dependent on state pensions and other state benefits as a percentage of all retired households

	Percentage
East Anglia	51
Greater London	39
South East excluding Greater London	43
South West	35
Wales	44
Scotland	45
Northern Ireland	54

Capital Gains Tax (National Grid)

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much capital gains tax he expects to receive in connection with the demerger of the national grid. [41392]

Mr. Jack: The tax affairs of particular companies are a confidential matter between those companies and the Inland Revenue.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he intends to release a figure for the amount of capital gains tax levied in connection with the demerger of the national grid. [41393]

Mr. Jack: I am unable to release such a figure because the tax affairs of particular companies is a confidential matter between those companies and the Inland Revenue.

Unquoted Shares

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate *(a)* the value of unquoted shares sold in the latest year available, including shares in wholly owned companies and *(b)* the taxable gains on these shares before allowing for any (i) reliefs or (ii) exemptions claimed. [41394]

Mr. Jack: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Tax Relief

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate for the latest available year *(a)* the number of people and *(b)* the value of tax relief given under capital gains tax (i) retirement relief and (ii) re-investment relief. [41391]

Mr. Jack: The latest estimates for the costs of capital gains tax retirement and re-investment reliefs are given in table 1.6 in the 1995 edition of "Inland Revenue Statistics". Reliable estimates for the numbers of people claiming these reliefs are not available.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the total amount of capital gains tax that *(a)* has been deferred and *(b)* is still deferred through use of the various reliefs afforded to capital taxpayers. [41395]

Mr. Jack: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement. [41542]

Mrs. Angela Knight: I refer to the answer that my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster gave to my hon. Friend earlier today.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the Inland Revenue's business plan and the way it will now work on deregulation policy with the Department of Social Security. [41519]

Mr. Jack: The Inland Revenue management plan for 1995–96 to 1997–98 foreshadowed plans for the Inland Revenue and the Contributions Agency of the Department of Social Security to work more closely together with a view to providing a better service to customers and lifting the burdens on business. Details of the joint working programme were announced on 19 September 1995.

The joint working programme is an important part of each Department's deregulation initiative. It has been drawn up with small businesses particularly in mind and should help to make their dealings with the government machine more straightforward and less burdensome.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and in how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41543]

Mrs. Knight: The Treasury has laid three draft deregulation proposals to date. The Deregulation (Building Societies) Order was laid on 9 May, the Deregulation (Credit Unions) Order on 11 July and the Deregulation (Friendly Societies) Order on 17 July. The draft orders will not lead to any significant cost savings for the Exchequer.

The explanatory documents which were presented to the committee alongside each of the draft orders contain an assessment of the cost savings to business and any other persons whom the draft orders are intended to benefit.

Inquiries (Small Firms)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many compulsory inquiries are issued by the Central Statistical Office to small firms each year; how many Prodcom quarterly inquiries are sent out to small firms each year; and what is the estimated total cost of these inquiries to *(a)* each small business and *(b)* the Exchequer. [41548]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Information on the number of forms to the level of detail requested is currently held only for those inquiries included in the interdepartmental business register. Out of a total of 663,000, 304,500 forms were sent to businesses with fewer than 25 employees between July 1994 and June 1995. Some 1,170 small firms with fewer than 25 employees were included in the Prodcom quarterly inquiry, resulting in 4,680 forms in that year.

In July 1995 the Central Statistical Office took over responsibility for the former Employment Department's employer surveys. Including the inquiries conducted by the former Employment Department, there were in total some 1,743,000 forms sent to businesses in the 1994 calendar year. This figure includes an estimate for the former Employment Department's biennial census of employment based on an average of the number of forms sent out for that inquiry in 1993 and 1994. The 1994 costs on the same basis were estimated at £22 million to business and £23 million to the Exchequer. Information which would enable a breakdown of these costs between smaller and larger businesses is currently not available in respect of all the inquiries. The Central Statistical Office is in the process of developing a compliance plan which will provide more detailed breakdowns of the costs of all the inquiries. This will be available in April 1996 and a copy placed in the House of Commons Library.

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is now allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38611]

Mrs. Angela Knight: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for National Heritage on 31 October, columns *186–87*.

Tax Allowances and Reliefs

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will update his answer to the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) of 11 February 1992, *Official Report*, column *430*, on average tax allowances and reliefs for those with gross earnings up to £120,000, differentiating between reliefs and allowances claimed at the marginal rate and reliefs and allowances claimed at other rates. [39107]

Mr. Jack: Available estimates for taxpayers in 1995–96 are in the table. It is not possible to provide reliable estimates for the specified bands above £100,000.

Gross income range £ per year	*Average amount of tax reliefs and allowances claimed at marginal rates set against income*	*Average amount of tax reliefs and allowances claimed at other rates, set against income*
0–10,000	3,900	650
10,000–20,000	4,100	1,550
20,000–30,000	4,600	2,250
30,000–40,000	5,100	2,600
40,000–50,000	5,900	2,800
50,000–60,000	6,500	2,850
60,000–70,000	7,100	2,900
70,000–80,000	7,800	2,900
80,000–90,000	7,900	2,700
90,000–100,000	9,000	2,700
Over 100,000	13,800	2,750
Average	4,300	1,400

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list figures for the donations and cost of tax relief on *(a)* covenants to charities and *(b)* gift aid for taxpayers with gross income of over (i) £40,000, (ii) £60,000, (iii) £80,000 and (iv) £100,000. [39110]

Mr. Jack: Provisional estimates for individual taxpayers in 1995–96 are as follows:

Covenants to charities

Total income	*Donors*	*Gross donations £ million*	*Cost of tax relief £ million*
Over £40,000	156,000	150	60
Over £60,000	70,000	80	30
Over £80,000	40,000	50	20
Over £100,000	27,000	40	15

Gift aid

Total income	*Donors*	*Gross donations £ million*	*Cost of tax relief £ million*
Over £40,000	20,000	90	35
Over £60,000	11,000	65	25
Over £80,000	6,500	55	20
Over £100,000	5,000	50	20

Gilts

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he is taking in respect of sharp movements in gilts prior to the impact day of the new tax regime; and if he will make a statement. [40961]

Mr. Jack: Gilt prices respond to a variety of influences, of which prospective tax change is only one. My right hon. and learned Friend has already announced his proposals for tax reform in this field in broad outline, and the date on which it should come into effect. He does not believe any special measures are needed as these plans move towards implementation.

Housing Benefit Payments

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what impediments exist to details of payment of housing benefit to private landlords being made available to the tax authorities. [40904]

Mr. Jack: There are no impediments to the Inland Revenue's powers to require returns from local authorities of housing benefit payments made to private landlords.

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions exemption from inheritance tax has been granted for bequests to political parties since 1988; and how much revenue was forgone. [40777]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* I regret that this information is not available.

Profit-related Pay

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue yield from restricting relief on profit-related pay to relief at the marginal rate of *(a)* 25 per cent. and *(b)* 20 per cent. giving in each case the number of people affected and the average loss per taxpayer. [40783]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Information about profit-related pay schemes is derived from annual returns provided by employers. These show the total amounts of profit-related pay and the numbers of participants but do not include information about the distribution of earnings. The total revenue cost of the scheme is tentatively estimated on the assumption that the distribution of participants by marginal tax rate is similar to that for employees generally. On this basis, the revenue yield from restriction to 25 per cent. and 20 per cent. might be about £90 million and £230 million respectively at 1995–96 levels. But it would be misleading to provide estimates about numbers of losers and average amounts of loss on the basis of very general assumptions.

Personal Allowances

Mrs. Maddock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the Darby *v.* Sweden case which was considered by the European Court of Human Rights in 1990 and its implication for the eligibility of women with disabled husbands for additional personal allowance. [40841]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* The case of Darby *v.* Sweden concerned a Finnish resident who worked in Sweden and was required to pay the Swedish church tax simply because he was not registered as a resident of Sweden. Dr. Darby's complaint, which was upheld by the court, was brought under article 1 of protocol 1 of the European convention on human rights which concerns the peaceful enjoyment of possessions. That article has no relevance to the eligibility of claimants to additional personal allowance.

Tobacco Duty

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received regarding the duty on tobacco products; what the nature of such representations has been; what response he has given to any such representations; and if he will make a statement. [41294]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* We have received a number or representations. The majority of these asked that tobacco taxation not be increased in the forthcoming Budget. All representations concerning tobacco taxation will be considered very carefully in the period leading up to the Budget, but it would be inappropriate for me to comment further at this stage.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the percentage of those working in domestic service are *(a)* of ethnic minority origin and *(b)* female. [39945]

Mrs. Angela Knight: The labour force survey for spring 1995 shows that of an estimated 151,000 people employed as domestic personnel in private households, 76 per cent. were female. The LFS sample of people of ethnic minority origin in this group is too small to provide a reliable estimate.

Mr. Byers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many 20 to 24-year-olds were employed *(a)* at the latest date for which information is available and *(b)* 12 months earlier. [41822]

Mrs. Knight: Information from the labour force survey shows there were 2.637 million persons aged 20 to 24 years in employment in Great Britain at summer 1995 and 2.657 million at summer 1994.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

School Milk Subsidies

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has to alter the current subsidy arrangements for school milk. [40918]

Mr. Baldry: Our participation in the discretionary elements of the EC school milk subsidy scheme is kept under review.

Fishing Licences

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has reached a decision on the National River's Authority's Anglian Coast (Limitation of Net Licences) Order 1994. [41882]

Mr. Baldry: My hon. Friend has previously drawn my attention to the views expressed by his constituents on this issue. I am now pleased to tell him that I have received the inspector's report on the public inquiry into this order. It recommends that the order be confirmed, provided that a number of amendments are made. The most significant amendment proposed by the inspector is that licences for this fishery should not be limited to those dependent on fishing for their livelihood. I have accepted these recommendations, and, provided the NRA consents to the amendments, intend to confirm the order on this basis. All existing licence holders will therefore continue to be eligible to hold licences. No new licences will be issued, however, and the fishery will gradually be phased out.

People's Dispensary for Sick Animals

Sir Terence Higgins: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will estimate the additional cost of treating various kinds of sick animals by PDSA dispensaries as a result of European Union legislation. [39360]

Mrs. Browning: The PDSA has represented that changes to United Kingdom law made by the Medicines (Restrictions on the Administration of Veterinary Medicinal Products) Regulations 1994 to implement EC legislation will increase the cost of treating companion animals. These regulations contain provisions which had already passed into good veterinary practice in the UK, by means of the British Veterinary Association's code of practice for the prescribing of medicinal products, introduced in 1991. Following a recent meeting between officials from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate and the director general of the PDSA at which these issues were discussed and clarified, we have been able to give assurances which should ensure that that the PDSA does not incur additional costs as a result of the application of the regulations.

Public Appointments, South Yorkshire

Mr. Martin Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which his Department makes appointments in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating the total annual budget and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years. [39424]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In the county of South Yorkshire there are three non-departmental public bodies to which the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food makes appointments.

The Yorkshire regional flood defence committee is a statutory executive committee of the National Rivers Authority, which meets its administrative costs. Expenditure is accounted for by the National Rivers Authority. In 1994, four appointments were made or renewed. There have been no other appointments in the last four years.

The appointments of two MAFF appointed members of the South and West Yorkshire agricultural wages committee were renewed in each of the years 1993 and 1994. No other appointments have been made in the last four years. There is no separate regional budget for agricultural wages committee work.

Appointments are made to the regional panel for the Ministry's north-east region which includes the county of South Yorkshire. Regional panel members do not receive a fee for their services but may claim travel and subsistence allowances.

Year	*New/renewed appointments*	*Total annual budget £*
1992–93	13	2,900
1993–94	3	2,100
1994–95	3	3,300
1995–96	2	[1]4,000

[1] Estimate.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work force; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41113]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Breakdown by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—normally those engaged for a period of up to 12 months, but exceptionally up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis on 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

EC Agriculture Council

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Croydon, North-East (Mr. Congdon), of 18 October 1995, *Official Report*, columns *285–86*, what was the voting record of each member state on items agreed at the meeting of the European Community's Agriculture Council held on 25 September; and if he will make it his practice to list all votes, including where there have been no votes, in the future. [41090]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The answer referred to makes clear that the Agriculture Council held in Brussels on 25 September 1995 took two decisions, both by qualified majority, Portugal voting against in one instance and the United Kingdom opposing in the other. The affirmative vote by all other member states, in each case, is implicit.

Peanut Allergy

Sir Cranley Onslow: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to raise awareness in catering establishments and takeaways of the dangers of peanut allergy. [41136]

Mrs. Browning: Following the publicity about the dangers to allergic individuals of severe reactions to peanuts and other nuts, my officials met various sectors of the food industry, including the catering sector, to discuss what could be done. We are continuing to explore ways of improving awareness and encouraging information exchange and we are also in touch with consumer groups including the Anaphylaxis Campaign which has itself done much to alert sufferers to the dangers and to heighten awareness in the industry. In addition, the Ministry is investing £500,000 per year in research on food allergies to help elucidate the nature of the problem.

Dimetridazole

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the ban of the use of dimetridazole and its effect on the United Kingdom bird industry. [41625]

Mrs. Browning: We are aware of the concerns about this ban and a number of options to assist the game bird industry are under active consideration.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Co-operative Organisations (Central and Eastern Europe)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of the British organisations delivering consultancy to co-operatives in central and eastern Europe are themselves co-operatives; and what is the extent to which co-operative organisations are on the tender lists for such co-operative projects in central and eastern Europe. [40916]

Mr. Hanley: There are no co-operatives on the ODA's register of organisations interested in know-how fund work. Nor is there any record of co-operatives having been awarded contracts for KHF work.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what amount of funds is allocated to developing and restructuring the co-operative sectors of the countries in central and eastern Europe as a proportion of private sector projects; how many projects make up the allocation to the co-operative sector in central and eastern Europe; and what percentage of such projects has been awarded to British organisations to deliver the consultancy requirements. [40917]

Mr. Hanley: The know-how fund does not allocate funds specifically to the co-operative sectors of the countries in central and eastern Europe. Nor does it keep statistics specifically on the amount of money spent on the co-operative sector, but if a proposal to support co-operatives is received and it meets the criteria applied by the know-how fund it will be considered on its merits.

The know-how fund awards all its contracts to British organisations.

Poverty

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy that any proposals for a reduction in the overseas budget shall not affect those programmes aimed at fighting poverty in the developing world. [39936]

Mr. Hanley: The overriding goal of the British aid programme is to improve the quality of life of people in poorer countries by contributing to sustainable development and reducing poverty and suffering. Her Majesty's Government will maintain a substantial and effective programme increasingly focused on the poorest countries.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what communications he has had from the president of the World bank about the priority to be accorded to fighting poverty in the developing world by the developed nations. [39962]

Mr. Hanley: At the annual meetings of the World bank and IMF in October, the president made a strong appeal for adequate funding of the International Development Association to ensure that global efforts to support poverty reduction in the poorest countries are not set back.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Secretary of State for Defence about the reduction of arms sales as a contribution to fighting poverty in the developing world. [39938]

Mr. Hanley: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has made no representations to the Secretary of State for Defence on this matter.

The United Kingdom actively supports the emphasis placed by the donor community, including the International Monetary Fund and the World bank, in their relations with developing countries on the implications for economic and social development of an excessive level of military expenditure. We have made it clear that we consider the setting of an appropriate level of military expenditure to be an important part of good government. It is one of the factors we take into account when deciding our allocations of bilateral aid.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what commitment Her Majesty's Government have made to encouraging economic and social development in the world's poorest nations as recommended in the 1980 Brandt report. [39942]

Mr. Hanley: Sustainable economic and social development is at the heart of the United Kingdom's overseas aid programme. Many of the recommendations of the 1980 Brandt report have been incorporated into policy making. Around two thirds of our bilateral aid allocatable by income group goes to the world's poorest countries.

Aid Expenditure

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the United States authorities about overseas aid expenditure. [39937]

Mr. Hanley: My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary has not held such discussions. However, my right hon. and noble Friend the Minister for Overseas Development last held discussions about overseas aid expenditure with the US authorities when she visited Washington in June this year.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government plan a reduction in the proportion of gross national product currently spent on overseas aid. [39940]

Mr. Hanley: Future levels of aid will depend on the outcome of the public expenditure survey, which is currently under way.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what comparison he has made between the proportion of gross national product spent on foreign aid by the United Kingdom and *(a)* Denmark and *(b)* Sweden. [39941]

Mr. Hanley: The United Kingdom, Denmark and Sweden spent the following proportions of gross national product on aid in the last three years.

Percentage

	1992	*1993*	*1994*
(a) United Kingdom	0.31	0.31	0.31
(b) Denmark	1.02	1.03	1.03
(c) Sweden	1.03	0.99	0.90

Women's Programmes

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how the Government's recent proposals for the overseas aid budget will affect those programmes aimed at helping women in the developing world to which the Government committed itself at the UN women's conference in Beijing. [39939]

Mr. Hanley: Programmes aimed at helping women in the developing world will continue to be an important priority for ODA. Future spending plans are currently under discussion.

NATIONAL HERITAGE

Millennium Exhibition

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will issue guidance on entrance charges to the proposed millennium exhibition. [40082]

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This is a matter for the Millennium Commission. I shall reply to the hon. Member in my capacity as chairman of the commission and place copies of my reply in the Libraries of the House.

Millennium Funding

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what study or consideration she has given to the relative income generation potential of the bids for millennium funding in Wales from the Welsh national stadium and the Cardiff Bay opera house. [38048]

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This is a matter for the Millennium Commission. I shall reply to the hon. Member in my capacity as chairman of the commission and place copies of my reply in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage (1) what consultations she has had in relation to the compliance with the publicly stated conditions for funding from the Millennium Commission of *(a)* the redevelopment of the Welsh national rugby stadium and *(b)* the Cardiff Bay opera house; [37819]

(2) if she will list the reports prepared for the Millennium Commission in relation to the bids for funding *(a)* the Cardiff Bay opera house and *(b)* redevelopment of the Welsh national rugby stadium; and what were the main positive and negative recommendations contained in each report with respect to the project under review; [37823]

(3) what estimate she has of the level of matching private funds available corresponding to the bids for assistance from the Millennium Commission for *(a)* the Cardiff Bay opera house and *(b)* the redevelopment of the Welsh national rugby stadium; [37821]

(4) what estimates she has made of the relative levels of public support in Wales for the proposals to obtain Millennium Commission funding for *(a)* the redevelopment of the Welsh national rugby stadium and *(b)* the Cardiff Bay opera house; and if she will make a statement; [37820]

(5) what deadline she has given for the determination of the bids for funding from the Millennium Commission of *(a)* the Cardiff Bay opera house and *(b)* the redevelopment of the Welsh national rugby Stadium. [37822]

Mrs. Bottomley *[holding answer 19 October 1995]:* This is a matter for the Millennium Commission. I shall reply to the hon. Member in my capacity as chairman of the commission and place copies of my reply in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what consultations she has had with the organisations applying to the Millennium Commission for funding; and what guidance she has issued to them concerning their eligibility or otherwise for funding where geographically applicable from *(a)* the European regional development fund, *(b)* the Wales tourist board, *(c)* the Welsh Development Agency and Development Board for Rural Wales and *(d)* other public grant-aiding bodies; and what proposals she has to issue further clarification in the guidelines. [38416]

Mrs. Bottomley *[holding answer 20 October 1995]:* This is a matter for the Millennium Commission. I shall reply to the hon. Member in my capacity as chairman of the commission and place copies of my reply in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what special measures she proposes for ensuring that appropriate tests of public support are carried out in respect of millennium fund projects submitted from Wales; and if she will make a statement. [40724]

Mrs. Bottomley *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* This is a matter for the Millennium Commission. I shall reply to the hon. Member in my capacity as chairman of the commission and place copies of my reply in the Libraries of the House.

PRIME MINISTER

Remploy Consortium

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Prime Minister what representations he has had from the trade union side secretary of the Remploy Consortium; what reply he is sending; what action he is taking; and if he will make a statement. [40934]

The Prime Minister: I have received one such representation, which will be responded to in due course by my hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Education and Employment.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Prime Minister (1) pursuant to his oral answer of 2 May, *Official Report,* columns 167-68, what progress is being made towards repealing those regulations identified as unnecessary burdens to business; [41569]

(2) if a compliance cost assessment has been completed on each regulation to be repealed; and what is the estimated saving to *(a)* small businesses and *(b)* the public funds from the repeal of each regulation. [41570]

The Prime Minister: We have identified over 1,000 regulations for repeal or amendment and are on target to have dealt with over half of those by the end of the year. The requirement to carry out a compliance cost assessment applies to regulations imposing additional burdens on business while the programme of repeals and amendments is concerned with reducing the burden. However, to take an example, simplification of the food temperature control regulations will help small businesses and generate savings of about £40 million a year for the industry as a whole without removing any necessary public health protection.

Overseas Aid Budget

Ms Lestor: To ask the Prime Minister (1) how many letters about the size of the overseas aid budget he has received from hon. Members since 1 September; and what was the comparable figure for the same period in the previous year; [41664]

(2) how many letters about the size of the overseas aid budget he has received from non-governmental organisations since 1 September; and what was the comparable figure for the same period in the previous year; [41662]

(3) how many letters about the size of the overseas aid budget he has received from members of the public since 1 September; and what was the comparable figure for the same period in the previous year. [41663]

The Prime Minister: I have received a substantial number of representations on this matter over the past 12 months.

President Chirac

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if he will place in the Library *(a)* a copy of the memorandum on defence and security co-operation agreed with President Chirac of France on 30 October and *(b)* the text of the press conference he jointly hosted with President Chirac on 30 October. [41473]

The Prime Minister: I have already done so.

Quebec (Ex-premier's Remarks)

Mr. Mates: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make it clear to the ex-premier of Quebec Her Majesty's displeasure at his remarks about ethnic minority groups and the recent referendum. [41327]

The Prime Minister: The outcome of the referendum is a matter for Canadians in Canada. The Canadian Prime Minister has called for reconciliation. We wish the Canadian people well in the task of working together to this end.

Official Inquiries

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list all the official inquiries he and his department have undertaken over the last five years indicating the dates they were initiated and the date when the findings were released to the public. [41450]

The Prime Minister: I have set up no further inquiries since my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster answered a similar question from my hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Mr. Forman) on 25 May, *Official Report*, columns *717-20.*

Marriage

Mr. Patten: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to help married families since April 1992; [40898]

(2) what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken to strengthen the institution of marriage since April 1992. [40899]

The Prime Minister: The Government are fully committed to supporting the institution of marriage. Marriage is the bedrock of family life. Stable families are good for our children. They are a source of love and discipline, and of support for weaker members. However, we recognise that marriage is also a personal matter. We have taken several steps to support marriage, while at the same time respecting the privacy of personal relationships and choice.

This Government believe that married couples should receive recognition in the tax system. Married couples therefore receive tax treatment on both income and capital. They pay nearly £260 per year less in tax than most single people on the same income, at a total cost of £2.7 billion in 1995, and are treated more favourably for capital gains and inheritance tax. Inheritance tax reliefs for married couples are alone worth around £950 million in 1995–96.

We also believe that people should have access to help to overcome problems in their marriages. The Government have therefore given £8.5 million to marriage guidance and research organisations since April 1992.

To take this further, an interdepartmental group on marriage was set up in April this year to identify how Government can develop additional services to help couples who are considering marriage or whose marriages are in difficulty.

Housing is a crucial issue for married families. Our White Paper "Our Future Homes" sets out the aim of ensuring that a decent home is in reach of every family. We want to make sure that the allocation of social housing includes the need to support married couples who take a responsible approach to family life as an important objective.

We want to take away as many barriers to marriage as possible. For this reason, the Government supported a private Member's Bill in 1994 which widened the choice of venues for couples wishing to marry by civil ceremony.

Government Ministers meet representatives from the Churches and other organisations supporting marriage on an on–going basis to discuss the scope for further initiatives.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39479]

Mr. Hanley: The FCO diplomatic wing has one agency, Wilton Park, for which the information requested is given in the table. For the ODA, the chief executive of the Natural Resources Institute will write shortly to the hon. Member with the details requested.

Staffing levels	*1994–95*	*1995–96*
HCS 5	1	1
HCS 6	1	1
HCS 7	5	5
EO	8	8
AO	2	3
PS	3	3
CM III	1	1

Staffing levels	*1994–95*	*1995–96*
CHEF II	3	3
SGB II	8	8
Total cost	£630,538	£664,000

Figures are gross and include national insurance contributions and superannuation.

Letter from Anthony Beattie to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 3 November 1995:

NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE—STAFFING

In his reply of 30 October to your question to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs about staffing in executive agencies, Mr Hanley indicated that I would write to you separately about the position in the Natural Resources Institute (NRI). I now attach the information which you require. It needs some explanation.

The first point is that staffing levels in NRI are highly variable. They reflect day to day changes in the large number of individual projects and contracts which make up our business. It is therefore not meaningful to speak in terms of absolute numbers in a particular grade for a complete year as the numbers will change significantly over that period.

We have therefore based the data on the number of man-years of employment in each grade over the two years about which you have asked.

There is a further complication in respect of the estimated figures for 1995/96. We are currently in the process of implementing a voluntary redundancy programme which has as its aim the reduction of staffing levels to 360 by 1 April 1996. We do not know - and cannot reasonably speculate about - the identity of the staff who will volunteer to accept redundancy or when precisely they might be released. We have therefore compiled the 1995/96 estimate on the assumption that the volunteers will be evenly distributed across all grades and that the timing of their departures will occur on a straight-line basis between the end of September (when the first departures began to occur) and 31 March 1996.

All this does mean, I am afraid, that the 1995/96 estimate is subject to a considerably greater degree of uncertainty that might ordinarily be the case.

Numbers of staff in NRI by grade, and their cost in 1994–95 and 1995–96

	1994–95 (actual)		*1995–96 (estimated)*	
	Man years	*Pay cost £*	*Man years*	*Pay cost £*
Grade 3	1.0	76,054	1.0	78,008
Grade 5	4.7	264,851	4.2	202,494
Department Regional Vet Officer	1.7	97,372	0.9	38,632
Grade 6	22.4	1,258,534	22.7	965,257
Advisory Officer 1	16.4	660,537	10.4	367,966
Grade 7 (Accountant)	1.0	35,253	0.9	28,783
Grade 7	106.6	4,107,098	93.2	3,105,853
Advisory Officer II	2.6	111,848	2.3	64,016
Senior Scientific Officer	74.2	2,329,698	66.5	1,724,471
Senior Research Officer	19.5	476,447	15.1	311,292
Senior Executive Officer (Accountant)	0.5	17,069	0.9	20,736
Senior Executive Officer	3.4	100,922	5.2	124,417
Senior Information Officer	2.0	35,603	1.7	42,648
Higher Scientific Officer	54.0	1,338,217	45.5	895,525
Higher Executive Officer	4.2	131,632	3.1	64,929
Higher Graphics Officer	1.0	24,301	0.9	18,492
Higher Mapping and Charting Officer	1.0	24,617	0.9	18,672
Scientific Officer	30.8	601,838	29.0	463,804
Information Officer	1.0	41,431	0.9	15,972
Librarian	1.0	3,857	0.9	17,439
Executive Officer	19.3	355,919	14.4	220,618
Typing Manager	2.0	36,821	1.7	27,296
Administrative Officer	44.5	559,503	42.0	458,823
Assistant Scientific Officer	17.3	285,597	12.8	168,750
Administrative Assistant	2.6	27,492	2.5	21,463
Assistant Information Officer	1.0	18,270	1.7	27,670
Assistant Librarian	2.5	37,337	1.7	26,750
Graphics Officer	1.0	10,256	0.9	10,780
Mapping and Charting Officer	1.0	21,790	0.9	16,609
Mapping and Charting Tech Grade 1	1.0	15,256	0.0	0
Personal Secretary	11.8	217,873	9.2	126,001
Professional and Technology Officer	2.0	39,346	1.7	9,964
Support Grade Band 1	8.5	108,272	6.9	73,124
Support Grade Band 2	12.3	135,968	10.4	95,823
Tech Grade 1	5.9	92,098	5.2	69,078
Typist	8.3	87,614	8.3	95,375
	490.0	13,786,591	426.3	10,017,526

Iraq

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what information Her Majesty's Government had received on activities conducted since 1985 in connection with *(a)* the BADR–2000 missile, *(b)* project 144 on missile modification, *(c)* project 1728 on liquid propellant rocket engines and *(d)* the Karama project on production of missile guidance and control by Iraq, prior to the publication of the eighth biannual United Nations Special Commission report on the visits of the UN Special Commission on Iraq, pursuant to UN Security Council resolution 687 of 1991; [41505]

(2) what information Her Majesty's Government had received on activities conducted since 1985 at *(a)* the Muthanna state establishment, *(b)* the Al Hakan facility, *(c)* the Al Hazen Ibn Al Haythan Institute in Al Salman, *(d)* the single cell protein plant at Tajis, *(e)* the Sammarra drug factory and *(f)* the Muhammadiyat weapons test range in Iraq, in regard to development of biological and chemical weapon or precursor agent development, prior to the publication on 11th October of the UNSCOM eight biannual report on its mission to Iraq. [41504]

Mr. David Davis: It is not our practice to comment in detail on information given to us in confidence by UNSCOM. Nor do we comment on intelligence matters.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what additional assistance has been offered by Her Majesty's Government to meet the acute shortage of funds detailed at page 35 of the UNSCOM eighth biannual report on its mission in Iraq pursuant to UN Security Council resolution 687 of 1991. [41472]

Mr. Davis: We strongly support the work on UNSCOM and make a major effort to supply personnel, equipment and expertise. The funds which the United Kingdom commits to this have been about £1 million per annum. We have no plans to increase this.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer of 27 October, *Official Report*, column *862*, if he is following up any evidence that British companies have supplied materials relevant to Iraqi programmes to acquire weapons of mass destruction; and if he will make a statement. [41433]

Mr. Davis: Inspections by the UN Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency have revealed the names of many companies from Britain and other countries which have traded with Iraq. UNSCOM and the IAEA inform us in confidence of British equipment found in order to help verify Iraqi statements. However, it is not our practice to comment on information passed to us by these organisations or to publish the names of the companies. Any evidence of wrong-doing will be investigated and, if appropriate, will be a matter for the courts.

Crown Colonies (Governors)

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the answer to the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Foster) of 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *10–11*, if the obligation to restrict political activities also applies to governors of Crown colonies. [41280]

Mr. Hanley: Most governors of our dependent territories are diplomatic service officers and are therefore subject to diplomatic service regulations which restrict political activities. Where politicians are appointed as governors, on contract, these regulations do not apply and they may make political statements in their personal capacity.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current situation in Sri Lanka and on reports of the recent massacres of civilians in the north and east. [42020]

Mr. Hanley: We condemn the recent brutal massacres of civilians which have taken place, especially those in villages in the north and east of Sri Lanka. These outrages bear all the hallmarks of operations carried out by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam—LTTE—and deserve the condemnation of the entire international community. We deplore the loss of life and destruction resulting from this conflict, and urge both the Government and the LTTE to take all possible steps to avoid further civilian casualties.

We continue to believe that a lasting solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka can be achieved only through a sustainable political settlement, reached through peaceful negotiation. The Government of Sri Lanka have put forward wide-ranging proposals for constitutional reform, which we believe could provide the basis for a negotiated settlement acceptable to all Sri Lankans. We urge all who are concerned to see a lasting and peaceful settlement to the conflict to make every effort to persuade the LTTE to respond positively to the constitutional opportunities now emerging.

Arms Sales (Peru and Equador)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on arms sales to Peru and Ecuador following the outbreak of fighting in January in the long-standing border dispute. [42021]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The Government's policy is to support sales of UK defence equipment where this is compatible with our political, strategic and security interests. At all times, we have followed our established and public practice of considering individual sales to Peru and Ecuador on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the international guidelines to which we are committed. We shall continue to process applications on a case-by-case basis. Some licence applications for the export of military equipment were not approved during the period of heightened tension between Peru and Ecuador. The recent reduction in tension between the two countries is encouraging.

Bosnia

Ms Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has concerning requests to UN headquarters in Zagreb in July for air strikes to protect Srebrenica; and if he will make a statement. [41220]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary in the House on 12 July 1995, *Official Report*, columns *947–66*.

Immigration

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to introduce a system whereby a reference number is allocated to each individual who contacts entry clearance staff about an application for a visitor's visa, who is advised not to proceed, and then acts upon the advice, and if he will make a statement. [41396]

Mr. Hanley: Some entry clearance issuing posts operate a preliminary assessment system whereby an applicant may be advised by an entry clearance officer that his application is unlikely to succeed, should he choose to proceed with the application. A fee is not taken unless an application is formally lodged. It is made clear to applicants that they are not obliged to follow this advice.

Posts are required to maintain a record of the number of those who accept preliminary assessment advice. Additionally, posts are required to retain a record of those individuals who accept this advice for a period of six months after their inquiry to help deal with any subsequent inquiries.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many potential applicants in *(a)* 1994 and *(b)* January to June 1995 seeking visitors' visas at (i) Islamabad, (ii) Delhi, (iii) Bombay and (iv) Lagos have been advised not to pursue their application; and if he will make a statement. [41397]

Mr. Hanley: The number of potential applicants for non-settlement visas who were offered and accepted advice that their application was unlikely to succeed before they had paid their (non-refundable fee) in;

(a) 1994 was:

(i) Islamabad 10803

(ii) New Delhi 8179

(iii) Bombay 1689

(iv) Lagos 916

(b) January to June 1995 was:

(i) Islamabad 4853

(ii) New Delhi 3125

(iii) Bombay 2231

(iv) Lagos 165

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will set out, for the most recently available 12-month period, the figures of applications for settlement in the United Kingdom from each country in the world, categorised by reasons for application and, in each case, the number and percentage of acceptance and refusals with, where available, reasons for rejection; and if he will, as appropriate, provide the same information with regard to applications for visits. [41712]

Mr. Hanley: Information on visas granted and refused by country of application is published in table 2.1 of the Home Office Command Paper "Control of Immigration Statistics United Kingdom 1994" issued on 10 August 1995, Cm HMSO, a copy of which is in the Library.

Figures are not available in any format categorised by reasons for application or reasons for refusal in either settlement or visit cases. To compile such statistics would incur disproportionate cost.

Brazil

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what attempts have been made by Her Majesty's embassy in Brazil to meet representatives of the Makuxi people in Roraima concerning their land rights and the implementation of the Group of Seven policies. [41824]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: A British embassy official met representatives of the Makuxi people in Roraima between 8 and 15 October.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to him recently on behalf of the Makuxi Indians in Brazil; and what was his response. [41812]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Representatives of the Makuxi had discussions with officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 1 November.

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations Her Majesty's ambassador has made to the Government of the United Arab Emirates about the proposed flogging of a 16-year-old Filipina girl; and if he will make a statement. [41628]

Mr. Hanley: The UAE Government are well aware of the international concern over Sahara Balabagan. The judicial process has still not been exhausted, and we will continue to follow the case.

Afghanistan

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the implications for Her Majesty's Government's policy of the recent attack on the Pakistan embassy in Kabul. [41711]

Mr. Hanley: We condemn the attack by demonstrators on the Pakistan embassy in Kabul in September. We continue to support the efforts of the UN Secretary-General's special representative to broker a peace agreement. Permanent peace in Afghanistan will be achieved only if the major Afghan leaders and their supporters genuinely want it.

Peru

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings have been held by her Majesty's embassy in Peru with the Government of Peru to discuss the operation of the emergency provisions and human rights; and if he will make a statement. [41825]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Meetings are held regularly, most recently on 25 October with the director general for human rights in the Peruvian Foreign Ministry.

Correspondence

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his letter of 14 July, ref. 132969, when he expects to reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Ealing, North of 13 July relating to the case of Mr. Neil McGowan. [41710]

Mr. Hanley: An interim reply has been sent to the hon. Member for Ealing, North from the migration and visa correspondence unit. A substantive reply will follow as soon as possible. The delay is regretted.

SCOTLAND

Pollution (Loch Lomond)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to reduce pollution in Loch Lomond. [40478]

Mr. Kynoch: The Clyde River Purification Board is responsible for monitoring and controlling pollution in Loch Lomond.

Scottish Natural Heritage

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the amounts awarded by SNH in 1994 under section 15 agreements for each owner and occupier. [40311]

Mr. Kynoch: This is a matter for Scottish Natural Heritage. I have asked the chief executive to reply to the hon. Member.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects the current review of SNH to be completed; if he will make a statement on its remit; and if its findings will be published. [40312]

Mr. Kynoch: My right hon. Friend will make a statement on the conclusions of the study group on SNH shortly.

Incapable Adults (Legislation)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the legislation proposed by the Scottish Law Commission on incapable adults. [41356]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. Friend welcomes the publication of this very important report, which contains a number of far-reaching proposals in relation to incapable adults. He is giving careful consideration to these proposals.

Forestry Grants

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the current recipients of forest access grants, the value of the grant for each year and the total value for Scotland. [41704]

Mr. Kynoch: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy of the signed letter in the Libraries of the House.

Respite and Continuing Care Beds

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many *(a)* NHS and *(b)* private respite care beds were available (i) by region and (ii) by health authority in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [41406]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is not available centrally.

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many NHS continuing care beds have been available in each *(a)* region and *(b)* district in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [41421]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is available for regions only and is shown in the table.

National Health Service Hospitals in Scotland—Average available staffed beds in the specialties of mental handicap, psychogeriatrics and geriatric long stay:

Years ending 31 March

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Region					
Scotland	19,378	19,594	18,305	16,910	15,878
Borders	375	349	308	301	292
Central	1,607	1,530	1,454	1,451	1,384
Dumfries and Galloway	553	562	547	550	511
Fife	1,474	1,430	1,301	1,238	1,152
Grampian	2,271	2,269	1,928	1,711	1,612
Highland	580	559	531	525	598
Lothian	2,571	2,492	2,378	2,200	2,202
Orkney	64	78	69	47	51
Shetland	87	87	87	86	81
Strathclyde	8,099	8,568	8,134	7,340	6,604
Tayside	1,597	1,584	1,475	1,371	1,308
Western Isles	98	87	93	89	83

Financial Reserves

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what financial reserves have been held *(a)* by trusts and *(b)* health authorities in each region in each of the last three years; [41418]

(2) if he will itemise the financial reserves of each *(a)* trust and *(b)* health authority in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [41425]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: NHS trusts and health boards, in the interests of sound financial planning and management, do maintain financial reserves, for use in year. The total involved will vary throughout the year. Detailed information on these constantly changing amounts is not held centrally.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Fireworks

Mr. Burden: To ask the President of the Board of Trade when Kanash Ltd. imported consignments of Red Lion fireworks to the United Kingdom; how many container loads were included; what checks were undertaken at the port of entry; and the number of container loads the location of which the Health and Safety Executive is now aware. [41726]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: I understand from Customs and Excise and the Health and Safety Executive that the fireworks in question were imported through Southampton in September 1995. A total of seven container loads were brought in. Existing arrangements do not specifically require analytical tests to be carried out on each consignment of fireworks at the port of entry and none was undertaken in this instance. Such tests do, of course, require specialised equipment and facilities. I understand that some fireworks remain at the importer's leased deport at Chorley but the bulk were distributed to various parts of the United Kingdom. The importer is co-operating with the Health and Safety Executive in providing full details and is recalling all its imported fireworks.

Mr. Burden: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what provision of the Explosives Act 1875 may be enforced by trading standards officers in metropolitan areas. [41767]

Mr. Evans: Enforcement of the majority of the provisions of the Explosives Act 1875 is provided for by the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1989. In metropolitan counties, enforcement is a matter for fire authorities or, depending upon the provision in question, the Health and Safety Executive. The regulations do not, however, provide for enforcement of a number of specific provisions of the 1875 Act. These include, for example, section 31—sale of gunpowder and explosives to children. My Department takes the view that trading standards departments are able to bring prosecutions under this section in cases where the police have not become involved or have decided not to proceed.

My Department draws no distinction between metropolitan and other areas in this respect.

Research Councils

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will name the members of the two appointments panels set up to select the new chief executives of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and the Medical Research Council. [41883]

Mr. Ian Taylor: The membership of the recruitment boards for the appointment of new chief executives to the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and the Medical Research Council is as follows:

The permanent secretary, Department of Trade and Industry (board chairman);

The chief scientific adviser, Office of Science and Technology;

The Director General of Research Councils, Office of Science and Technology;

The chairman of the relevant research council;

Two independent members—one from academe, and one from the relevant industry.

Campbell's Soups

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what plans he has to meet representatives of Campbell's Soups to discuss competition in the production of soup. [39715]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: I have no such plans.

Dounreay (Reprocessing of Nuclear Fuel)

Mr. Chisholm: to ask the President of the Board of Trade what plans he has to hold consultation exercises to assess the opinion of the Scottish people with regard to the reprocessing of American spent fuel rods at Dounreay. [41627]

Mr. Page: Reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel at Dounreay is an established industrial process which has been undertaken at Dounreay for more than 30 years. It is carried out subject to nuclear installations inspectorate and Her Majesty's industrial pollution inspectorate regulation. There is no reason to engage in public consultation about the continuation of such a well-established and well-regulated activity.

Commercial reprocessing will be an important factor in maintaining employment levels in the Dounreay area. The DTI will continue to support it provided that the appropriate regulatory requirements continue to be met and there is a commercial return.

Mr. Chisholm: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what correspondence he has received from the United States Government concerning opposition to the reprocessing of American spent fuel rods at Dounreay. [41626]

Mr. Page: The US Department of Energy has sent my officials two copies of letters they have received opposing reprocessing at Dounreay.

Home Brewery, Nottingham

Mr. Heppell: To ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) what representations he has received on the future of the Home Brewery, Nottingham; [41963]

(2) what information he has on the effect the merger of Scottish and Newcastle Ltd. and Courage Ltd. will have on Home Brewery, Nottingham. [41969]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: The Department received a number of representations about the Scottish and Newcastle/Courage merger including the future of the Home Brewery in Nottingham. In giving his advice to me on the merger, the Director General of Fair Trading took account of all relevant factors, as I did in making my decision on the case. Any information about the commercial operations of the parties supplied to the DGFT or myself under merger control procedures, including about the future of the Home Brewery, must remain confidential.

Brewery Mergers

Mr. Heppell: To ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) how many public houses Scottish and

Newcastle Ltd. owned or supplied before the merger with Courage Ltd.; [41967]

(2) how many public houses Scottish Courage currently own; and how many Scottish Courage will own or supply after fulfilling the undertakings given to prevent reference of the merger between Scottish and Newcastle Ltd. and Courage Ltd. to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. [41968]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: At the time of giving his advice to me on the Scottish and Newcastle/Courage merger, the Director General of Fair Trading estimated that the parties would between them have owned or supplied about 7,500 pubs, which included some 4,350 pubs owned by Inntrepreneur Estates Ltd. and supplied by Courage. This figure is not complete as it does not include all supply agreements entered into by the parties as part of their normal commercial activities. The undertakings provide for the reduction in Scottish and Newcastle's tied estate to a maximum of 2,624—115 pubs fewer than its maximum permitted tied estate under the beer orders—and for the early release of 1,000 pubs from the supply agreement with IEL. It is not possible to say how many public houses the merged company, Scottish Courage, will supply in total in the future since that will depend on how successful the company is in competing for supply agreements in the competitive beer market.

Mr. Heppell: To ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) what percentage of the United Kingdom's final beer sales is Scottish Courage's share after the merger of Scottish and Newcastle Ltd. and Courage Ltd.; [41965]

(2) what percentage of the United Kingdom's beer sales was Scottish and Newcastle Brewery Ltd.'s share before the merger with Courage Ltd.; [41964]

(3) what percentage of the United Kingdom's final beer sales will be Scottish Courage's share after the merger of Scottish and Newcastle Ltd. and Courage Ltd. [41966]

Mr. Evans: At the time of giving his advice to me on the Scottish and Newcastle/Courage merger, the Director General of Fair Trading estimated the parties' combined share of final beer sales in the UK to be about 30 per cent., of which Scottish and Newcastle had 11 per cent.

Walker Wingsail Systems, Plymouth

Mr. Jamieson: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what financial assistance has been given by his Department to Walter Wingsail, Plymouth, since 1987. [41336]

Mr. Page: I believe that the hon. Member is referring to Walker Wingsail Systems plc. My Department has not provided any financial assistance to the company in question since 1987, with the exception of a small contribution of some £4,000 towards some consultancy work under the enterprise initiative.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40734]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: The total cost, excluding VAT, of ministerial transport provided from the government car service and under private contract for the financial years:

1990–91: £165,724

1991–92: £178,982

1992–93: £272,524

1993–94: £349,520

1994–95: £362,167

These figures reflect structural and ministerial changes within the Department resulting from machinery of government changes. Ministers who use their own vehicles on official business are entitled to claim the standard motor mileage allowance, which currently ranges from 19p to 46p depending on engine size and distance travelled. A breakdown of such claims could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Regional Selective Assistance

Mr. Morgan: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is his latest outturn forecast for regional selective assistance offers and expenditure in England in 1995–96; and how it relates to planned expenditure. [41784]

Mr. Eggar: The forecast outturn for offers of RSA in 1995–96, in England, is £140 million. Expenditure in 1995–96 is expected to be close to our estimate of £103.7 million. Grants are paid in instalments against progress on the project, typically over a period of three to five years. Most of the expenditure on grants offered in 1995–96 will be spread over future years.

Small Firms Conference

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) if he will list the organisations which have been invited to participate in next year's conference on small firms; [41518]

(2) when he expects next year's UK conference on small firms to take place; who will fund it; how much he expects it to cost; how much of the cost will be met from public funds; and what topics he expects it to cover. [41517]

Mr. Page: The "Your Business Matters" series of conferences, the majority of which will take place in 1995, are being run by a team of leading business organisations—the Institute of Business Directors, the CBI, the British chambers of commerce, the TEC National Council, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Forum of Private Business. The timing and funding of the conferences is the responsibility of the organisers.

I understand that the topics likely to be covered will be a reflection of the issues raised at the regional conferences.

Total Access Communications System

Mr. William Ross: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will place in the Library copies of all issues of his specifications for a total access communications system including extended total access communications system and BABT—British Approvals Board for Telecommunications—six special investigation test schedules and relevant specifications for authentication. [41386]

Mr. Ian Taylor *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* I have arranged for the information to be placed in the Library of the House. Detailed specifications for authentication are subject to commercial confidentiality provisions.

3-Dimensional Pharmaceuticals

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what assessment he has made of the effect that granting a patent upon combinatorial chemistry 3–Dimensional Pharmaceuticals will have on restricting the scope and availability of basic science research. [41980]

Mr. Ian Taylor: My officials in the Patent Office have been unable to identify any patent granted to an organisation called 3-Dimensional Pharmaceuticals. However, the grant of a patent would not prevent others from doing acts for experimental purposes relating to the subject matter of the invention. If that research were to lead to a new invention which fell within the scope of the patent, it would be necessary to obtain a licence under the patent before it could be commercialised. If the invention were such as to make a substantial contribution to the art and three years had elapsed since the grant of the patent, a licence could not be refused.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41562]

Mr. Lang: There are no plans to repeal any further regulations by the end of 1995. However, four proposals for deregulatory amendments to company and competition law are currently before the Select Committee on Deregulation.

The requirement to carry out a compliance cost assessment applies to regulations which impose additional burdens on business while the programme of repeals and amendments is concerned with reducing the burden. However, it is estimated that cost savings of at least £100,000 a year will result from the amendments currently proposed.

Mr. Steen: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and in how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41547]

Mr. Lang: My Department has laid four draft deregulation proposals to date. The savings to the Exchequer as a result of these orders are virtually impossible to quantify but are likely to be very small. However, it is estimated that they will result in savings to business of at least £100,000 a year.

The explanatory document which is presented to the Committee alongside each draft order is required to contain an assessment of the cost savings to business and any other persons whom the draft order is intended to benefit.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Deportations

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if M15 is to work with the immigration service in respect of deportations. [39934]

Mr. Howard: It remains the case that the Security Service may provide information to assist in the exercise of powers under immigration legislation in cases involving national security.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has to amend the regulations regarding deportation of those who leave their employers because of mistreatment and abuse. [39947]

Mr. Kirkhope: None. The immigration laws are applied firmly but fairly to all persons liable to deportation. However, full consideration is always given to the compassionate circumstances of each case before any decision is taken.

Foreign Workers

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the possible outcome for foreign domestic workers suffering abuse from their employers. [39933]

Mr. Kirkhope: Domestic workers who are abused by their employers are advised to contact the police. Information about this is set out in the leaflet issued to domestic workers before arrival in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to act vigorously against employers who mistreat foreign domestic employees. [39935]

Mr. Kirkhope: The Government deplore all abuse of foreign domestic workers. The procedures in place guard against abuse as far as is possible. Any employer who uses violence towards an employee would be subject to the criminal law.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the extent to which immigration procedures may contribute to an increase in the number of individuals working in domestic service but unregistered as such. [39963]

Mr. Kirkhope: None. Current procedures are designed to ensure that only those domestic workers entitled to work as such in the United Kingdom are admitted or allowed to remain.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are allowed to remain in the United Kingdom only because they have a contract of employment. [39946]

Mr. Kirkhope: None. A person subject to immigration control needs to qualify for leave to remain under the immigration rules, or, in the case of overseas domestic workers, under the terms of the relevant concession.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the numbers of those people brought into the United Kingdom as domestic employees and *(b)* the percentage of those who suffer mistreatment and abuse. [39948]

Mr. Kirkhope: Comprehensive information on domestic workers admitted to the United Kingdom is not available. There are some entry clearance data for the 21 posts abroad which are likely to deal with the vast majority of applications by domestic workers. In the first six months of this year, nearly 6,300 visas were issued at these posts to domestic workers.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will inform in-country asylum seekers from countries who have undergone events likely to give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution that their entitlement to social security benefits will not cease on 8 January 1996. [41036]

Mr. Kirkhope: If declarations are made in respect of individual countries in accordance with the proposed benefit regulations, nationals of the countries concerned who submitted in-country asylum applications would be informed, as would relevant organisations and voluntary groups.

The benefit entitlement of all in-country applicants whose claims were lodged before 12 October will be protected until the next decision on their claim, regardless of whether their countries have undergone such events.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many of those applying for asylum in 1994 had children with them in the United Kingdom; what percentage of the total this represents; and how many children were involved; [41502]

(2) how many persons applied to the United Kingdom for asylum in 1994; and how many were successful. [41499]

Mr. Kirkhope: In 1994, 32,830 principal applicants applied for asylum in the United Kingdom. Of those, approximately 4,000, 12 per cent., were accompanied by dependants. The estimated total number of dependants was 9,400, of whom approximately half were minor children.

In 1994, 825 principal applicants were granted asylum and a further 3,660 were refused asylum but granted exceptional leave: 16,500 were refused asylum.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of those seeking asylum do so *(a)* at the port of entry and *(b)* within the United Kingdom mainland after entry. [41500]

Mr. Kirkhope: In the last year, October 1994 to September 1995, there have been 40,180 applications for asylum. Of these, approximately 30 per cent. were made at the port of entry and 70 per cent. made after entry into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people are currently awaiting a decision on their application for asylum in the United Kingdom; and what is the date of the oldest application; [41498]

(2) how many of those currently awaiting determination of their applications for asylum in the United Kingdom submitted their application *(a)* after their existing leave to remain had expired and *(b)* within three weeks of its expiry. [41496]

Mr. Kirkhope: The number of outstanding applications for asylum in the United Kingdom as at 30 September 1995 was 64,415. The oldest outstanding application for asylum is not separately identifiable.

Of the 64,415 outstanding asylum applications, approximately 31,000 were lodged by people who had previously been given leave to enter or leave to remain in the United Kingdom. An estimated 7,200 of these applications were lodged after such leave had expired. Information regarding the number of these applications submitted within three weeks of their leave expiring is not readily available.

Remand Prisoners

Sir John Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current number of remand prisoners who have been held in custody for a period in excess of three months. [41091]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Sir John Hunt, dated 6 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking what is the current number of remand prisoners who have been held in custody for a period in excess of three months.

The latest provisional information relates to the length of time since first reception into a Prison Service establishment in England and Wales on 30 June 1995 and is given in the attached table.

Remand prisoners in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales on 30 June 1995 held on remand for over 3 months[1]

On 30 June 1995	
Number on remand for over 3 months	[2]4,200

[1] Awaiting trial or sentence. Time since first reception on remand into a Prison Service establishment. This includes any intervening time spent on bail, but excludes any time spent in police cells beforehand.

[2] Rounded provisional estimate.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Jamieson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of his Department's inspectors monitor the use of research animals by personal licensees, project licence holders and designated establishments; and if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of the inspection system. [41041]

Mr. Kirkhope: All members of the animals (scientific procedures) inspectorate are involved in monitoring the use of animals in research. I am satisfied that the system is fully effective in delivering the objectives of the legislation.

Mr. Jamieson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of *(a)* personal licensees, *(b)* project licence holders and *(c)* designated establishments in the United Kingdom are permitted to carry out research on animals. [41042]

Mr. Kirkhope: At 31 December 1994, there were 15,807 personal licensees, 4,013 project licence holders and 331 certificates of designation.

Mr. Jamieson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many procedures on animals were carried out for tobacco research in *(a)* 1993 and *(b)* 1994; and if he will give details of the experiments carried out for tobacco research; [41043]

(2) how many procedures on animals were carried out for alcohol research in *(a)* 1993 and *(b)* 1994; and if he will make a statement; [41044]

(3) if he will list the areas of research which were responsible for the increased use of primates between 1993 and 1994; [41046]

(4) if he will list the pharmaceutical products which use primates in their research; and what was the number of primates used in *(a)* 1993 and *(b)* 1994 for each product. [41086]

Mr. Kirkhope: The numbers of procedures on animals are listed in "Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain" for 1993, Cm 2746, and 1994, Cm 3012.

Prior to 1 January, figures for the number of animal used in fundamental or applied research involving tobacco or its products were not separately recorded.

The number of procedures for alcohol research for 1993 was 7,328 and for 1994, 9,119.

The increase in the use if primates is attributable to increased demands for regulatory testing of medical and dental products.

Primates are used in many ares of medical research. Where regulatory testing is concerned, it is not always known, at the time of testing, the product for which individual ingredients may be used.

Mr. Jamieson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the reasons for the delays in publishing "Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain" for *(a)* 1993 and *(b)* 1994. [41045]

Mr. Kirkhope: I refer the hon. Member to the replies which the then Under-Secretary of State gave to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) on 18 January, *Official Report*, column *527*, and the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) on 27 January, *Official Report*, column *455*. It was not practical to publish in July this year since the returns were not complete by that date. The annual Command Paper was last published in July in 1992, and for reasons explained in the earlier replies the annual publication is likely to appear in the autumn in future.

Sentenced Prisoners Convention

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many countries have ratified the European Council convention concerning the return of sentenced prisoners; how many have agreements with the United Kingdom; how many British citizens have been repatriated to prisons in the United Kingdom over the last five years to date; what discussions have taken place with each country to determine the principles of repatriation agreements; if he will list the main features of each such agreement; what arrangements exist to review them; if the receiving country may reduce the sentence imposed by another jurisdiction; and if he will make a statement; [41047]

(2) how many British citizens given prison sentences in America have been repatriated to prisons in the United Kingdom in the last five years, to date; what prior agreement was reached in each case on the sentence to be served in the United Kingdom; what principles were agreed in discussions between both Governments before repatriation procedures were agreed; what arrangements were made for reviewing such procedures; and if he will make a statement; [41084]

(3) if Her Majesty's Government reserve the right to arrange to vary any prison sentence set by an overseas jurisdiction in the case of any person legally repatriated to prison in the United Kingdom under international agreement; how many such persons in the last five years, to date, applied for such a variation to be applied; to whom such applications have been made; and if he will make a statement. [41085]

Miss Widdecombe: The Council of Europe convention on the transfer of sentenced persons has been ratified by the United Kingdom and 31 other countries. The United Kingdom and four other countries have ratified the Commonwealth repatriation scheme. The United Kingdom has also entered into a bilateral prisoner repatriation agreement with Thailand.

The principles of repatriation are set out in each of the three agreements, copies of which have been placed in the Library. The main features of all three agreements are that: repatriation requires the consent of both jurisdictions and the prisoner concerned; the prisoner's sentence is not subject to further appeal and has at least six months left to run, and the prisoner is a national of the jurisdiction to which repatriation is sought and the acts which gave rise to the sentence would have constituted a criminal offence there.

The operation of the convention is reviewed by the European committee on crime problems of the Council of Europe. The Commonwealth scheme may be reviewed by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The bilateral agreement may be reviewed by either jurisdiction.

All repatriation requests are considered on their individual merits in consultation with the foreign jurisdiction. The United Kingdom has opted to conduct repatriation arrangements on the basis of continued enforcement of the original sentence. Under these arrangements, the jurisdiction responsible for administering a prisoner's sentence following repatriation is bound by the legal nature and duration of the original sentence. It is not therefore possible for the United Kingdom to vary or reduce the sentence imposed by a foreign jurisdiction. If, however, a foreign sentence is by its nature or duration incompatible with the law of the United Kingdom, the sentence may be adapted to a sanction prescribed in law for a similar offence. Any such adaptation must not aggravate by its nature or duration the sanction imposed by the sentencing state or exceed the maximum prescribed by law in the United Kingdom. Since 1990, the United Kingdom has conducted one repatriation of a British prisoner on the basis of the original sentence being adapted in this way with the consent of the sentencing jurisdiction and the prisoner concerned.

Between 1990 and 1994, 44 British prisoners were repatriated to the United Kingdom from foreign jurisdictions, including 11 prisoners repatriated from the United States of America. In each case, repatriation was conducted on the basis of both jurisdictions and the prisoner concerned consenting to the arrangements to be made for the continued enforcement of the sentence imposed.

Internet

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what investigations his Department has made into the practicality of the regulation of material available on the Internet; [41819]

(2) what representations he has received about the possible regulation of material available on the Internet. [41817]

Mr. Kirkhope: My right hon. and learned Friend has received a number of letters expressing concern about the availability of obscene and pornographic material on the Internet. The interdepartmental group on obscenity is examining this issue and hopes shortly to be discussing it with Internet service providers.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is responsible for more general questions relating to the regulation of the Internet and other computer networks.

Industry is responsible for more general questions relating to the regulation of the Internet and other computer networks.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers are available to the police to take action against users who make material available on the Internet which would be illegal in any other medium. [41818]

Mr. Kirkhope: The provisions of the criminal law apply to material disseminated on the Internet in the same way as to material disseminated on other media. It is, for example, an offence to publish obscene material or child pornography on the Internet. We have recently taken action in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to ensure that our controls keep pace with advances in technology. This has included clarification of the law to assist the police in gaining access to computer bulletin boards.

Ridgewell Air Force Base

Sir Alan Haselhurst: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration is being given to the former Air Force base at Ridgewell in Essex as the site for a new high security prison; and if he will make a statement. [41709]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Sir Alan Haselhurst, dated 6 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the former airforce base at Ridgewell in Essex as I have operational responsibility for the Prison Service.

The Prison Service has not been considering this site for a new high security prison. If the site is available, the Prison Service will examine its suitability as a potential site for new prison development.

Prisons Ombudsman

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the number of cases referred to the prisons ombudsman since his appointment. [40943]

Miss Widdecombe: The prisons ombudsman had received 1,810 letters of complaint by 31 October 1995, of which 464 were eligible for investigation by his office; the eligibility of a further 159 was being considered.

Prisons (Drugs)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the number of persons in the last 12 months who have been caught trying to take illegal drugs into prison while visiting an inmate. [41859]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 6 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the number of persons in the last 12 months who have been caught trying to take illegal drugs into prison while visiting an inmate.

Between 1 January and 30 September this year, the total number of incidents reported to Prison Service headquarters of visitors caught trying to take illegal drugs into prison while visiting an inmate was 1,109.

Visitors' Visas

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visitors' visas were *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused from applicants in (i) Pakistan, (ii) India, (iii) Bangladesh and (iv) Nigeria in (1) 1992, (2) 1993, and (3) 1994. [41723]

Mr. Kirkhope: Information on visas granted and refused by country of application is published in table 2.1 of the Home Office Command Paper "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 1994", issued on 10 August 1995, Cm 2935, by HMSO, a copy of which is in the Library.

Fires

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* deaths and *(b)* severe injuries from fires occurred in houses in multiple occupation for the years 1992–93, 1993–94 and 1994–95. [41053]

Mr. Kirkhope: Information about deaths and injuries in fires in houses in multiple occupation, attended by local authority fire brigades, is published in table G of the Home Office publication "Fire Statistics United Kingdom 1993", available in the Library; 1993 is the latest year for which such statistics are available.

Discretionary Life Sentences

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has issued a notice of appeal against the High Court judgment concerning the case of Paul Norwey, Stephen Nordone, Sean Kinsella, Noel Gibson and Brendan Dowd; what action he is taking to change procedures concerning discretionary life sentence prisoners applying for parole; and if he will make a statement. [40565]

Miss Widdecombe: My right hon and learned Friend has decided not to appeal against the High Court judgment in this case. Arrangements are now in hand to ensure that the cases of discretionary life sentence prisoners are referred to the Parole Board so that they may be heard by a discretionary lifer panel immediately on expiry of the prisoners' tariffs or shortly thereafter. It will be entirely a matter for the panel to decide whether to direct release.

New Prisons

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will name the prisons to be built by 2000, with the costs of each. [40459]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. George Howarth, dated 6 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about new prisons to be built by the year 2000.

Six new prisons are planned to be built under the private sector design, construct, manage and finance (DCMF) initiative announced by the Home Secretary on 2 September 1993. The first two prisons will be at Bridgend in South Wales and at Fazakerley on Merseyside. These are due to open in 1997–98. A site for a third prison has been identified in the Salford area of Greater Manchester, but the local planning authority have objected to the proposal. The Prison Service is considering making a request to the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the dispute and this could lead to a public inquiry. Site searching for the remainder of the DCMF projects is in progress and it is too early to give locations and likely timescales.

In addition to the six new DCMF prisons, the former Lowdham Grange prison near Nottingham will be rebuilt as a 500 bed, category B prison to be operated by the private sector. The prison is planned to open during 1997–98.

An annual management charge will be paid, subject to contract, so far as Fazakerley and Bridgend prisons, are concerned. Costs are not available at this time. Costs for Lowdham Grange and the other DCMF prisons are not yet known.

Prison Escorts

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will break down the savings achieved for each privatised prison escort area, showing how the savings are achieved; [40463]

(2) what is the cost for letting each escort contract; to whom each contract has been let; what is the budget reduction for each area as a result of the privatisation of the escort service, to how many staff posts is this equivalent; and what redundancies have occurred so far. [40462]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for these matters has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. George Howarth, dated 6 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Questions about the contracted out court escort service.

To date contracts have been implemented for the provision of this service in four of the eight court escort areas in England and Wales. This work was previously undertaken by the Prison Service and the police.

The attached table shows the contractor in each area together with information about costs and, insofar as the Prison Service is concerned, budget reductions expressed in financial and staffing terms. The savings relate to posts in the police and Prison Service deployed on court escort duties on a full time and part-time basis and vehicle mileage costs.

The actual level of reduction in respect of police service posts could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Decisions about how to manage the reductions, which were effected by top slicing police service budgets, were taken locally.

The direct costs to the Prison Service of the process of letting the contracts were approximately £150,000 per area.

Area	Contractor	Annual cost £ million[1]	Previous cost £ million[2]	Saving £ million	Budgetary reduction (Prison Service) £ million[3]	Number of staff posts lost (Prison Service)[4]	Redundancies
7 (East Midlands)	Group 4 Court Services	8.1	10.7	2.6	1.6	78	—
3 (London)	Securicor Custodial Services Ltd.	22.0	29.8	7.8	3.8	250	3
4 (East Anglia)	Group 4 Court Services	7.8	8.3	0.5	1.9	86	1
6 (Merseyside, Greater Manchester North Wales)	Group 4 Court Services	12.5	14.7	2.2	2.7	124	—

[1] Contract cost based on first year of full operation.

[2] Equivalent cost of the Police and Prison Service operation prior to contracting out (includes overheads, vehicle costs, catering and medical support).

[3] Budgetary reductions relates to Prison Service only.

[4] The posts shown as being given up were those sufficient to meet the cost of the Prison Service contribution to the contract cost. Other officers previously employed on court escort work were redeployed to other operational duties.

Certified National Accommodation

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of certified national accommodation for each of the next five years. [40458]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. George Howarth, dated 6 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent question about the estimate of certified normal accommodation in prisons in England and Wales for each of the next five years.

The most recent available projections were those published in May as part of the Prison Service's 1995 corporate plan. Revised and updated projections will be published in the new year as part of the 1996 corporate plan.

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Lord President of the Council what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96.

Mr. Newton: It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time salary in payment within the Privy Council Office fell within the band £10,000 to £14,999 in both 1994–95 and 1995–96. The highest full-time salary fell within the band £65,000 to £69,999 in both years.

I am not responsible for any agencies or non-departmental public bodies.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will estimate the number of individuals in his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeded (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (ii) £300,000 in (1) 1985–86, (2) 1990–91, (3) 1992–93 and (4) 1994–95 and (5) 1995–96.

Mr. Newton: No member of the Privy Council Office staff receives or has received annual remuneration in excess of £100,000. I am not responsible for any agencies or non-departmental public bodies.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Strangers' Cafeteria

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, if the staff who work in the Strangers' Cafeteria have yet been consulted on the proposed rearrangement of the cafeteria. [41387]

Mr. Beith *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* Yes. The management of the Refreshment Department has actively sought the views of staff who work in both the Members' and Strangers' Cafeterias since proposals were first made for the modernisation of these outlets in a consultant's report in July 1992.

Payment of Claims

Mr. Stern: To ask the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, if he will highlight, in the 1995–96 and subsequent reports of the Commission, in how many cases claims submitted by the hon. Members to the Fees Office are delayed for more than 50 per cent. of the average number of days for the year claimed. [40275]

Mr. Beith: At present such statistics are not collected. A monitoring exercise such as the one described by the hon. Gentleman could be implemented only at disproportionate cost and with a loss of effective processing time which would lead to additional delays.

Mr. Stern: To ask the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, what steps he is taking to restore the average delay in payment of claims submitted by hon. Members to the Fees Office to the levels achieved in 1993–94. [40274]

Mr. Beith: The average delay in payment fluctuates with the number of claims received and available resources. The current turnaround of claims is better than the level recorded in the Commission's annual report for 1993–94 and therefore restoration measures are not required.

Staff (Ethnic Monitoring)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, what proportion of those employed in domestic service in the House are from ethnic minority backgrounds. [39943]

Mr. Beith: Ethnic monitoring of staff employed by the Commission has been in place since 1988. This is carried out on a voluntary basis and not all staff choose to respond to the ethnic monitoring questionnaire. The current figures for staff in the respective ethnic groupings are as follows:

	Numbers of staff	*Percentage*
White	877	64.9
Asian (East African)	1	0.01
Asian (Indian)	12	0.9
Asian (Other)	8	0.6
Black (African)	23	1.7
Black (Carribbean)	26	1.9
Black (Other)	3	0.2
Other	8	0.6
Questionnaires not returned	394	29.1
Total	1,352	

Contracted-out Services

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, which House of Commons work has now been contracted out; if he will give the date when the contract commenced and the numbers of workers; and what numbers of staff are not subject to any contracting out arrangements. [39323]

Mr. Beith *[holding answer 23 October 1995]:* Services are contracted out by House Departments where this can meet the requirements of the House and provide benefits in quality, efficiency and value for money. The area where this is done on the largest scale is new works and maintenance of the parliamentary estate, where 96 per cent. of the work is contracted out by the Parliamentary Works Directorate. A team of 97 directly employed labour provides a service in dealing with emergencies, urgent minor requests and shift working to attend boilers and other plant.

If the hon. Member has any particular areas on which he would like detailed information, I would ask him to contact the Director of Works or the relevant Head of Department.

Disabled People (Access)

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Chairman of the Accommodation and Works Committee what access provision is being made for disabled people in the new parliamentary building; what organisations have been consulted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ray Powell: A ramp is provided between the pavement to the main entrance and the main courtyard level, a rise of 0.5 m. The lifts at each corner of the courtyard will reach all floors of the building. The six Members' rooms on the sixth floor are the only rooms not readily accessible to disabled persons, as they are reached from the floor below by spiral staircases. There are lavatories for the disabled on all the main floors. The new parliamentary building has been designed according to good practice and current regulations. Consultation with appropriate organisations is undertaken from time to time as necessary but has not so far taken place in connection with the new parliamentary building.

Decanting of Parliamentary Buildings

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Chairman of the Accommodation and Works Committee which buildings in the Palace of Westminster were decanted to be refurbished or cabled during the summer recess; if he will place the tender specifications in the Library; what delays there have been in the work contracted; what fines have been levied on the contractors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ray Powell: The parts of the Palace of Westminster decanted for summer recess works were the Upper Committee Corridor North in the Commons and Principal Floor West Front and the Lord Chancellor's Department in the other place. The ground floor of the Norman Shaw North building and No. 2 The Abbey Garden were also vacated.

Tender specifications for specific contracts can be made available by the Director of Parliamentary Works should the hon. Member wish to consult him. All offices were available for occupation when the House returned from the recess in October. No fines have been levied on the contractors.

Travel Costs

Mr. Peter Bottomley: To ask the Lord President of the Council what would be the reduction of the annual total costs of travel by hon. Members if the travel allowance rates for staff in the Treasury were substituted for the rates that may be claimed.

Mr. Newton: This information is not available and could be produced only at a disproportionate cost.

Charity Payroll Giving

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Lord President of the Council, pursuant to his answer of 19 October, *Official Report*, column *303*, if he will list by party affiliation the 45 right hon. and hon. Members who are signed up to the charity payroll giving scheme operated by the Fees Office.

Mr. Newton: The party affiliation of the 45 right hon. and hon. Members who participate in the charity payroll giving scheme operated by the Fees Office is not a matter of public record.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many orders were put before Parliament in each of the years between 1979–94 during parliamentary recesses; and if he will indicate those Government Ministers responsible for those orders and the number of orders per Government Department.

Mr. Newton: The numbers of statutory instruments laid before the House of Commons in each year from 1979 to 1994, during parliamentary recesses, including Christmas, Easter, Whitsun and summer are as follows:

1979: 236

1980: 216

1981: 206

1982: 233

1983: 170

1984: 207

1985: 161

1986: 258

1987: 232

1988: 267

1989: 253

1990: 231

1991: 323

1992: 275

1993: 293

1994: 425

It would not be possible, except at disproportionate cost, to provide figures by reference to the presenting Minister or Government Department.

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many orders were laid before Parliament during the summer adjournment; by which bodies; and on which date.

Mr. Newton: The number of statutory instruments laid before the House of Commons during the summer adjournment was 260. The Departments responsible were the Treasury (18), the Home Office (eight), the Department of Trade and Industry (13), the Department of Transport (16), the Privy Council (five), the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (18), the Department of the Environment (29), the Welsh Office (eight), the Department of Social Security (10), the Scottish Office (54), the Department of National Heritage (three), the Northern Ireland Office (nine), the Department of Education and Employment (12), the Department of Health (41) and the Lord Chancellor's Department (12). There were four Instruments from the General Synod, relating to ecclesiastical law, which were laid in the name of the Clerk of the House.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Deregulation

38. **Mr. Denham:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on progress towards deregulation. [39725]

Mr. Freeman: Among recent initiatives, we have agreed to launch a joint initiative with the French Government to consider the reduction of regulatory burdens on small businesses.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, pursuant to the answer of 27 March, *Official Report*, column *410*, what progress is being made towards realising the target of repealing those regulations identified as unnecessary burdens to business; how many of these will be repealed by the end of the year; and if he will make a statement. [41574]

Mr. Freeman: Over 1,000 regulations have been targeted by Departments for repeal or amendment to remove unnecessary burdens on business and we are on target to have dealt with over half of those by the end of the year.

Dr. Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what new deregulation initiatives he is considering. [39726]

Mr. Freeman: With the help of the deregulation task force, we continue to identify changes to existing rules and requirements to reduce the burdens they impose without removing necessary protections. Particular areas the task force will be focusing on over the next few months include the labour market, planning, building regulations, financial services, the health sector and different approaches to regulation. We are also working to make enforcement provisions fairer, more transparent and more consistent, including use of the new powers in the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994. In order to ensure that new requirements are introduced only where they are really needed, Ministers have agreed to certify when regulation is brought forward that the regulation strikes an appropriate balance between cost and benefit.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995, and if he will make a statement. [41546]

Mr. Freeman: The Cabinet Office provides the Deregulation Committee with a monthly statement showing those deregulation proposals which are the subject of consultation and an indication of those which may be brought forward as draft proposals in the following two months. Copies of the October statement have been placed in the Vote Office.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40745]

Mr. Freeman: The cost of ministerial transport for Ministers located in the Cabinet Office, excluding VAT, in each of the last five financial years up to 31 March 1995 is as follows:

1990–91: £82,950
1991–92: £94,916
1992–93: £102,076
1993–94: £102,596
1994–95: £132,479

No allowances were paid to Ministers for the use of their own vehicles during this period.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Farming and Forestry Industry (Accidents)

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his answer on 16 October, *Official Report*, column *178*, what action his Department is taking to reduce the number of fatal accidents in the farming and forestry industry. [38867]

Mr. Ancram: The Department of Agriculture's health and safety inspectorate will, through its on-going programme of statutory inspections and accident prevention education, continue to work towards improving health and safety awareness in the farming and forestry industry. There are also strong links developing with the Republic of Ireland on this matter to share information and experience.

Ormeau Road Arrests

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were arrested or charged for disturbance on the lower Ormeau road over the marching season; and how many of these people are from the lower Ormeau road. [39365]

Sir John Wheeler: A total of 26 arrests were made during the "marching season" on the lower Ormeau road. Of these, 17 were from the lower Ormeau road area and nine were from elsewhere. On all cases files are with the Director of Public Prosecutions for decision.

Domestic Electricity Costs

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many homes in Northern Ireland are heated solely by electricity. [39637]

Mr. Ancram: Figures for the 1994–95 continuous household survey show that an estimated 9 per cent. of households in Northern Ireland are heated solely by electricity. The 1991 census recorded a total of some 530,000 households in Northern Ireland.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40747]

Sir John Wheeler: Records on ministerial transport, including internal and overseas air transport, are available only for the last three financial years, April to March. These costs, which are greatly inflated by necessary security requirements, were:

1993–94: £992,663
1994–95: £1,041,077
1995–96: £365,641 (to 31 October 1995)

Ministers at the Northern Ireland Office do not use their own vehicles. Consequently, no allowances have been paid.

James Dixon Home, Belfast

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what have been the security costs incurred at the former James Dixon home in Rugby avenue, Belfast since it was vacated by the Eastern health and social services board; and what consideration is being given to making it available for *(a)* student accommodation and *(b)* single accommodation by transfer to a registered housing association or similar body. [40886]

Mr. Moss: The building has been unoccupied since June and is currently being secured 24 hours per day at a cost of £2,000 per month.

South and East Belfast Trust has been considering alternative uses for the premises. An approach has been made by the Belfast Community Housing Association and the trust, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Services, will be entering into discussions with the housing association in the near future to consider its proposals for the future use of this facility.

Child Support

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those Department of Health and Social Services benefits that are not taken into account in child support assessments; if they are taxable; and if he will make a statement. [40889]

Mr. Moss: The benefits which are disregarded in the calculation of net income under the child support formula are listed in schedule 2 to the Child Support (Maintenance Assessments and Special Cases) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992. I have arranged for a copy of the regulations to be placed in the library. The social security benefits listed in the schedule are non-taxable.

GPs' Dispensing Lists

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what process of consultation was undergone before it was decided that patients living less than 5 km from a pharmacy would no longer be able to collect medication from a general practitioner's surgery; what considerations underlie the application of the 5 km rule to Northern Ireland and the one-mile rule in Great Britain; what effect the rule change will have on residents of Lisbane, County Down; and if he will make a statement. [41229]

Mr. Moss: Extensive consultation and deliberation have taken place over two and a half years, involving health and social services boards, the Central Services Agency and the representative bodies of both the medical and pharmaceutical professions. Health and social services councils are now going to be consulted about the final draft of the revised guidelines. When boards come to implement the guidelines they will be approaching individual patients about their needs and circumstances, as they review their general practitioners' dispensing lists.

Regulations governing dispensing by doctors in Northern Ireland are similar to those operating in Scotland, but different to those which apply in England and Wales. The guidelines operating under the various regulations are therefore also different. The one-mile rule in England and Wales is actually contained in regulations but is not used in determining whether a patient has serious difficulty in obtaining medication from a pharmacy. Under the revised Northern Ireland guidelines it is proposed to use 5 km distance from a pharmacy as the general basic test for serious difficulty. This is considered reasonable, given that a two-mile rule has been in operation from 1957 and there have been significant improvements in transport and telecommunications since then. In addition, many pharmacies are now providing collection and delivery services, making it easier for patients to get their drugs. Boards will, however, have the flexibility to exercise judgment in relation to individual patients when reasons other than distance exist for serious difficulty. In exercising such judgment, boards will have as their paramount concern the overall needs of patients and their access to the professional services of both general medical practitioners and community pharmacists.

The effect of the changes on the residents of Lisbane, County Down, will not be known until the revised guidelines are applied by the Eastern health and social services board, in relation to individual patients on general practitioners' dispensing lists.

Waste Disposal, Newtownards

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment his Department has made of the risks to public health arising from the unofficial dump in the disused quarry at the intersection of the Ballybarnes and Tullynagardy roads in Newtownards; and if he will make a statement about provision of official dumps in the Newtownards area. [41230]

Mr. Moss: The licensing of waste disposal facilities is a matter for the district council—in this case Ards borough council. The council has licensed the site in question at Craiganee quarry and reports that there are no matters relating to the site which constitute a public health nuisance. The council has adopted a 10-year waste disposal plan for the borough which is regularly reviewed.

Stormont Fire

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those recommendations of the Doyle report into the Stormont fire which have already been implemented by Government Departments and those which have not. [41231]

Mr. Moss: The Doyle report made 30 recommendations in relation to fire safety of Crown buildings in Northern Ireland. To date, some 22 of these have been put into practice by Northern Ireland Departments while the remaining eight are in the process of implementation.

Those recommendations which have already been implemented are contained in the following paragraphs of the report:

Paras 1.4.1 to 1.4.3

Paras 1.4.6 to 1.4.12

Paras 1.4.15 to 1.4.16

Paras 1.4.18 to 1.4.23

Paras 1.4.25 to 1.4.28

Roads Expenditure

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the capital expenditure on each class of road in each of the past five years in the borough of ards; when the proposed link road at Portaferry/Comber road, Newtownards was first included in the local area plan; at what stage is the design and acquisition of lands for the road; and if he will make a statement about the programme for construction of this link road. [41232]

Mr. Moss: Details of capital expenditure by roads classification are not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate costs. Overall capital expenditure covering major and minor works, traffic management and accident remedial schemes, street lighting and car park provision in the Ards borough council area was for the years in question as follows:

1990–91: £1,101,000

1991–92: £472,000

1992–93: £792,000

1993–94: £612,000

1994–95: £558,000

The Portaferry road-Comber road link, Newtownards appeared in the North Down area plan which was published in 1972. At the moment, design work is at a very preliminary stage and a final line for the road has yet to be determined. The scheme is included in the current major road works programme with a planned starting date in the 1999–2000 financial year, subject to the necessary finance being available.

Health and Social Services Trusts

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what financial reserves have been held *(a)* by trusts and *(b)* by health authorities in each region in each of the last three years. [41416]

Mr. Moss: The financial reserves held by health and social services trusts and boards are disclosed in the annual financial accounts.

The reserves held by the health and social services trusts and boards in each area are as follows:

Table 1: Health and social services trusts summary of reserves

£ thousands

	1993–94	*1994–95*
Eastern board	34,019	31,769
Western board	n/a	n/a
Southern board	2,899	2,254
Northern board	n/a	n/a

Table 2: Health and social services boards summary of reserves

	1992–93 £	*1993–94* £	*1994–95* £
Eastern board	442,603,370	191,760,873	13,382,566
Southern board	104,032,224	79,039,728	42,301,620
Northern board	113,255,648	159,409,479	149,872,036
Western board	133,211,810	143,012,738	143,511,842

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will itemise the financial reserves of each *(a)* trust and *(b)* health authority in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [41426]

Mr. Moss: The financial reserves held by health and social services trusts are disclosed in the annual financial accounts. The tables itemise the reserves held by trusts in each area for 1993–94 and 1994–95.

Table 1: Health and social services trusts reserves 1993–94

£ thousands

	Revaluation reserve	*Donation reserve*	*Income and expenditure reserve*	*Total reserves*
Eastern board area				
Belfast City hospital	8,050	321	2,628	10,999
Ulster North Down and Ards	2,691	4,111	797	7,599
Royal Group of hospitals	6,708	2,476	1,602	10,786
Greenpark	2,655	830	931	4,416
Eastern Ambulance service	131	—	88	219
Total	20,235	7,738	6,046	34,019
Southern board area				
Craigavon Area hospital	2,213	—	686	2,899
Total	2,213	—	686	2,899

The comparative figures for this trust were restated in 1994–95. The figure tabled is the restated amount.

Table 2: Health and social services trusts reserves 1994–95

£ thousands

	Revaluation reserve	*Donation reserve*	*Income and expenditure reserve*	*Total reserves*
Eastern board area				
Belfast City hospital	5,516	480	1,619	7,615
Ulster North Down and Ards	1,937	4,424	(217)	6,144
Royal Group of hospitals	4,985	3,033	1,958	9,976
Greenpark	2,117	899	806	3,822
Eastern Ambulance service	119	—	4	123
Mater hospital	(76)	3,372	113	3,409
South and east Belfast	(761)	130	1,291	660
North and West Belfast	(473)	50	169	(254)
North Down and Ards	(186)	—	962	776
Down and Lisburn	(1,023)	46	475	(502)
Total	12,155	12,434	7,180	31,769
Southern board area				
Craigavon Area hospital	1,741	12	495	2,248
Newry and Mourne	(384)	62	135	(187)
Craigavon and Banbridge	(237)	10	420	193
Total	1,120	84	1,050	2,254

Only six trusts were in existence in 1993–94 and there were none before that date. Thirteen trusts existed in 1994–95.

The reserves held by health and social services boards are disclosed in the annual financial accounts. The table itemises the reserves held by boards in each area for the last three years.

Table 3: Health and social services boards

Health and social services board	*1992–93* £	*1993–94* £	*1994–95* £
Eastern board			
Capital Account	427,062,751	180,092,696	8,358,987
Donation Reserve	5,870,066	3,982,357	0
Balance due to/from Department	9,670,553	7,685,820	5,023,579
Total	442,603,370	191,760,873	13,382,566
Southern board			
Capital Account	102,702,412	76,386,249	36,975,989
Donation Reserve	145,316	537,946	437,960
Balance due to/from Department	1,184,496	2,115,533	4,887,671
Total	104,032,224	79,039,728	42,301,620
Northern board			
Capital Account	107,835,922	152,836,035	142,946,098
Donation Reserve	768,456	379,094	507,858
Balance due to/from Department	4,651,270	6,194,350	6,418,080
Total	113,255,648	159,409,479	149,872,036
Western board			
Capital Account	128,209,888	135,840,456	135,970,475
Donation Reserve	444,227	380,785	328,717
Balance due to/from Department	4,557,695	6,791,497	7,212,650
Total	133,211,810	143,012,738	143,511,842

The figures for 1994–95 are provisional pending final clearance from the appointed auditor.

Continuing Care Beds

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many NHS continuing care beds have been available in each *(a)* region and *(b)* district in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [41420]

Mr. Moss: Information is not available in the format requested. The table shows the average number of available beds in long stay wards only for people who have a learning disability or are mentally ill, and the average number of available beds in wards for elderly and young physically disabled patients.

Year	*Long-stay*	*Elderly*	*Young physically disabled*
1990–91	3,481	2,519	39
1991–92	3,182	2,315	42
1992–93	2,826	2,121	37
1993–94	2,312	1,934	55
1994–95	1,931	1,830	55

Respite Care Beds

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* NHS and *(b)* private respite care beds were available (i) by region and (ii) by health authority in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [41408]

Mr. Moss: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Simpson: To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission how much has been spent on outside advertising agencies for each year since 1979; and if he will list the specific advertising campaigns undertaken by his Department, their purpose and their cost. [32480]

Sir Peter Hordern: The National Audit Office does not engage in advertising campaigns, other than for graduate and specialist recruitment. The costs of advertising for recruitment purposes are currently around £90,000 each year.

DEFENCE

No. 13 Air Experience Flight

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of annual savings to the defence budget of the proposed closure of No. 13 Air Experience Flight, Royal Air Force volunteer reserve. [41389]

Mr. Soames: The estimated annual savings to the defence budget of the closure of No. 13 Air Experience Flight of the Air Cadet Organisation would be £190,000.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the air experience flights of the Royal Air Force volunteer reserve in the United Kingdom identifying which it is planned to *(a)* close and *(b)* move in the next three years. [41398]

Mr. Soames: The current air experience flights of the Air Cadet Organisation are listed. A proposal to close No. 13 Air Experience Flight of the Air Cadet Organisation has recently been the subject of consultation and is now receiving consideration. The amalgamation of the flying operations of university air squadrons and air experience flights at regional locations, using the University Air Squadron Bulldog aircraft, has recently been announced and will be implemented in 1996. One of the effects will be that six air experience flights, which are marked with asterisks on the list, will reform at new locations.

Current Structure

No. 1—RAF Manston*
No. 2—Hurn Airport*
No. 3—Colerne Airfield
No. 4—Exeter Airport*
No. 5—Cambridge Airport
No. 6—RAF Benson
No. 7—RAF Newton
No. 8—RAF Shawbury*
No. 9—RAF Finningley*
No. 10—RAF Woodvale
No. 11—RAF Leeming
No. 12—RAF Turnhouse*
No. 13—Belfast City Airport

Rifle Ammunition

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what tests have been performed on rifle ammunition purchased from the Portuguese firm INDEP to determine their failure rate; what was the failure rate of the ammunition; what is his Department's standard failure rate of rifle ammunition; if his Department has encountered any technical problems with the ammunition; and if the ammunition purchased from INDEP has been assessed as satisfactory. [41568]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The 7.62 mm sniper rifle round produced by INDEP, which won the recent competition to supply ammunition for the National Rifle Association, has been subjected to three sets of tests. Prior to INDEP's inclusion in the tender invitation list, the design integrity of their round was established. During production, sample rounds underwent a number of acceptance tests examining different aspects of the manufacture of the rounds and their functioning in service weapons. Pass-fail criteria varied from test to test but were rigorous; no critical defects were allowed and major defects could not occur in more than one round in 1,000. To date all acceptance tests have been satisfactory. Finally, following the NRA's reports of misfires, the Defence Test and Evaluation Organisation carried out extensive tests during which over 1,500 rounds of INDEP ammunition were fired from service issue sniper rifles. No misfires occurred. We remain satisfied that the INDEP ammunition is to the specification laid down in the contract.

Dr. Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department purchased rifle ammunition from the Portuguese firm INDEP; how many rounds of ammunition were purchased; and what was the total value of the order. [41567]

Mr. Arbuthnot: INDEP was awarded a contract for 1.3 million rounds of 7.62 mm sniper rifle ammunition on 10 February 1995. The contract value is commercially confidential.

Reserve Forces

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to *(a)* disband, *(b)* merge and *(c)* move any units of the Territorial Army and Royal Naval reserve in Northern Ireland in the next three years. [41400]

Mr. Soames: None.

Anglo-French Defence Measures

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the joint defence measures agreed with the Government of France on 13 October. [41564]

Mr. Soames: The UK-French summit on 30 October reviewed the wide range of bilateral defence co-operation between the United Kingdom and France and agreed to build further on this. Discussions also highlighted a common position on a wide range of defence issues.

Mobile Cellphones

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what procedures his Department possesses to prevent the accidental monitoring of mobile cellphones. [41566]

Mr. Soames: It is MOD policy that only cellphones used by MOD personnel for official use are subjected to monitoring, and the equipment can be programmed to monitor only calls involving specified cellphones.

If a non-MOD call is unintentionally intercepted during a scanning sweep of frequencies then the procedure laid down, in accordance with the Interception of Communications Act 1985, requires the operator to stop monitoring of the call immediately, dispose of all recorded material from that intercept and log the incident.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement; [41531]

(2) what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal; [41554]

(3) what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and in how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41532]

Mr. Arbuthnot: My Department is not a regulator of business so it does not refer proposals to the Deregulation Committee. As a non-regulatory Department we are playing a full part in the deregulation initiative by focusing our efforts on relieving unnecessary administrative burdens on our suppliers, streamlining contracts procedures and improving communications.

RAF University Cadetships

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of the cost in the academic year 1996–97 of the travelling and accommodation expenses of students at Queen's university, Belfast holding university cadetships sponsored by the Royal Air Force to attend training at university air squadrons in Great Britain. [41403]

Mr. Soames: There are currently no students at Queen's university holding university cadetships sponsored by the RAF. Assessments of the costs of travel and accommodation for any future students at Queen's university awarded a cadetship sponsored by the RAF in the future will be made as and when awards are approved.

Cadet Forces (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has *(a)* to disband, *(b)* merge and *(c)* move units of the Army Cadet Force and for the Cadet Corps in Northern Ireland in the next three years. [41399]

Mr. Soames: There are currently no plans to disband, merge or move units of the Army Cadet Force or the Combined Cadet Force in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements he is making for the Royal Air Force to provide air experience in powered aircraft to cadets of the Air Training Corps and Combined Cadet Force in Northern Ireland following the closure of No. 13 Air Experience Flight of the Royal Air Force volunteer reserve. [41390]

Mr. Soames: A proposal for the closure of No. 13 Air Experience Flight of the Air Cadet Organisation is still receiving consideration. If accepted, air cadets in Northern Ireland would be offered the same level of flying opportunities as cadets on the mainland, the establishment of a volunteer gliding school offering powered gliding, and the provision of opportunities for air experience flights during annual camps on the mainland.

Army Helicopter (Misuse)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will make a statement on the conclusions of his Department's special investigation branch into the allegations concerning the misuse of an Army helicopter to transport a commanding officer to a golf competition in Scotland. [41565]

Mr. Soames: The special investigations branch has completed and submitted a report into the allegations concerning the misuse of an Army helicopter. This is now being considered by my Department and I will advise the hon. Member of the outcome shortly.

University Air Squadron

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to increase the complement of aircraft and qualified flying instructors of university air squadrons in Great Britain to provide training for students from Queen's university, Belfast holding university cadetships sponsored by the Royal Air Force following the closure of Queen's University Air Squadron, Belfast. [41401]

Mr. Soames: At present, there are no plans to increase the complement of aircraft or qualified flying instructors at university air squadrons in Great Britain to provide flying training for students at Queen's University, Belfast holding university cadetships sponsored by the RAF. Should the decision be taken to close the Queen's University Air Squadron, the flying training of any students holding RAF sponsored cadetships would be undertaken from within existing resources.

Radioactive Debris

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made since 1965 by the Meteorological Office of the fallout pattern of radioactive debris arising from the French atmospheric weapon tests conducted in the Algerian Sahara desert between 1960 and 1966; and if he will make a statement on what *(a)* public protection and *(b)* information measures have been taken since 1965 in the United Kingdom. [40258]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The Meteorological Office makes no assessment of fallout patterns of radioactive debris. It does, however, provide essential meteorological data and forecasts to the other Government Departments with responsibility for public protection and information measures.

AEA Technology, formerly a division of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, has measured the deposition and air concentration of long-lived radioactive material produced as a result of weapons tests in the atmosphere since the late 1950s. Annual reports have been published.

In the event of an accident involving defence nuclear material in the UK, the Ministry of Defence nuclear accident response organisation would work in conjunction with the appropriate civil agencies to ensure an effective response to safeguard the public. Where appropriate, the information necessary to deal with such an event has been issued by the MOD under the provisions of the Public Information for Radiation Emergencies Regulations 1992.

Public safety schemes exist in respect of all UK berths used by nuclear powered submarines, and guidance on appropriate protective measures in the event of an accident during the transportation of nuclear weapons has been issued to local authorities and the emergency services.

A national response plan, which is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, was put in place in 1988 to deal with the possible impact on the UK from overseas nuclear accidents or major radioactive release overseas, of whatever origin.

Air Force Recruitment

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current maximum age requirement for recruits to enter the Air Force; what was this age limit two years ago; and if he will make a statement. [41563]

Mr. Soames: The information is as follows:

Years and under

	Age requirement from 1 September 1995	*Age requirement two years ago*
Officers		
General Duties (Air) Pilot	24	24
General Duties (Air) Navigator	26	26
General Duties (Ground) Air Traffic Control	25½	30
General Duties (Ground) Fighter Control	30	30
General Duties (Ground) Intelligence	30	30
Engineer	29½	[1]30
Supply	26½	[1]30
Administrative (Secretarial)	25½	[1]30
Administrative (Education)	27½	[1]30
Administrative (Catering)	27½	[1]30
Administrative (Physical Education)	27½	[1]27
Security (Regiment)	25½	26
Security (Provost)	30	[1]30
Specialists		
Legal	[3]30	[3]30
Chaplains	[3]39	[3]39
PMRAFNS	35	35
Medical Secretarial	[1]30	[1]30
Medical	39	[4]39
Dental	[3]33	”
Airmen/Aircrew	31	[2]26
Ground Trades	24	39

[1] Exceptionally, recruits could be considered up to the age of 39 years.

[2] Exceptionally, recruits could be considered up to the age of 31 years.

[3] Older candidates could be considered on their merits.

[4] Older candidates could be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Temporary age restrictions have been imposed from 1 September 1995 on entry to training in the RAF. Given reductions and restructuring in the RAF following changes in the strategic environment, these restrictions are necessary to maintain a balanced age-rank structure for the future. The revised age criteria will be kept under regular review.

Training Assistance

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to which foreign Governments training assistance has been offered since 1992; and what was the total receipt in respect of such assistance in the financial years 1992–93, 1993–94 and 1994–95. [40492]

Mr. Soames: According to available records the following countries have received United Kingdom assistance since 1992:

Country
Albania
Angola
Antigua and Barbuda
Austria
Australia
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belarus
Belgium
Belize
Bermuda
Botswana
Brazil
British Virgin Islands
Brunei
Bulgaria
Burma
Cambodia
Cameroon
Canada
Cayman Islands
Chad
Chile
Colombia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Dominica
Ecuador
Egypt
Estonia
Falkland Island
Fiji
Finland
France
Gambia
Germany
Ghana
Gibraltar
Greece
Grenada
Guatemala
Guyana
Honduras
Hong Kong
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Ivory Coast
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Latvia
Lebanon
Lesotho
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Malta
Mauritus
Mexico
Montserrat
Mozambique
Morocco
Namibia
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Romania
Russia
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Africa
South Korea
Spain
Sri Lanka
St. Kitts
St. Lucia
St. Vincent
Sudan
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Tanzania
Thailand
Trinidad and Tobago
Turkey
Turks and Caicos
Uganda
Ukraine
UAE
Uruguay
USA
Venezuela
Yemen
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

The list covers training provided in the UK and training provided by UK service personnel overseas. In addition, forces on exercise overseas often provide limited training to, or train alongside, the armed forces of the host nation. A central record of such training is not maintained.

According to available records the following total receipts were received from foreign Governments in respect of such assistance in financial years 1992–93, 1993–94 and 1994–95:

1992–93: £35,298,325

1993–94: £45,117,356

1994–95: £51,126,747

Military Hospitals (Health Services)

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the administrative cost of market testing and contracting out the services provided by the military hospitals at Ruinteln and Wegberg in Germany; when these hospitals will close; how many *(a)* service personnel and *(b)* United Kingdom civilian staff will be made redundant; how many organisations made full bids to take over these services; and if the contract was awarded to the lowest bidder. [40760]

Mr. Soames: I refer the hon. Member to my answers to the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 16 October 1995, *Official Report*, columns *32–35*. The total cost of mounting the project in terms of the full-time project and in-house bid teams and consultancy support is estimated at some £1,700,000. The Health Alliance submitted the lowest compliant bid to provide full primary, community and secondary health care to the Army and primary and community health care to the RAF in Germany from 1 April 1996.

Royal Flight

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many aircraft, of which type, make up No. 32, the Royal Squadron; what is the original capital value of each aircraft; how old each is; and what is its present value. [41383]

Mr. Soames: Details of the composition of No. 32, the Royal Squadron, which is responsible for royal, VIP and other communications flying, are set out in the table. Under the Government's resource accounting initiative, the capital values of all such assets are being identified; however, this work will not be complete until April 1998.

Aircraft of No. 32 (The Royal) Squadron—at 1 November 1995

AC Type	*Date procured*	*Current age*	*Total AC by type*
Flight A			
BAe 146 100 Series	April 1986	9 years, 6 months	
BAe 146 100 Series	July 1986	9 years, 3 months	[1]3 AE
BAe 146 100 Series	January 1991	4 years, 9 months	
Flight B			
Wessex HCC Mk4	June 1969	26 years, months	
Wessex HCC Mk4	June 1969	26 years, 4 months	2 AE
Gazelle HT Mk4	18 January 1984	11 years, 9 months	
Gazelle HT Mk3	31 August 1978	17 years, 2 months	2 AE +
Gazelle HT Mk3 (IUR)	31 July 1973	22 years, 3 months	[2]2IUR
Gazelle HT Mk3 (IUR)	5 July 1973	22 years, 4 months	
Flight C			
BAe 125 700 Series	23 February 1983	12 years, 8 months	
BAe 125 700 Series	14 March 1983	12 years, 7 months	
BAe 125 700 Series	15 April 1983	12 years, 6 months	6 AE
BAe 125 700 Series	23 August 1983	12 years, 2 months	
BAe 125 700 Series	26 November 1983	11 years, 11 months	
BAe 125 700 Series	17 February 1984	11 years, 8 months	
BAe 125 600 Series	24 April 1973	22 years, 6 months	1 AE +
BAe 125 600 Series (IUR)	26 April 1973	22 Years, 6 months	1 IUR

[1] Aircraft established.

[2] In use reserve.

Mr. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the usage of the royal flight in each of the five years to April 1995 was used by the royal family *(a)* as a proportion of occasions used and *(b)* as a proportion of distance covered. [41384]

Mr. Soames: The percentage of passenger carrying flights by the Queen's flight on which a member of the royal family was a passenger in each financial year from 1990–91 to 1994–95 was as follows:

1990–91: 94 per cent.

1991–92: 95 per cent.

1993–94: 94 per cent.

1993–94: 90 per cent.

1994–95: 88 per cent.

Information on distance covered could not be provided without disproportionate cost.

Nuclear Weapons, France

Mr. Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what financial arrangements are in place governing the Franco-British Joint Commission on Nuclear Policy and Doctrine. [41447]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Smith) on 23 October, *Official Report*, column *476*.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the memoranda of understanding which currently exist between Britain and France with regard to all aspects of nuclear weapons; and if he will set out the purpose of each memorandum giving the date on which each one was signed, whether its text is still classified, on what dates each one has been amended, why it was amended on each occasion and what other countries are party to it. [41446]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I have nothing to add to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) on 24 October, *Official Report*, column *587*.

Jobs, Clwyd

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate of the number of *(a)* defence and *(b)* defence-related jobs in Clwyd; and if he will make a statement. [41250]

Mr. Arbuthnot: This information is not available in the form requested. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North Devon (Mr. Harvey) on Monday 16 October, *Official Report*, columns *32–33*. There are currently 423 service men and 1,285 civilians based in Clwyd, mainly at RAF Sealand.

Military Hospitals, Germany

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the revenue cost of running *(a)* Rinteln and *(b)* Wegberg military hospital in Germany in each of the last five years: and what the annual cost will be of replacement medical services provided by the Health Alliance. [40762]

Mr. Soames: The running costs for the British military hospital Rinteln and the RAF hospital Wegberg in the last five years, including an estimate of expenditure for the current financial year, are as follows:

		£ million
	RAF (H) Wegberg	*BMH Rinteln*
1991–92	10.7	9.2
1992–93	11.7	10.6
1993–94	12.2	13.2
1994–95	12.3	15.7
1995–96	12.5	16.6

It is not possible to give comparable figures for the replacement service as there will be a fundamental change in the method of provision of health care services and there will be overlap with other elements of the health care service in Germany.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money has been spent on capital projects at *(a)* Rinteln and *(b)* Wegberg military hospitals in Germany in each of the last five years. [40761]

Mr. Soames: There has been no capital expenditure at RAF hospital Wegberg in the last five years. Capital expenditure at the British military hospital Rinteln in the last five years, in deutschmark millions, was:

	BMH Rinteln
1991–92	0
1992–93	0
1993–94	2.6
1994–95	0.3
1995–96	8.4

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of *(a)* his Department's invitation to tender documents and *(b)* the service specification that forms part of the contract awarded to the Health Alliance for replacing the health services provided currently by the military hospitals at Rinteln and Wegberg. [40763]

Mr. Soames: A copy of the invitation to tender will be placed in the Library of the House. A copy of the statement of requirement—service specification—is already available in the Library of the House.

Corporate Head Office Technology System

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are his plans for the future of the corporate head office technology system; if he intends to update the Unix-based OfficePower system; and how CHOTS will relate to the relocated Procurement Executive. [41119]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The Unix-based corporate headquarters office technology system is currently being upgraded for the fourth time since the start of implementation in 1991. This latest upgrade delivers OfficePower Version 7 replacing the existing version of OfficePower 450 on CHOTS. There are no plans to update OfficePower beyond version 7.

A review involving a wide range of existing and potential CHOTS users established a clear need to operate a range of modern commercial software on the CHOTS workstation. As a result, it was agreed in May 1995 that a further development be undertaken. This work is now well under way with the objective of providing MicroSoft Windows applications on CHOTS. The full extent to which current and future CHOTS installations will use this development is still under consideration.

A number of CHOTS terminals will be installed at Abbey Wood. These terminals, plus connections with other IT systems, at Abbey Wood will allow the relocated Procurement Executive headquarters to communicate with the wider CHOTS population.

Gurkha Troops

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if Gurkha troops qualify for the same pay and conditions as their British counterparts. [41108]

Mr. Soames: Pay and conditions of service for Gurkhas serving the Crown are largely governed by the 1947 tripartite agreement, between the Governments of the United Kingdom, India and Nepal. Under the terms of this agreement, Gurkha basic pay is linked to Indian army rates of pay. British Gurkhas do, however, receive a substantial addition to their basic pay which takes into account the cost of living at their duty station. In the United Kingdom, where the tasks carried out by Gurkhas are similar to their regular counterparts, the addition is calculated to ensure comparability. British Gurkha conditions of service are also governed by the tripartite agreement and are comparable to those in the Indian Army; they do, however, recognise the unique cultural and religious character of British Gurkha personnel.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work force; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41124]

Mr. Arbuthnot: Breakdowns by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—that is normally those engaged for a period up to 12 months, but exceptionally up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Employees (Disabled People)

Mrs. Liddell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many registered disabled civilians are employed by his Ministry. [41507]

Mr. Arbuthnot: At 1 April 1995 my Department and its agencies employed 1,355 registered disabled civilians, representing 1.1 per cent. of all civilian staff.

Gulf War (Misappropriated Funds)

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the reasons why £43,000 was misappropriated from public funds during the Gulf war; and to which cost centre the sum was reimbursed in the transaction mentioned at page 20 of his departmental appropriation accounts, 1994–95, volume 1, class 1 on defence, HC paper 757–I, of 17 October. [41469]

Mr. Soames: The sum of £43,000 was reimbursed in the transaction mentioned at page 20 of the MOD's departmental appropriation accounts, 1994–95, volume 1, class 1 on defence, HC paper 757–I, of 17 October, following the conviction of an officer who admitted he had defrauded the MOD of that sum while on service in the middle east between May 1992 and October 1993.

By their nature, consolidated fund extra receipts are sums that the MOD is not allowed to retain for the benefit of defence votes. Therefore, no departmental cost centre has been reimbursed with this recovery.

VC10 Aircraft (Repainting)

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* United Kingdom and *(b)* non-United Kingdom companies bid for the contract A3a/453 with his Department for re-painting of RAF VC10 aircraft; on what grounds Sogerma-Socea of Bordeaux was selected; and if he will make a statement. [41322]

Mr. Arbuthnot: Three companies bid for the contract for repainting RAF VC10 aircraft, two UK and one non-UK. The contract was placed on the basis of the lowest price and lowest risk. None of the bidders proposed to paint the aircraft in the UK.

Nuclear Weapons (Legality)

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what official monitoring his Department has of the proceeding begun at the International Court of Justice in The Hague on 30 October on the legality of nuclear weapons. [41470]

Mr. Arbuthnot: We have maintained a close interest in the requests by the World Health Organisation and the UN General Assembly to the International Court of Justice for advisory opinions on the legality of nuclear weapons since May 1993.

Indonesian Pilots (Training)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements have been made to train Indonesian pilots at RAF Valley. [41385]

Mr. Soames: It is not Government policy to reveal specific details of training undertaken by overseas students in the United Kingdom.

Field Ambulances

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make an announcement regarding the order for field ambulances. [41279]

Mr. Arbuthnot: We expect to make an announcement by early 1996.

Departmental Properties, Southampton

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many domestic properties owned by his Department are unoccupied in Marchwood and Calshot, near Southampton. [41455]

Mr. Soames: As at 30 September 1995, there were 54 vacant married quarters at Marchwood and Calshot. Of these, 30 were awaiting demolition as part of the plan to demolish 64 underscaled maisonettes and redevelop the area with houses. The remainder of the vacant properties were either awaiting major maintenance work, already allocated to service families due to move in shortly or formed part of the management margin needed to ensure that accommodation is available to house entitled service personnel.

Royal Welch Fusiliers (Gorazde)

Mr. Ainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the statement of the General-Secretary of the United Nations in respect of the Royal Welch Fusiliers in Gorazde. [41285]

Mr. Soames *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The UN Secretary-General's statement of 18 August reflected the British Government's decision not to replace the Royal Welch Fusiliers in Gorazde at the end of their tour. British troops has served in the town for 18 months. The London conference in July, and subsequent air action by NATO, made abundantly clear the international community's resolve to deter attacks on Gorazde and other safe areas.

Solvent Buoyage

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answers of 31 October, *Official Report,* column *165,* on Solvent buoyage, if he will define the limits of the Dockyard port; and if his answers include the navigation buoys laid in the Solvent by the Navy outside the entrance to Portsmouth harbour. [41368]

Mr. Soames *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The limits of the dockyard port of Portsmouth are defined at paragraph 3 of Statutory Instrument 1978 No. 1881, the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth Order 1978, a copy of which is found in the Library of the House. All navigation buoys located within the limits of the Portsmouth dockyard port area are the responsibility of the Queen's harbour master, Portsmouth.

Mr. Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer of 31 October, *Official Report,* column *165,* if the Queen's harbour master charges light dues on the Navy's buoyage in the Solvent to merchant shipping. [41369]

Mr. Soames *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The Queen's harbour master at Portsmouth does not charge any dues for buoyage within the area for which he is responsible.

ENVIRONMENT

Urban Regeneration, Sheffield

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many initiatives have been taken since June 1987 to deal with urban dereliction and inner-city decay in Sheffield by means of encouraging development and improvements to the city; if he will list each initiative, indicating the amounts expended under each heading; and if he will include grants which have been made to Sheffield, including all funding from European Union sources. [40572]

Mr. Curry: Between 1 April 1987 and 31 March 1996, estimated, Sheffield metropolitan district will have benefited from approximately £262.688 million of grant funding from United Kingdom Government—Department of the Environment—and European Union sources for regeneration schemes. The amount for each initiative is set out in the table.

	£ million
Urban programme	58.017
English partnerships[1]	10.986
Estate action	55.776[2]
Urban development corporation	93.210
Urban partnership fund	0.675
Challenge fund	2.568
European regional development fund	39.830
European social fund[3]	1.626

[1] Includes city grant and derelict land grant prior to 1 April 1994.

[2] Grant and SCAs.

[3] From 1 January 1994. Earlier figures are available only on a county basis.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40735]

Sir Paul Beresford: The information is provided in respect of all DOE Ministers:

1990–91: £270,000

1991–92: £265,000

1992–93: £254,000

1993–94: £258,000

1994–95: £258,000

All figures are exclusive of VAT.

No DOE Ministers use their own vehicles for official purposes.

Meetings with Local Authorities

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the delegations from local authorities whose meetings with Ministers in his Department have been cancelled in the past two weeks. [40654]

Sir Paul Beresford *[holding reply given Tuesday 31 October 1995]:* No ministerial meetings with local authorities have been cancelled within the past two weeks. However, Earl Ferrers, the Minister for the Environment and Countryside, was obliged to withdraw from attending the Association of District Councils conference on 31 October.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many times in the past year he has met local authority organisations to discuss the services that they provide and the means by which they are financed. [41138]

Sir Paul Beresford: The Secretary of State met representatives of the local authority associations on six occasions in the past year to discuss a range of issues affecting local government.

Carers

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 is to cost local authorities in *(a)* England and *(b)* the west midlands; and if local authorities will receive extra funding from central Government to meet the cost of implementation. [41014]

Sir Paul Beresford: We do not expect the implementation of the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 to add significantly to local authorities' costs.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate the Association of Metropolitan Authorities has sent to provide him about the increase in local authority spending needed to provide the same level of public services for the year 1995–96 as in 1994–95 in *(a)* England and *(b)* the west midlands. [41011]

Sir Paul Beresford: The local authority associations submitted a joint report in October 1994 which indicated that local authorities in England would need to increase aggregate expenditure in 1995–96 by approximately £3 billion at 1994–95 prices over 1994–95. There were no separate figures for the west midlands.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the increase in local authority spending needed to provide the same level of public services as in 1994–905 for the year 1995–96 in *(a)* England and *(b)* the west midlands. [41010]

Sir Paul Beresford: Each year, the Government estimate the total revenue spending which authorities in England should incur. This is known as total standard spending and mounted to £43.507 billion in 1995–96 including provision of £50 million for the transitional costs of local government reorganisation. In 1994–95, TSS amounted to £42.664 billion including provision of £10 million for local government reorganisation. Authorities have discretion within their capping limits to spend more than this on services.

In arriving at a figure for 1995–96, the Government took account not only of demographic pressures and inflation but of the scope for efficiency gains and re-prioritising. TSS was distributed to local authorities through standard spending assessment which reflect local circumstances.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many times a month he has met the Chancellor of the Exchequer to discuss exclusively the spending requirements of local authorities. [41012]

Sir Paul Beresford: My right hon. Friend has met his right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on numerous occasions in recent months. The spending requirements of local authorities have been among the many subjects they have discussed.

South Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make available additional finance under the Bellwin scheme, or any other scheme, to South Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority in view of its unforeseen expenditure in 1995. [41365]

Sir Paul Beresford: My right hon. Friend has recently considered a request from the South Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority for support through the Bellwin scheme for additional expenditure incurred as a consequence of the increased demand for fire services during the recent drought. The Bellwin scheme is intended to support expenditure resulting from sudden one-off emergencies, rather than in response to conditions which have led to an increased demand for an authority's normal services over a prolonged period. My right hon. Friend has decided, therefore, not to establish a Bellwin scheme of financial assistance for South Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority on this occasion. The authority has been advised accordingly. We have no plans to make any additional grants available in respect of this expenditure.

Goole

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what powers he has and in what circumstances to refer back the Local Government Commission's recommendations concerning Goole and rural Goole for reconsideration. [41610]

Sir Paul Beresford: Where a report on a review is submitted to the Secretary of State by the Commission he may, under section 15(6) of the Local Government Act 1992, if he thinks fit, direct the commission to conduct a further review of any area to which the report relates and to make revised recommendations as respects that area.

Further Education Development Association

Mr. Bryan Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what grant his Department has paid to the Further Education Development Association; on what date this grant was made; what consultation with local authorities preceded payment; and what statutory provisions govern such payment. [41806]

Sir Paul Beresford: Each year my right hon. Friend makes a determination of the amount of revenue support grant payable in the forthcoming financial year to bodies specified in regulations made under section 76(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. In the Local Government Finance Report 1995–96, approved by this House on 1 February, the amount of £71,656 was determined as payable in 1995–96 to the staff college. This amount was in accordance with the expressed wishes of the local authority associations, which my right hon. Friend consulted before determining the sum concerned. My Department makes payments of revenue support grant in 12 monthly instalments. From 7 April 1995, the Further Education Development Agency became the sole trustee of the staff college and in this capacity has been paid revenue support grant of £41,797 to date in 1995–96.

Somerset House

Sir Cranley Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment to what uses Somerset house is currently put. [40231]

Mr. Gummer: The east, west and new wings of Somerset house are occupied by the London headquarters of the Inland Revenue. The south wing is occupied by the principal registry of the family division of the High Court. The north wing of the building is leased to the Courtauld Institute of the university of London for an art gallery and library.

Town Centre Rents

Sir Cranley Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies he has made of the impact of upward-only rent reviews on the town centre property market. [40232]

Mr. Robert B. Jones: None.

The Government considered the issue of upward-only rent reviews in their review of commercial property leases concluded in 1994. We urged the commercial property industry to introduce a code of practice dealing with upward-only rent reviews, among other issues. The industry plans to publish a code very soon.

Domestic Water Meters

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 23 October, *Official Report*, column *410*, what proportion of domestic premises in each of the English regional water companies were fitted with water meters in *(a)* 1994–95, *(b)* 1993–94 and *(c)* 1992–93. [41223]

Mr. Clappison: In 1993–94 and 1994–95 the proportion of metered water customers of the 10 water and sewerage companies was as follows:

Households percentage[1]

	1994–95	*1993—9*
Anglian	11.2	6.1
Dwr Cymru	2.7	2.5
North West	4.1	3.0
Northumbrian	0.6	0.4
Severn Trent	7.0	6.2
South West	6.9	5.4
Southern	11.2	10.5
Thames	4.8	4.1
Wessex	8.4	6.6
Yorkshire	5.4	4.1

[1] Company estimates. Comparable information for 1992–93 is not available.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 23 October, *Official Report*, column *410*, what is the current charge made by each of the English regional water companies for the installation of a water meter in domestic premises. [41222]

Mr. Clappison: Where water companies adopt a programme of metering they do not make a charge to customers for the cost of installing the meter. Where a customer chooses to have a meter, the customer pays for the installation. The amount varies between companies and Ofwat is pressing hard to secure lower installation charges where companies' charges are too high. The current charges made by each of the water companies are shown in tables 5.1 and 5.2 in Ofwat's 1995–96 report on tariff structures and charges, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Environment Agency

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the timetable for establishing a UK environment agency; how many staff will it employ and at what cost; and if he will make a statement. [41520]

Mr. Clappison: The Government are not intending to establish a UK environment agency. However, the Environment Agency for England and Wales was established on 8 August and is planning to take over the functions of Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution, the National Rivers Authority and the local waste regulation authorities on 1 April 1996. Approximately 9,000 staff will be transferred to the Environment Agency from the predecessor bodies. Staffing costs will be met out of the agency's provision which will be determined in the light of the Government's decisions on public expenditure, to be announced by the Chancellor later this month.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement. [41521]

Sir Paul Beresford: I refer to the oral answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster earlier today.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and in how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41522]

Sir Paul Beresford: My Department has not yet laid any draft order before the Committee.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41550]

Sir Paul Beresford: In response to recommendations made by the Health and Safety Commission in its review of regulations to simplify and clarify health and safety law, I will shortly be laying before Parliament the Health and Safety (Repeals and Revocations) Regulations 1995 which will repeal:

Section 133 of the Factories Act 1961
Homework Orders 1911, 1912, 1913, 1929 and 1938
The Slaughterhouse Order 1962
The Slaughterhouse (No. 1) Regulations 1962
The Slaughterhouse (No. 2) Regulations 1962
The Railway Running Sheds Order 1961
The Railway Running Sheds (No. 1) Regulations 1961
The Railway Running Sheds (No. 2) Regulations 1961
The Hours of Employment (Conventions) Acts 1936
The Horizontal Milling Machines (Amendment) Regulations 1934

This programme of repeals is concerned with reducing the burden of regulation on business. As they do not impose any new costs on business a cost-benefit assessment was not necessary.

I will also be laying before Parliament before the end of the year the Health and Safety Information for Employees (Modification and Repeals) Regulations 1995, which will remove 53 legal requirements to display posters and notices. However, it is estimated that these proposals will result in an overall estimated cost saving of £1.4 million over 10 years.

The cost to the Health and Safety Executive of producing a cost-benefit assessment will vary depending upon the complexity of the proposed regulatory package, and the amount of supporting information that needs to be collected. A cost-benefit assessment for a relatively straightforward proposal to repeal regulations, such as those of posters and notices, would typically be in the region of £5,000.

Housing (Pensioners)

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what national, regional and local figures his Department maintains on forms of housing tenure among pensioners. [41415]

Mr. Clappison: Information on the tenure of pensioners is available from the 1991 census and from regular interview surveys, notably the survey of English housing, the general household survey and the labour force survey. The household surveys can provide national and regional figures but sample sizes are not large enough to provide reliable figures for smaller areas. The House of Commons Library holds reports on the census and on all these surveys.

National and regional information is also available from a special survey sponsored by my Department in 1991 and 1992. The results are published as "A National Survey of Elderly People in the Community", a copy of which is in the House of Commons Library.

Fireworks

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment where each of the container loads of Red Lion fireworks were stored; for how long, and what monitoring was carried out during storage. [41728]

Sir Paul Beresford: The nominated legal place of keeping required for Red Lion fireworks was at Chorley. Samples were taken of the fireworks held there and submitted to compliance testing at recognised test houses. Seven container loads were moved to Chorley on 16 and 17 September and three of those were subsequently re-exported on 23 September.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what reports the Health and Safety Executive has received from Cleveland trading standards departments about the number of fireworks produced by Black Cat which contain sulphur chlorate, and what response the HSE has made. [41774]

Sir Paul Beresford: The HSE received information from Cleveland trading standards department of first one and then a further eight fireworks sold by Black Cat that were alleged to contain sulphur and chlorate admixtures.

Each firework type mentioned was tested by the health and safety laboratory for the HSE, the results were evaluated and as a result a general recall was ordered for the "Thunderstorm". Results obtained for the remainder were sent in writing to the Cleveland trading standards department on 1 November 1995.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration the HSE has given to prosecuting Kanash Ltd. and the Royal Ordnance factory in respect of Red Lion fireworks and if he will make a statement. [41778]

Sir Paul Beresford: The HSE issued notices to Kanash Ltd. to prohibit any further distribution or sale of those Red Lion fireworks which failed spot checks. The question of legal proceedings is under consideration.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information about compliance with BS 7114 appeared on the "Thunderstorm" firework produced by Red Lion Fireworks; and what assessment he has made as to the extent of such compliance. [41787]

Sir Paul Beresford: The label on the "Thunderstorm" firework says that is complies with BS7114:2:88. Tests for compliance are carried out by trading standard officers.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when and by whom the HSE was informed of the presence of sulphur chlorate in "Thunderstorm" fireworks, produced by Black Cat; and what action was taken on the basis of the information supplied. [41772]

Sir Paul Beresford: Information was received in two ways. The more comprehensive was provided by trading standards offices in Cleveland on 26 October and led to the further sampling and testing by HSE on 27 and 28 and the general recall then immediately ordered.

Earlier information received from a competitor company on 3 and 17 October was less precise and came only after HSE had visited Black Cat as part of its national campaign.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment where and when were tests carried out on the consignment of Red Lion fireworks; what were the results; and when they were communicated to the HSE. [41776]

Sir Paul Beresford: The sequence of events was set out by my right hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Competition and Consumer Affairs on 1 November 1995, *Official Report*, columns *273–74*.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which companies' firework products were tested by the Health and Safety Executive for sulphur chlorate between 1965 and 1995; which products were involved; and what were the results and dates of the tests. [41790]

Sir Paul Beresford: Due to statutory restrictions on disclosure of information it is not possible in the time available to list the names of the companies involved. Information for years prior to 1984 would be available only at disproportionate cost.

Year	*Number of companies*	*Number of fireworks tested*	*Number fail test*	*Number pass test*
1995*	13	30	3	27
1993	Not recorded	17	0	3
1992	Not recorded	3	0	17
1991	1	1	0	1
1990	1	1	1	0
1989	—	—	—	—
1988	1	3	0	3
1987	11	126	3	123
1986	10	80	9	71
1985	—	—	—	—
1984	5	47	0	47
Total		311	16	295

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are now the whereabouts of the container loads of Red Lion fireworks. [41729]

Sir Paul Beresford: I understand that some fireworks remain in the leased depot at Chorley, but the bulk were distributed to various parts of the United Kingdom. The importer is co-operating with the Health and Safety Executive in providing full details and is recalling all its imported fireworks.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many container loads of Red Lion fireworks were at the Royal Ordnance depot in Chorley; for how long; and what tests were carried out there. [41775]

Sir Paul Beresford: Seven container loads of fireworks were moved to Chorley on 16 and 17 September when released from the port of importation. Three of them were re-exported on 23 September.

Samples were taken for testing at recognised test houses in Derbyshire and Yorkshire, and later by HSE for check test purposes.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment is sulphur chlorate is permitted as a constituent of fireworks. [41789]

Sir Paul Beresford: Order in Council 15 of 30 April 1894 to the Explosives Act 1875 prohibits the manufacture, import, keeping, conveyance or sale of any fireworks containing an admixture of sulphur and chlorate.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what arrangements the Health and Safety Executive put in place to investigate and monitor Kanash Ltd. and Red Lion fireworks. [41727]

Sir Paul Beresford: The Health and Safety Executive made arrangements to receive test reports from recognised test houses in Great Britain—to show compliance with British standard 7114:1988 and with Order in Council 15 on the prohibition of admixtures of sulphur with a chlorate before distribution could begin. All results were satisfactory and authorisation was given. However, two fireworks failed spot checks and prohibitions were then placed on any further distribution of them.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the steps taken by the HSE to ensure the withdrawal of "Thunderstorm" fireworks from sale. [41773]

Sir Paul Beresford: The distributor, Black Cat, was required to stop any further distribution and to make arrangments to recover all "Thunderstorm" fireworks or selection boxes which contained that item from its retail outlets. At the same time, a press notice was issued to advise the public that a fault had been detected and that the firework or selection box should be returned to the place of purchase.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what attempts the HSE have made to trace buyers of Red Lion fireworks; and what records Kanash Ltd. has provided to assist them. [41777]

Sir Paul Beresford: The Health and Safety Executive issued a press notice to alert the public and Kanash Ltd. has been co-operating with officials in recalling the fireworks in question.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when Kanash Ltd. applied to the Health and Safety Executive for approval to import Red Lion fireworks to the United Kingdom; what was the Health and Safety Executive's response to that application; and what was the date of that response. [41724]

Sir Paul Beresford: The sequence of events was set out by my right hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Competition and Consumer Affairs on 1 November 1995, *Official Report,* columns *273–74.*

Mr. Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the terms of the approval given to Kanash Ltd. regarding the import of Red Lion fireworks. [41725]

Sir Paul Beresford: Kanash Ltd. was required to show evidence of compliance with conditions for authorisation as set out in section 40(9) of the Explosives Act 1875, as amended.

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the implications for the import of explosive devices into the United Kingdom of non-compliance with BS7114. [41768]

Sir Paul Beresford: BS7114 relates only to fireworks. Compliance with that standard is one of the main conditions to be satisfied for the authorisation of any firework and is an important element in deciding if any particular firework is safe. Non-compliance means that the firework cannot be supplied in Great Britain.

Housing Improvement Grants

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total sum paid towards housing improvement grants by English local authorities annually since 1979. [41720]

Mr. Clappison: The table shows total payments of all types of house renovation grant by local authorities in England, as reported to the Department. It covers payments under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Housing Act 1985 and earlier legislation. The figures include estimates to cover local authorities that did not provide this information to the Department.

House renovation grants: total final grants payments

England	*£ million*
1979	100.2
1980	127.3
1981	148.2
1982	282.2
1983	655.5
1984	839.4
1985	525.1
1986	394.9
1987	362.0
1988	247.2
1989	328.7
1990	314.0
1991	299.4
1992	398.9
1993	428.7
1994	468.4

Canary Wharf

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total contribution from public funds to the Canary wharf office complex from *(a)* grants, *(b)* subsidies, and *(c)* write-offs. [41722]

Sir Paul Beresford: No grants or subsidies have been provided by the London Docklands development corporation. As a result of Olympia and York—the developers of Canary wharf—going into administration, the LDDC, in common with other creditors, received 15p in the pound on its debts outstanding as at spring 1992 with Olympia and York contractors and Olympia and York Canary Wharf Ltd. The LDDC, therefore, wrote off 85 per cent. of its debt which amounted to £608,167.

Dangerous Wild Animals

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many licences have been issued by local authorities to private individuals to keep dangerous wild animals. [41721]

Mr. Clappison: This information is not held centrally since licensing under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 is the responsibility of district councils and the councils of London boroughs.

HEALTH

Doncaster Health Commission

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the legal fees incurred by Doncaster health commission form part of its management running costs. [39007]

Mr. Sackville: Yes.

Measles, Mumps and Rubella

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the recommendation made by his departmental scientist and others that a second dose of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine should be administered before school age has been implemented. [40079]

Mr. Sackville: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's recommendation is presently under consideration.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the likelihood of the adverse reactions to the administration of both MR and MMR vaccines; and what account is taken of the possibility of under-reporting of *(a)* rash, *(b)* fever, *(c)* arthritis in all children, *(d)* arthritis in females of child-bearing age, *(e)* meningitis, *(f)* encephalitis and *(g)* convulsions following such vaccinations. [40063]

Mr. Sackville: The measles and rubella components of the MR vaccine are the same as those in MMR and the profile of adverse reactions to these components of both vaccines is the same. Prior to the national introduction of MMR vaccine in the United Kingdom in 1988, post-immunisation symptoms were assessed, using active surveillance, in more than 10,000 children, including some for whom it was the second dose of measles. Published studies from the United States, which used active and passive reporting systems, have also been considered by my Department.

It is well established that there is under-reporting of suspected adverse reactions to any medicinal product, but serious conditions are more likely to be reported. This fact is taken into account when assessing data from spontaneous reports. However, in respect of MR vaccine, doctors were asked by the chief medical officer to report all reactions. It is likely that this, combined with the widespread awareness and magnitude of the campaign, led to enhanced compliance with the reporting of certain conditions that may not be casually related to the vaccine. The public health laboratory service is conducting on-going studies to look at MMR immunisation and meningitis, encephalitis and convulsions.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice is given to parents of children who have suffered life-threatening anaphylaxis following egg ingestion before the planned administration of MR vaccine. [40071]

Mr. Sackville: The leaflet "Measles: Why every child in school needs to be protected from measles this autumn", containing a consent form, was sent to all parents before immunisation took place; it stated that MR injection should not be given if their child has had a serious life-threatening reaction after eating eggs. This advice was also given to all health professionals.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what survey or other scientific information underlay his Department's press release of 28 July 1994 on the plans for a nationwide measles vaccine campaign. [40075]

Mr. Sackville: A list of articles and scientific papers will be placed in the Library, all of which have been published and underpinned the decision of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation to recommend to Ministers that a measles immunisation campaign was necessary.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to the average length of the immunity established in children vaccinated with MMR or MR vaccinations. [40067]

Mr. Sackville: Follow-up of the first children to receive measles vaccine in the United Kingdom 30 years ago has shown that immunity to measles persists at least this length of time. Rubella vaccine for school girls and adult women was introduced 25 years ago and immunity has been shown to persist in this group for at least this long. The combined MMR vaccine was only introduced for young children in the UK in 1988 but studies in other countries show persistence of immunity in this age group for at least 20 years. However, most of this information relates to persistence under conditions where the natural diseases are still circulating and may be boosting immunity. Also, with each vaccine there is a proportion of children—5 to 10 per cent.—who do not develop immunity the first time that they are vaccinated.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to arrange for public access to the data held at the National Institute for Biological Standards on the effects of vaccines upon children known to suffer from allergies. [40081]

Mr. Sackville: The National Institute for Biological Standards and Control does not hold information on the effects of vaccines upon children known to suffer from allergies.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to establish a scheme to encourage parents or guardians to submit their own reports on suspected vaccine damage from MMR or MR directly to *(a)* the Committee on Safety of Medicines and *(b)* the Medicines Control Agency. [40065]

Mr. Sackville: We have no such plans. Parents and guardians are, however, recommended to discuss any concerns with their family doctor. Health professionals are encouraged to report suspected adverse reactions to the Medicines Control Agency. It is important that the details of the patient's medical condition and medication that has been taken are known. Therefore, it is most appropriate to obtain reports of suspected vaccine damage from the patient's doctor who will be able to supply all the information needed.

All reports of suspected adverse drug reactions are assessed by professional staff of the MCA. The Committee on Safety of Medicines is an independent expert committee that advises the licensing authority and Ministers on matters relating to the safety, quality and efficacy of medicines.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the scientific papers on the association between the RA 27/3 rubella vaccine and arthritis of which his Department took account in formulating the national campaign of MR vaccination last November. [40080]

Mr. Sackville: A comprehensive list of papers is contained in the publication "Adverse effects of pertussis and rubella vaccine" published by the United States National Academy Press, ISBN 0 309 0449 5. A copy of the extract will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what follow-up his Department has established in respect of reported cases of convulsions linked to vaccinations. [40064]

Mr. Sackville: Follow-up is carried out after a serious reaction is reported under the yellow card system to obtain further details of the patient's medical history and other factors relevant to the reaction, in order to assess whether the reaction is likely to be associated with the vaccine. This procedure is carried out by the professional staff of the Medicines Control Agency.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the children for whom there are reports of suspected damage from the administration of MR vaccine were known to have a history of *(a)* asthma, *(b)* allergies and *(c)* fitios febrile convulsions. [40070]

Mr. Sackville: Over 8 million children in the United Kingdom have been immunised with MR vaccine. By October 1995, the Medicines Control Agency had received 2,735 suspected adverse reactions affecting 1,202 children. Some children were reported as having more than one reaction. However, the receipt of a report of a reaction does not necessarily mean that it has been caused by the vaccine.

Of the 1,202 children with suspected reactions to MR vaccine, 41 were reported as having a history of asthma—or chest symptoms suggestive of asthma—32 were reported as having preexisting allergic conditions and four febrile convulsions.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in how many instances financial penalties have been applied to the manufacturers of the measles-rubella vaccine used in the vaccination campaign begun in November 1994 because of an identified fault in the supply of vaccines or instruments as to its preparation. [40078]

Mr. Sackville: None. Deliveries of the vaccine and the immunisation equipment were made on time. Surplus stocks of vaccine occurred because of an excess in the amount of diluent provided. These surplus stocks have been returned to the supplier and credits have been received.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what information he has received in regard to the number of children who have suffered physical or psychological trauma as a suspected result of immunisation against measles. [40365]

Mr. Sackville: To October 1995, the Medicines Control Agency has received reports of 2,690 physical reactions relating to the MMR campaign, out of approximately 8 million children who received MR vaccine in the United Kingdom. For MMR vaccine, since 1987, the MCA have received 4,264 reports of physical reactions and 38 psychiatric/psychological reactions. Some 9.6 million doses of MMR have been distributed in the UK since the vaccine was introduced. However, the receipt of a report of a reaction does not necessarily mean that it has been caused by the vaccine.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies have been carried out by his Department of the effects of booster shots of measles vaccinations. [40266]

Mr. Sackville: Studies have been carried out by the public health laboratory service since 1987 in this country and there are a number of other international publications.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what specialist medical advice is available from the health service to counsel and support children who have suffered from the suspected adverse effects of measles vaccination. [40269]

Mr. Sackville: All children with illness, of whatever sort, receive advice and support from appropriate medical specialists.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library copies of all letters received by his Department's principal medical officer from *(a)* the United States Government's health authorities and *(b)* the US national immunisation program in the past year on measles immunisation programmes; and if he will make a statement on the advice received from his American counterpart on measles immunisation. [40287]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The Department's principal medical officer has not received letters from the United States Government's health authority or the US national immunisation programme in the past year on measles immunisation.

In 1994, advice on adverse reactions following a second dose of MMR was received from US authorities and this was included in information sent to all doctors in September 1994; a copy of this information is in the Library.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to establish a structured interview programme in respect of families alleging deleterious effects from immunisation against measles. [40270]

Mr. Sackville: There is already a well-established satisfactory system in place for monitoring adverse reactions to all medicines, including vaccines.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out *(a)* the month of manufacture of the component constituents, *(b)* the date of cultivation of the viruses and *(c)* the dates of alteration of the viruses used in the measles and rubella vaccination campaign launched in November 1994. [40284]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Two manufacturers supplied the vaccines used in the measles and rubella vaccination campaign. The finished batch products, produced in August and September 1994 were manufactured from a number of bulk component constituents each of which was made over a period of several months in 1989, 1992, 1993 and 1994. Cultivation of the viruses used in these batches occurred during manufacture of the bulk component constituents. The viruses were obtained from master seed viruses attenuated some 25 to 30 years ago.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evaluation was made by his Department of the reasons why the Trivirix MMR vaccine was withdrawn from use in Canada in May 1990; what considerations led to his Department's to withdraw the MMR vaccine from use in the United Kingdom; and when it was withdrawn. [40288]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The decisions that were taken by the Canadian authorities to discontinue using Urabe strain mumps vaccines were known to other licensing authorities. At that time, there was insufficient evidence of a problem with the strain of mumps vaccine in the United Kingdom for a change in vaccine policy to be advised.

Alerted to the existence of a potential problem of mumps vaccine virus meningitis by the Canadians, the Department of Health commissioned the public health laboratory service to undertake a study which allowed the detailed monitoring of possible vaccine associated cases. The studies undertaken were of an intensity that had not been undertaken anywhere else in the world. This involved 13 health districts. Some 28 vaccine associated cases were identified, all in recipients of MMR vaccines containing the Urabe mumps strain, indicating a risk of one in 11,000 with the vaccines.

As soon as data were available confirming the extent of the risk, showing that an alternative vaccine did not have this level of risk and was equally effective, and adequate alternative supplies were available, the Urabe vaccines were replaced. This occurred in September 1992.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the evidence his Department has evaluated in respect of suspected links between vaccinations administered for tuberculosis and *(a)* epileptic fits and *(b)* febrile convulsions. [40730]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* All reports of suspected adverse reactions to vaccines are regularly reviewed by professional staff of the Medicines Control Agency. The report of a reaction does not necessarily mean it was caused by the vaccine.

Since 1963, reactions have been reported in 795 people who had received BCG vaccine. In 11 children suspected reaction were classified as "convulsions". Six of these reactions were closely related to immunisation and were associated with fainting. The number that were febrile convulsions cannot be identified from the available information. Approximately 500,000 BCG vaccinations are given each year mostly in schoolchildren aged 10 to 13 years.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans exist to introduce improved vaccine monitoring of the side effects of the administration of MMR vaccinations. [40069]

Mr. Sackville: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no plans to change the monitoring of the side effects of the administration of MMR vaccine. There is a well-established satisfactory system in place already for monitoring adverse reactions to all medicines, including vaccines.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what survey his Department has conducted of children vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella in the past year in regard to the numbers and the proportion suffering from a reaction rash to the administration of the vaccine. [40072]

Mr. Sackville: Between 26 October 1994 and 26 October 1995, there have been 220 spontaneous reports in the United Kingdom of suspected adverse reactions in patients who have received measles, mumps and rubella vaccine. Of these, 67 were rashes or other similar skin reactions. However, the receipt of a report of a reaction does not necessarily mean that it has been caused by a vaccine. There have been 950,000 doses of MMR distributed in the UK in the past year.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies have been done by his Department, or consultants to his Department, into the causes of sub-acute sclerosing panencephalitis; and what steps have been taken to combat this disease. [40076]

Mr. Sackville: Sub-acute sclerosing panencephalitis was shown to be due to wild measles virus in 1967 by a United Kingdom virologist working in Belfast. The effects on SSPE of the introduction of measles vaccination in 1968 has been investigated by the public health laboratory service which keeps a register of all cases. This surveillance has shown that the vaccine protects against SSPE and that the incidence of this condition has dramatically decreased since routine measles immunisation was introduced.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what study his Department has set up to correlate vaccination records for MMR with *(a)* school attendance records, *(b)* hospital admission records and *(c)* general practitioners' records. [40068]

Mr. Sackville: The public health laboratory service is conducting studies to look at adverse events associated with MMR vaccination using hospital admissions data and general practioners' records. Pilot studies in single districts with hospital records have been published. Larger studies using both data sets are in progress. MMR is given routinely at 12 to 15 months, an age when children do not attend school. No study has been set up to look at school attendance records.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made by his Department of secondary complications arising from *(a)* measles, *(b)* mumps and *(c)* rubella. [40077]

Mr. Sackville: A number of investigations have been carried out by the public health laboratory service over the last 30 years that have looked at the severity and complications of natural measles, mumps and rubella infection. These studies have been based on hospital admissions and laboratory confirmed cases. Numerous other studies, both in this country and abroad, have also been conducted and these have been considered by my Department. Studies continue to confirm that there is significant morbidity associated with measles and mumps infection and with rubella infection during pregnancy.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what variation has been recorded in the incidences of congenital rubella syndrome in the United Kingdom since 1986. [40073]

Mr. Sackville: The number of reported cases of congenital rubella in the United Kingdom since 1986 is shown in the table.

	Number of Cases
1986	30
1987	40
1988	25
1989	15
1990	13
1991	3
1992	[1]7
1993	3
1994	7

[1] Includes triplets (thus, number of affected pregnancies = 5).

These was a substantial drop in the number of cases following the introduction of MMR in October 988 and an increase in 1994. The figures for the most recent years—1990 onwards—are not complete as some affected children are not diagnosed or reported until they are older.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment hid Department has made as to whether natural measles normally convey life-long immunity. [40061]

Mr. Sackville: It is established medical fact that measles is a serious disease which does convey life-long immunity for those who survive it.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department was informed of the likelihood of a measles epidemic in the winter of 1994–95. [40268]

Mr. Sackville: Evidence was presented to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation in November 1993 that pointed to an epidemic between 1996 and 1997. By the middle of 1994, it became apparent that an epidemic could occur earlier.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent information he has received from the World Health Organisation in regard to its assessment of the spread of measles. [40271]

Mr. Sackville: The conclusions and recommendations of the 10th meeting of the World Health Organisation's European advisory group on the expanded programme on immunisation held in Copenhagen on 24 to 25 April stated:

> "single dose measles immunisation strategies would not reach the Regional targets and with such strategies there would continue to be recurrent epidemics. The alternative augmented strategies will impose higher resources requirements but will be cost-effective by preventing cyclical epidemics".

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what was the *(a)* expected and *(b)* actual number of deaths from measles in each year since 1987; what is the expected number of deaths for the next year; and what is the mortality rate from measles; [40272]

(2) which historic outbreaks of measles were considered when assessing the number of children expected to die of measles before the establishment of the measles immunisation campaign in November 1994; and how many deaths occurred in each such epidemic. [40676]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Measles has been a notifiable disease since 1940. Epidemics, with associated deaths occurred regularly until the introduction of vaccine in 1968. This historic data, along with notifications and deaths from 1968 to 1993, were used in making predictions for future epidemics. Details of deaths since 1987 are shown in the table.

In predicting deaths in future epidemics, consideration was given to the expectation than an epidemic would primarily affect older individuals than previously. In such individuals, case fatality rates from measles are much higher.

Deaths recorded at Office of Population Censuses and Surveys having measles as an underlying cause for all ages in England and Wales 1987–94

Year	*Total expected*	*Total observed*
1987	6	6
1988	1	16
1989[1]	7	3
1990[1]	2	1
1991[1]	1	1
1992[1]	1	2
1993[1]	1	4
1994[1]	3	[2]1

[1] After the introduction of MMR vaccine in 1988, measles notification are not an accurate measure of the incidence of disease (Brown et al, *British Medical Journal* 1994, so for 1989–94 notifications are corrected for misdiagnosis before applying mortality rates.

[2] Provisional figure.

No deaths due to indigenously acquired acute measles are expected within the five to 16 year age group in 1996.

The age specific case fatality rates from measles during the period of 1971–88 were:

Age group	*Deaths per 100,000 cases*
<1 year	41
1-4 years	16
5-9 years	10
10-14 years	32
15-24 years	89
25+ years	92

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources were given to each area health authority to support the vaccination campaign against measles and rubella started in November 1994. [40286]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* District health authorities were supplied free of charge with measles and rubella vaccine, syringes, needles, sharps containers and publicity materials. Implementation costs were met from existing national health service resources.

Immunisation Campaigns

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library a copy of the letter on the measles and rubella immunisation campaign by the chief medical officer sent to all doctors on 27 September 1994; and if he will indicate whether his chief medical officer received any negative responses to his letter. [40074]

Mr. Sackville: A copy of the letter is available in the Library. The letter was sent to over 90,000 health care professionals and the chief medical officer received 35 written replies to his letter, only two of which were negative about the campaign.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which countries in the European Union have conducted immunisation campaigns against measles, mumps and rubella in the past 10 years. [40235]

Mr. Sackville: All countries of the European Union have immunisation programmes that include MMR vaccine. Almost all of them follow two dose programmes for MMR.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what meetings *(a)* he, *(b)* other departmental Ministers or *(c)* departmental officials have had for the past two years with representatives of the Justice Awareness and Basic Support group to discuss problems with immunisation campaigns conducted by his Department. [40267]

Mr. Sackville: I am not aware that the Justice Awareness and Basic Support group have formally requested a meeting with Ministers or officials.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the measles innoculation campaign of winter 1994–95. [40285]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The campaign was highly effective. Some 92 per cent. of the children aged five to 16 years were immunised. In much of the country, measles virus transmission has been interrupted. An epidemic has been averted. Since January 1995, there have been approximately 50 confirmed cases, of which eight were imported.

Cemfuel

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 24 October, *Official Report*, column *567*, what assessment he has made of the second report of the Environment Committee on burning of secondary liquid fuel in cement kilns, HC479 of Session 1994–95; and if he will commission studies into the possible health effects of burning cemfuel. [40452]

Mr. Sackville: The Department of Health will contribute to the Government response to the Environment Committee report. We have no plans to commission any studies on this subject.

Internet

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals in *(a)* Sheffield, *(b)* Yorkshire and *(c)* Humberside have been connected to the Internet; and if he will make a statement. [40574]

Mr. Sackville: Records are not available centrally of individual connections to the Internet by prospective national health service users. However, framework contracts have been awarded to British Telecom and Mercury for wide area network services to establish a NHS-wide networking service to support the business requirements of NHS organisations. This electronic communications infrastructure dedicated to the NHS will, in turn, be able to be connected to the Internet through secure, centrally managed, gateways. It will remain for individual organisations to decide whether to take up the option of being connected to the Internet through the secure gateway available as part of the NHS-wide networking service.

Psychiatric Hospitals

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many psychiatric hospitals are due to close *(a)* in 1996 and *(b)* in years subsequent to 1996; [41103]

(2) how many psychiatric hospitals have closed in 1995 and in each year since 1979. [41100]

Mr. Bowis: Information is available on the closure of large mental illness hospitals in the report "Survey of English Mental Hospitals March 1994—Monitoring the Closure of the Water Towers", copies of which are available in the Library. Information for 1994–95 is not available centrally.

Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes

Mr. Butcher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will instruct the social services inspectorate to consult proprietors of private residential homes and nursing homes in Coventry about the impact of Coventry social services department's variation from the conditions of registration with particular reference to staffing requirements. [40896]

Mr. Bowis: We have reminded local and health authorities, in recently published guidance, of the need to consult all providers about local standards. Copies of the guidance LAC(95)12 and HSG(95)41 are available in the Library. Representations by proprietors of residential care or nursing homes in Coventry should be made through the independent unit advisory panel, the local authority complaints procedure or the local government ombudsman.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff are currently employed in his Department and related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work force; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41120]

Mr. Sackville: Breakdowns by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—that is, normally those engaged for a period of up to 12 months, but exceptionally up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

Adipose Tissue

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated into causes of layers of adipose tissue on the wall of the abdomen, tapering to the hip bones; and if he will make a statement. [40953]

Mr. Malone: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *35–37*.

Evaluation of research into abdominal obesity is covered by "Reversing the increasing problem of obesity in England: a report from the Nutrition and Physical Activity Task Forces", recently published by my Department.

Beta-Interferon

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to restrict the use of beta-interferon to controlled trials; and if he will make a statement. [41508]

Mr. Sackville: Currently there are no marketing authorisations—product licences—for beta-interferon in the United Kingdom but approval has been given for clinical trials to test the efficacy of beta-interferon in multiple sclerosis.

In addition to the use of beta-interferon in controlled clinical trials, if a doctor identifies the need to treat a patient using this unlicensed medicine, he would be able to do so on a "named-patient" basis in accordance with section 9(1) of the Medicines Act 1968 without the patient taking part in a clinical trial and without the doctor notifying the licensing authority. However, a doctor prescribing an unlicensed product does so entirely on his own responsibility. To stop such a use of beta-interferon would be a restriction on clinical freedom and prevent a doctor from offering his patient what in his clinical judgment is the most appropriate treatment for that patient.

NHS Estates Agency

Mr. Congdon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the framework document for the NHS Estates agency. [42095]

Mr. Sackville: I have today published the agency's new framework document, copies of which have been placed in the Library.

Nut Allergies

Sir Cranley Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken since May 1994 to ensure that all general practitioners in England and Wales make it a rule to refer patients with nut allergy to a specialist allergy clinic. [41135]

Mr. Sackville: The chief medical officer's update No. 2, which was sent to all doctors in May 1994, included advice on the management of peanut anaphylaxis. In October 1994, the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Pathologists jointly produced guidelines on good allergy practice and standards of care for providers and purchasers of allergy services within the NHS. The treatment of individual patients is a matter of professional clinical judgment.

Sir Cranley Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many deaths from peanut allergy have been recorded in the past 12 months. [41134]

Mr. Sackville: There were two deaths in 1994—the latest year for which data are available—in which the cause of death was stated as an allergic reaction to nuts.

The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys has no record of any specific mention of peanuts appearing on any death certificate during this period.

Bed Closures

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence his Department has of whether a halt to bed closures in London is necessary. [41260]

Mr. Malone: Developments in health care, such as day surgery, non-invasive treatment and improved drug therapies, mean that more patients are being treated with fewer beds. London health authorities are responsible for planning the level of provision to meet patients' needs.

Community Psychiatric Nurses

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many community psychiatric nurses there are *(a)* in total and *(b)* per head of population in each health authority area. [41410]

Mr. Bowis: I will write to the hon. Member.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement. [41533]

Mr. Sackville: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster gave him today.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41555]

Mr. Sackville: By the end of 1995, we expect to amend three regulations covering exemptions from clinical trials, hospices and registration of mother and baby homes. We are also consulting on a number of proposals for deregulation including those which will repeal unnecessary regulations on imported food.

The requirement to carry out a compliance cost assessment applies to regulations which impose additional burdens on business while the programme of repeals and amendments is concerned with reducing burdens.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer of the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and in how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41534]

Mr. Sackville: My Department has not yet laid any draft orders before the Committee.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list all mergers that have taken place between trusts, indicating the reason given for each merger. [41428]

Mr. Malone: Mergers have taken place between the following national health service trusts:

Guy's Hospital (formerly part of Guy's and Lewisham NHS Trust) with St. Thomas's Hospital NHS trust;

Harrow Community Health Services NHS trust with Hillingdon Community Health NHS trust;

Homewood NHS trust with Weybourne Community NHS trust;

Royal Liverpool University Hospital NHS trust with Broadgreen Hospital NHS trust;

West Dorset Community Health NHS trust with West Dorset Mental Health NHS trust;

Wolverley NHS trust with North Warwickshire NHS trust.

The main reason for any trust merger is to improve patient care. Further information on the reasons for the above trust mergers may be obtained from the individual trusts.

GP Lists

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were deregistered by general practitioners in each of the last 10 years in each family health services authority and in total, at the request of the general practitioner; and if he will list whether reasons were given and whether the general practitioner was a fundholder or not. [41492]

Mr. Malone: I refer the right hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Dr. Spink) on 2 November, column *457*. The fundholding status of the general practitioner is not separately identified.

Mrs Beckett: To ask the Secretary for Health what consideration has been given to making it a condition of the striking off of a patient by the general practitioner that an explanation is given. [41479]

Mr. Malone: I refer the right hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) on 29 June, *Official Report*, column *789*.

GP Fundholders

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary for Health what is his latest evidence on whether there are different levels of service to patients of fundholders and others. [41573]

Mr. Malone: Every independent study of the fundholding scheme, from the National Audit Office to the Office of Economic Co-operation and Development, has found that fundholding has brought real benefits to patients including reduced waiting times and improved access to services; this has had the effect of driving standards up for all patients.

Personal Social Services

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary for Health what has been the level of spending on personal social services in each year since 1992–93 in respect of *(a)* the elderly, *(b)* children, *(c)* learning disabilities, *(d)* young physically disabled, *(e)* mentally ill and *(f)* others. [41414]

Mr. Bowis: Local authority net expenditure on services for the personal social services client groups from 1990–91 to 1993–94, the latest year for which information is available, is given in table 7.6, page 116 of health and personal social services statistics for England 1995, copies of which are available in the Library.

Domiciliary Care

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary for Health what information his Department maintains about failure rates among private sector domiciliary nursing or residential care providers. [41412]

Mr. Bowis: Information about failure rates in any sector is not collected by the Department.

Market Testing

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the expenditure on the introduction and implementation of market testing in each of the last five years. [41571]

Mr. Sackville: Detailed information on market-testing costs since the Government's competing for quality programme began in 1992 can be found in the "Market Testing Bulletin—Special Report" dated 9 January 1995. Copies of the bulletin are available in the Library.

Nursing Home Fees

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what would be the level of the present £8,000 capital disregard for nursing home fees if it had been uprated by the rate of inflation since its introduction. [41430]

Mr. Bowis: Since its introduction in April 1993, it would have increased to £8,478 in April 1995.

Population Statistics

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 23 October, *Official Report*, column *422*, when he expects to be in a position to release the mid-1994 population estimates together with the corresponding 1995 electorate figures. [41304]

Mr. Sackville: Shortly.

Financial Reserves

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will itemise the financial reserves of each *(a)* trust and *(b)* health authority in each of the last three years for which figures are available; [41427]

(2) what financial reserves have been held *(a)* by trusts and *(b)* by health authorities in each region in each of the last three years. [41419]

Mr. Sackville: Information from central returns will be placed in the Library.

Community Care

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what level of per capita spending on community care services is undertaken in each local area of England. [41411]

Mr. Bowis: I refer the hon. Member to key indicators of local authority social services 1995, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Hospital Readmissions

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information his Department maintains on hospital readmission rates *(a)* by health authority and *(b)* by trust. [41429]

Mr. Sackville: None.

NHS Patients

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have refused to be discharged from NHS care to a nursing or residential home *(a)* nationally, *(b)* regionally and *(c)* by health authority area since February 1995, indicating where patients have subsequently been placed. [41413]

Mr. Bowis: This information is not collected centrally.

Continuing Care

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many NHS continuing care beds have been available in each *(a)* region and *(b)* district in each of the last five years for which figures are available; [41423]

(2) how many *(a)* NHS and *(b)* private respite care beds were available (i) by region and (ii) by health authority in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [41405]

Mr. Bowis: Information collected from the national health service is published in "Bed Availability for England", copies of which are available in the Library. Information from the independent sector does not identify the purpose for which beds are provided.

Psychiatric Beds

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acute psychiatric beds are available *(a)* in total and *(b)* per head of population in each health authority area. [41409]

Mr Bowis: The information available centrally is shown in the table and provides the average daily number of available beds for short stay mental illness in 1993–94 and beds per 100,000 population by former English regional health authority.

Average daily number of available beds—short stay mental illness—all ages—1993–94

	Beds[1]	*Beds per 100,000*
Northern	1,467	47.28
Yorkshire	1,743	47.00
Trent	1,900	41.75
East Anglian	850	40.57
North West Thames	1,607	45.64
North East Thames	1,701	44.61
South East Thames	1,243	33.43
South West Thames	1,296	43.21
Wessex	1,153	36.56
Oxford	930	35.86
South Western	1,421	42.65
West Midlands	2,110	39.88
Mersey	1,273	52.75
Northern Western	2,069	51.32
England	21,293	43.87

Note:

Trusts in the regions listed do not provide services exclusively for the populations of those regions. Overall figures for short stay psychiatric beds have remained stable since 1988.

Source:

[1] DH KHO3 returns.

South and West Regional Health Authority

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library a copy of the South and West regional health authority's submission to the Ministry of Defence "Front Line First" review. [41478]

Mr. Sackville: This is a matter for the South and West regional health authority. The right hon. Member may wish to contact Ms Rennie Fritchie, chair of the authority, for details.

Winchester and Eastleigh Healthcare NHS Trust

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence his Department has on whether Winchester and Eastleigh Healthcare national health service trust has an explicit policy of giving preference to patients from general practitioner fundholders. [41572]

Mr. Malone: None.

Locum Medical Staff

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information his Department maintains on the number and costs of using locum medical staff. [41431]

Mr. Malone: The available information is shown in the table.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Service Medical Staff: England 30 September 1994—Whole-time equivalent.

	Number
All permanent paid and honorary staff	47,030
Locum staff	2,740
Locums as a percentage of all staff	5.8

Information on costs of using locum medical staff is not available centrally.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list all private finance initiative proposals for the development of national health service hospitals; and if he will make a statement. [41622]

Mr. Sackville: I refer the hon. and learned Member to the reply that I gave the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Betts) on 28 June, *Official Report*, column *690*.

Since that reply, three further schemes with a capital value over £1 million have been approved under the private finance initiative, as follows:

(1) NHS-wide clearing service; for exchange of activity data to support NHS contracts and to provide nationally required statistics. Capital value approximately £5.5 million.

(2) Royal Berkshire and Battle NHS trust; for the provision of car parks, office accommodation, private patient wing, sympathetic retail outlets and leisure centre at a capital value of approximately £15 million.

(3) Aintree Hospitals NHS trust; for the provision of a patient hotel conference and dining facility at a capital value of approximately £2.7 million.

Health Authority Cash Limits

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provisions are made for local health commissioning *(a)* when health authorities face shortfalls in their budget and general practitioner fundholders have unspent allocations; and if he will make a statement. [41623]

Mr. Sackville: It is for regional health authorities to manage overall spending within the regional cash limit set by the national health service executive. Regional health authorities set cash limits for health authorities and agree budgets for general practice fundholders. They are therefore responsible for managing any over or underspends within the overall resources available to them.

Community Health Councils

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the minimum number of hours per week the office of a community health council must be open to the public in order to comply with the Community Health Councils (Access to Information) Act 1988. [41719]

Mr. Malone: The Community Health Council (Access to Information) Act 1988 does not place any duty on community health councils in respect of minimum opening hours.

Secure Unit Places

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what were the numbers of secure places (beds) available on 1 January and 1 July for each year from 1985 to 1995 *(a)* for children and young people and *(b)* for children and young people aged 15 and 16 years, in each case indicating the number available (i) for boys, (ii) for girls, (iii) for both and (iv) in total; [41334]

(2) what were the total numbers of local authority secure places (beds) available for holding children and young people on 1 January and 1 July in each year since 1985. [41335]

Mr. Bowis: The information available centrally is contained in "Children accommodated in secure units, year ending 31 March 19XX".

Employment of Children

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to bring the Employment of Children Act 1973 into effect; and if he will make a statement on the Government's policy towards implementation of that Act. [41686]

Mr. Bowis: A comprehensive framework for the protection of children at work already exists. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman) on 30 October, *Official Report,* columns *42–43,* detailing my recently announced proposals for some minor improvements to that system.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what responsibility falls to local authorities for the care of asylum seekers' children who have no other means of support; and if he will make a statement. [41828]

Mr. Bowis: The responsibility that falls to local authorities for the care of asylum seekers' children is the same responsibility they have for any other children who may be "in need" as set out in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

NHS Management Numbers and Costs

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list for each year sine 1989 the number and cost of general and senior managers in the NHS by region and total. [39385]

Mr. Malone *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* I refer the right hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State gave the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn) on 21 July 1994—*Official Report,* columns *591–92,* and to the replies I gave the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn) on 24 October 1994, *Official Report,* column *451,* on 31 October 1994, *Official Report,* columns *902–3,* on 3 November 1994, *Official Report,* column *1267,* and on 18 July, *Official Report,* columns *1152–53.*

Information on the number of general and senior managers at 30 September 1994 is shown in the table. Information on costs for 1994–95 is not yet available.

NHS hospital and community health services—general and senior managers by region at 30 September 1994

	Numbers
England Total	22,950
Northern	1,040
Yorkshire	2,020
Trent	1,720
East Anglian	980
North West Thames	1,080
North East Thames	1,960
South East Thames	1,570
South West Thames	1,160
Wessex	1,290
Oxford	1,080
South Western	1,110
West Midlands	2,180
Mersey	1,070

NHS hospital and community health services—general and senior managers by region at 30 September 1994

	Numbers
North Western	1,600
SHAs and Others	3,080

Source:

Department of Health non-medical work force census.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 whole-time equivalents. The total does not equal the sum of the components due to rounding.

NHS Priority Setting

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the participants, and the organisations that they represented, who attended the recent conference initiated by his Department, the Royal College of Physicians and the British Medical Association in respect of establishing a national framework for rationing national health service treatment; if he will send the hon. Member for Don Valley a copy of the letter since circulated to participants at the conference by Mr. Alasdair Liddel, giving his assessment of the conference; and if he will make a statement. [41007]

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what *(a)* meetings and *(b)* other consultations he has had with health authorities and health commissions with regard to the introduction of a national framework for health care rationing in the NHS; and if he will make a statement; [40923]

(2) what *(a)* meetings and *(b)* other consultations he has had with any organisations representing the medical profession with regard to the introduction of a national framework for health care rationing in the NHS; and if he will make a statement; [40924]

(3) what studies his Department has undertaken regarding the introduction of a national framework for health care rationing in the NHS; [40925]

(4) what plans he has to introduce a national framework of rationing in the NHS; [40926]

(5) what report he has received about the meeting in September initiated by the NHS executive about a national framework for the rationing of health care in the NHS; who proposed that the meeting should take place; if he will list those present; if he will make available the report of the meeting; and if he will make a statement; [40927]

(6) what plans he has to hold meetings to discuss national rationing of health care in the NHS; who will participate; and if he will publish the reports of those meetings. [40928]

Mr. Malone *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* There are no plans to introduce a national framework for rationing services and no work has taken place to prepare such a framework. In their response earlier this year to the Health Select Committee on priority setting, Cm 2826, the Government set out their approach to priority setting at three levels, in the following terms:

> Ministers, advised by the Department of Health, set out the framework of national priorities and targets for improvement. This is done through annual priorities and planning guidance to the NHS and through important policies such as "The Health of the Nation" White Paper and the patient's charter;
>
> Health authorities and GP fundholders assess the needs of the people they serve and decide what treatments and services are required to meet those needs. This process should be informed by proper consultation with the public;
>
> Individual clinicians decide the most clinically appropriate treatment and clinical priority for each patient, based on their assessment of that patient's needs.

Earlier this year, officials in the NHS executive agreed with leaders of the medical profession and senior NHS managers that it would be helpful to meet together to discuss priority setting issues. This meeting took place on 28 September 1995 and involved a wide range of interests including patients' representatives. Views were exchanged on a personal and non-attributable basis. The note sent to participants summarising the discussion was not intended as a public document and to publish the letter would break the undertaking given to the participants.

There was general consensus at the meeting that:

> setting priorities was a necessary part of life in any health care system
>
> the role of Ministers and the NHS executive in setting a small number of national priorities was acceptable with no dissent about the current set of priorities.
>
> individual clinicians want to be free to take decisions about individual patients, but do not want to be left taking responsibility in isolation for difficult decisions
>
> there is scope for spreading good practice in approaches to priority-setting at local (health authority) level.

NHS Expenditure

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the spending per head of population on *(a)* primary care and *(b)* secondary care in (i) inner London, (ii) outer London, (iii) England and (iv) by each family health services authority in each of the last three years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on variations in amounts. [40793]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Primary care has been interpreted as family health services and per capita spend is for family health services authorities. Secondary care has been interpreted as hospital and community health services and per capita spend is for district health authorities.

For the per capita spend for DHAs and FHSAs for 1991–92, 1992–93 and 1993–94, I refer the right hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn) on 12 December 1994, *Official Report*, column *465*, and to the reply the then Minister for Health, my right hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney) gave him on 26 May 1994, *Official Report*, column *305*.

The total FHSA and DHA per capita spend for England for 1991–92, 1992–93 and 1993–94 is shown in the table.

	1991–92 £	*1992–93* £	*1993–94* £
England DHA per capita spend	355	376	370
England FHSA per capita spend	115	132	153
Total DHA and FHSA per capita spend	470	508	523

Note:

Comparisons of these figures should be treated with caution as not all expenditure covered arises from population activities and crude populations do not take into account difference in age structure or relative health needs across the country. In addition, FHSA per capita spend includes GP fundholder expenditure on both primary and secondary care services and this will vary with the distribution of GP fundholders.

Source:

Annual accounts of health authorities and mid-year population estimates.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Hutton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many pupils *(a)* in each local education authority band and *(b)* in each region received support under the assisted places scheme in each of the past five years. [40938]

Mrs. Gillan: Information on the place of residence of pupils in the assisted places scheme is not collected centrally. Many schools serve wide catchment areas and may offer places to pupils from outside the local authority area in which they are situated. I refer the hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) gave to the hon. Member for Gloucester (Mr. French) on 3 July, *Official Report,* columns *35–37,* containing information on the numbers of assisted place holders at schools situated within each local authority area for the academic year 1994–95. Information for earlier years is not readily available.

The numbers of assisted place holders within each region for each of the last five years are given in the table:

Assisted places scheme

Region	*Numbers of assisted pupils in academic year* *1990–91*	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*
North East	806	873	913	939	995
North West	6,365	6,408	6,542	6,550	6,569
Yorks and Humberside	1,742	1,794	1,839	1,893	1,940
East Anglia	1,267	1,340	1,377	1,430	1,436
East Midlands	1,735	1,846	1,914	2,002	2,020
West Midlands	2,591	2,721	2,776	2,869	2,932
South West	3,129	3,246	3,381	3,451	3,499
South East	4,193	4,403	4,762	4,891	5,008
Greater London	4,912	5,010	5,170	5,266	5,348

Figures relate to England only.

Cornish Language

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is her Department's assessment of the current level of the teaching of the Cornish language; and what measures she proposes to promote the teaching of the Cornish language. [40552]

Mr. Robin Squire: My right hon. Friend does not collect information on the teaching of Cornish. She has no proposals to promote Cornish teaching: it is for schools and other education establishments to decide what subjects to teach once they have met the requirements of the national curriculum and other statutory requirements.

Primary Schools

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what action she is taking to raise standards in primary schools. [40553]

Mrs. Gillan: The national curriculum and its assessment, national tests, regular inspections, improvements to teacher training and our improving schools programme all act to raise standards in primary schools. The chief inspector of schools has confirmed that our reforms are improving the quality of education.

Social Affairs Council

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, pursuant to her answer to the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Spring) of 19 October, *Official Report,* column *379,* what was the voting record of each member state on items agreed at the meeting of the European Community's Social Affairs Council held on 5 October; and if she will make it her practice to list all votes, including where there have been no votes, in the future. [41089]

Mr. Forth: There were no votes taken at the Council. The resolutions on the image of men and women in the media, the fight against racism and xenophobia, and co-operation with third countries in the field of youth were adopted unanimously, without discussion.

Grant-maintained Status

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many "Going GM" conferences her Department has organised; at what cost; and how many more are planned. [41087]

Mr. Robin Squire: The Department has organised 54 "Going GM" conferences at a total cost of around £720,000. We have firm plans to hold another nine between now and February 1996. Conferences this term have been over-subscribed and we are reviewing how to meet the increased demand for places.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list for each education authority the number of *(a)* voluntary-aided, *(b)* voluntary-controlled, *(c)* special agreement, *(d)* county and *(e)* grant-maintained schools; in each case what is the total number of pupils and the number in each category in *(a)* the primary sector and *(b)* the secondary sector; and what is the number of schools in England in each category. [41299]

Mr. Squire: I shall place the information in the Library.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list the number of parental ballots on grant-maintained status in *(a)* voluntary-aided, *(b)* voluntary-controlled, *(c)* special agreement and *(d)* county schools (i) between 1 September 1993 and 31 August 1994 and (ii) between 1 September 1994 and 31 August 1995; and in each case, how many ballots have resulted in a majority of parent voting (1) in favour of and (2) against grant-maintained status. [41300]

Mr. Squire: The information requested is set out in the table:

Number of parental ballots of grant-maintained status

	Number of ballots	*"Yes" ballots*	*"No" ballots*
(i) *1 September 1993 to 31 August 1994*			
(a) Voluntary aided	59	31	28
(b) Voluntary controlled	25	16	9
(c) Special agreement	1	1	0
(d) County	184	109	75
(ii) *1 September 1994 to 31 August 1995*			
(a) Voluntary aided	15	6	9
(b) Voluntary controlled	13	10	3
(c) Special agreement	0	0	0
(d) County	57	34	23

Note:

"Yes" ballots are those where a majority of parents voted in favour of seeking grant-maintained status, and "No" ballots are those where a majority voted against. Initial ballots have been disregarded where a second ballot was required because of low turnout or the Secretary of State having declared a ballot void.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what has been the total number of parents voting (i) in favour of and (ii) against grant-maintained status in ballots between *(a)* 1 September 1992 and 31 August 1993 *(b)* 1 September 1993 and 31 August 1994 and *(c)* 1 September 1994 and 31 August 1995. [41301]

Mr. Squire: The information requested is set out in the table:

Number of parents voting in grant-maintained ballots

	(a) *1 September 1992 to 31 August 1993*	*(b)* *1 September 1993 to 31 August 1994*	*(c)* *1 September 1994 to 31 August 1995*
(i) Parents voting in favour of GM status	251,250	63,703	17,322
(ii) Parents voting against GM status (including spoilt papers)	142,593	57,078	18,087

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what estimate she has made of the full-year cost in *(a)* transitional grant and *(b)* formula allocation of capital grant in the event of all the present voluntary aided schools becoming grant-maintained during the same financial year. [41303]

Mrs. Gillan: It is for the Funding Agency for Schools to determine the balance between the level of formula allocation and other forms of capital grant. The cost in *(a)* transitional grant and *(b)* formula allocation becoming grant-maintained during the same financial year will depend on levels of grant prevailing at the time.

Voluntary-aided Schools

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what has been *(a)* the level of capital expenditure and *(b)* the governor's share of capital expenditure in voluntary-aided schools in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [41302]

Mrs. Gillan: The level of capital expenditure over the past three years has been as follows:

£ thousands

	1992–93	*1993–94*	*1994–95*
(a) Total Governors' expenditure eligible for grant on which grant was paid	95,681	94,104	89,139
(b) —of which Governors' Contribution	14,352	14,116	13,371

Notes:

1. Governors' contribution based on 15 per cent. of approved building work costs. Information on additional annual expenditure incurred by governors, not approved for grant assistance, on cash-limited and off-programme work, is not held centrally.
2. Governors' contribution includes expenditure supported by Central Government loans.
3. The figures do not include local authority capital expenditure at aided schools, information on which is not held centrally.
4. The figures do not include expenditure on repairs.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what time scale has been allowed for responses to her Department's consultation paper on self-government for voluntary-aided schools; and what factors underlay her Department's rejection of the time scale periods recommended in *(a)* the Department of Environment publication "Action for Central Government" and *(b)* her Department's document on efficient scrutiny into the administrative burdens on schools. [41714]

Mr. Robin Squire: The consultation paper was published on 27 October with a request for responses by 24 November 1995. As the paper made clear, my right hon. Friend intends to consider the possibility of legislation in the coming parliamentary Session in the light of responses. This necessitates an unusually short consultation period, for which an apology was given in the letter to consultees accompanying the paper.

Mr. Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to publish in full responses to her Department's consultation paper on self-government for voluntary-aided schools and if she will make a statement. [41716]

Mr. Squire: A summary of responses will be made available on request, and a copy will be placed in the Library. Wider access to the responses themselves will be subject to consultees' consent.

Mr. Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment on what dates copies of her Department's consultation paper on self-government for voluntary-aided schools were sent to *(a)* voluntary-aided schools, *(b)* grant-maintained former VA schools, *(c)* local authority associations and *(d)* local education authorities. [41717]

Mr. Squire: The consultation paper was published on 27 October 1995. Some 4,400 copies were dispatched on that day and on the following two working days.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list the rules and regulations she proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if she will make a statement. [41529]

Mr. Forth: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given earlier by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what regulations her Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if she proposes to conduct a cost compliance assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a cost compliance assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41553]

Mr. Forth: There are no plans to repeal any regulations by the end of 1995.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from her Department; and in how many cases a cost compliance assessment has been carried out. [41530]

Mr. Forth: My right hon. Friend has laid one draft deregulation proposal to date. The draft order, which speeds up the process by which schools may change their session times, will not lead to any savings to the Exchequer.

Community Action Scheme

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many people are on the community action scheme. [41833]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Mr. Stephen Byers, dated 6 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to respond to your question about the number of people presently on the Community Action programme.

At the end of September 1995 there were 12,900 people on Community Action.

I hope this is helpful.

Accelerated Modern Apprenticeships

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many people are undertaking accelerated modern apprenticeships; and how many to date have completed such a course. [41832]

Mr. Paice: Reliable information on the number in training or completing accelerated modern apprenticeships is not available at present.

Youth Training

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the number of 16 and 17-year-olds on youth training in each region in August 1994 and August 1995. [41834]

Mr. Paice: The number on youth training in each region is given in the table. Information has been given for July 1995, the latest available month. It is not possible to provide figures for those aged 16 and 17 on youth training. Therefore, the table covers all those on youth training.

Youth training Great Britain and regions number in training

Region	*August 1994*	*July 1995*
South east	25,700	24,500
London	18,200	16,800
Eastern	21,500	19,600
South west	18,000	19,100
West Midlands	27,100	26,300
East Midlands	22,400	22,700
Yorkshire and Humberside	27,600	26,100
Merseyside	11,100	12,300
North west	37,100	32,900
North east	18,900	16,800
Wales	14,600	13,000
Scotland	32,300	30,300
Great Britain	274,500	263,700

Source:

TEC Management Information Returns, Welsh Office, The Scottish Office, Employment Service.

Training Programmes

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many people were on training for work programmes in each month of 1995. [41830]

Mr. Paice: Information on the number on training for work up to July 1995, the latest month for which figures are available, is given in the table.

Training for work—Great Britain 1995

Month	*Number on programme*
January	130,100
February	132,900
March	118,100
April	99,000
May	95,200
June	92,600
July	85,800

Source:

TEC Management Information Returns, Welsh Office, The Scottish Office.

Internet

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what representations she has received about the regulation of material available to schoolchildren on the Internet. [41820]

Mr. Robin Squire: The Department has received a number of comments on this issue in response to the Education Department's consultation paper "Superhighways for Education". A summary of the responses will be published later this month.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to improve the regulation of material available in schools on the Internet. [41814]

Mr. Squire: The National Council for Educational Technology earlier this year published advice for teachers and parents on access to computers and on-line communications. These issues were also covered in the Education Department's consultation paper "Superhighways for Education". The outcomes of this consultation will be announced shortly.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Educational and Employment what guidelines currently exist to restrict the material made available to schoolchildren on the Internet. [41813]

Mr. Squire: The National Council for Educational Technology has published guidance for schools and colleges on the use of the Internet, including considerations relating to access to undesirable materials. The NCET has also published guidance for teachers and parents on these issues.

Pre-School Learning Alliance

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what annual grant has been made by her Department to the Pre-School Learning Alliance or to its predecessor the Pre-School Playgrounds Association in each year since 1990; for what purpose the grant is intended; and what plans she has for the continuance of such a grant for such purposes once plans for universal nursery vouchers are fully implemented. [41629]

Mr. Robin Squire: Grants paid by the Department since 1990–91 are as shown in the table. They support the training of playgroup staff, and are reviewed annually. No decisions have been taken about the level of grant from 1997–98, when the voucher scheme is to be implemented fully.

Financial year	*£ thousands*
1990–91	179
1991–92	327.5
1992–93	649.5
1993–94	887
1994–95	1,195
1995–96	1,195

Mr. Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to implement the recommendations of the study commissioned by her Department and undertaken in 1994 into the use of the grant made by her Department to the Pre-School Learning Alliance. [41630]

Mr. Squire: The independent review into the use of the Pre-School Playgroups Association of its grant from the Department in support of staff training was undertaken in 1993. The review found that the PPA made effective use of its grant and obtained value for money. The review's findings were taken into account by the Department in determining its grant to the PPA in 1994–95, which increased by 35 per cent. over the preceding year.

Nursery Vouchers

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what estimates she has made of the impact of the proposed nursery voucher scheme on nursery provision for three-year-olds; and if she will make a statement. [41707]

Mr. Robin Squire: The voucher scheme should not affect existing places for three-year-olds. The proposed funding mechanism will allow local authorities and other providers to continue to spend on such places as they judge appropriate.

Modern Apprenticeship Scheme

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many people are on the modern apprenticeship scheme. [41831]

Mr. Paice: Modern apprenticeship prototypes started in September 1994. Modern apprenticeships became available in all TEC areas in September 1995. An early estimate of numbers of modern apprenticeships in September 1995 is 4,000.

WALES

Primary Care

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the spending per head of population on primary care *(a)* in the health authority areas and *(b)* in total; if he will list the figures for secondary care; and if he will make a statement on variations in amounts. [40812]

Mr. Richards *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* The information requested is set out as follows:

	Expenditure in 1994–95 £000s	*Population*	*Spending by FHSAs per head of population £*
Primary care—provision of health care by FHSAs			
Clwyd	79,084	417,400	189
Dyfed	70,499	352,300	200
Gwent	80,416	452,300	178
Gwynedd	45,647	240,400	190
Mid Glamorgan	92,136	544,600	169
Powys	26,806	120,200	223
South Glamorgan	70,966	414,800	171
West Glamorgan	74,049	371,000	200
Wales	539,603	2,913,000	185
Secondary care—provision of health care by district health authorities			
Clwyd	165,505	417,400	404
East Dyfed	101,291	238,700	424
Gwent	192,783	452,300	426
Gwynedd	113,909	240,400	474
Mid Glamorgan	255,750	544,600	470
Pembrokeshire	49,522	113,600	436
Powys	56,804	120,200	473
South Glamorgan	225,410	414,800	543
West Glamorgan	155,387	371,000	419
Wales	1,319,361	2,913,000	453

Notes:

1. Primary care is interpreted as expenditure on health care by FHSAs. It includes all GP fundholders' expenditure.
2. Secondary care is interpreted as expenditure on health care by district health authorities.
3. Expenditure are as reported by authorities in their annual accounts for 1994–95.
4. Population data are as reported in 1994 survey (as at 30 June) by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Class Sizes

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 27 October, *Official Report*, columns *845–6*, what plans he has to collate information about the number of children in classes in Wales. [41286]

Mr. Richards *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The annual schools census collects information from primary schools on the number of registered classes by size of class, but not on the precise number of pupils in those classes. Such information is sufficient to monitor trends in the number of larger classes in primary schools and I have no plans at present to collect further information. The census results are published in table 3.06 of "Statistics of Training and Education in Wales: Schools" No. 3 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. From these results, broad estimates can be made of the number of pupils in each class size.

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38594]

Mr. Richards: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on Tuesday 31 October by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, the Department of National Heritage, *Official Report*, column *186*.

Measles Immunisation

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to establish a structured interview programme for families in Wales allegedly suffering from deleterious effects from immunisation against measles. [40647]

Mr. Richards: None. There is already a well-established satisfactory system in place for monitoring adverse reactions to all medicines, including vaccines.

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of pupils on the assisted places scheme received a free place in each year since its operation. [41158]

Mr. Richards: The information requested is as follows:

Assisted places scheme—Wales

Academic year	*Total APS pupils*	*Number of pupils with full free remission*	*Percentage with full fee remission*
1981–82	114	50	44
1982–83	220	96	44
1983–84	318	157	49
1984–85	403	178	44
1985–86	495	202	41
1986–87	580	248	43
1987–88	622	256	41
1988–89	633	240	38
1989–90	631	226	36
1990–91	634	222	35
1991–92	662	252	38
1992–93	700	294	42
1993–94	691	283	41
1994–95	720	318	44

Nursery Schools

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average unit cost of providing a nursery place in *(a)* nursery schools and *(b)* nursery classes in primary schools; and what are the figures for each local education authority. [41172]

Mr. Richards: Expenditures on nursery and primary schools are not separately identified on local government returns to the Welsh Office so separate unit costs cannot be calculated. Unit costs for nursery and primary schools combined are contained in an education finance bulletin produced by the Welsh Office's training and education intelligence unit. A copy of the bulletin is in the Library of the House.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work force; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41117]

Mr. Hague: Breakdowns by department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—that is, normally those engaged for a period of up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

Hospices

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy concerning the funding of hospices; and if he will make a statement. [41265]

Mr. Richards: Since 1 April 1995, funds for hospices have been included in the health authority allocations. Authorities will be expected to assess local health needs and commission an appropriate level of palliative care, entering into three-year rolling contracts, where possible.

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease have been reported in Wales and if he will make a statement. [41248]

Mr. Richards: Since May 1990, details of suspected cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in the United Kingdom have been reported to the national CJD surveillance unit in Edinburgh. Suspected cases are classified as definite, probable or possible. During the period May 1990 to October 1995, there were 15 definite, one probable and five possible cases of CJD from Wales.

GP Fundholders

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of general practitioners in Wales are currently fundholders; and if he will make a statement. [41264]

Mr. Richards: There are 649 general practitioners, some 38 per cent. of all GPs, working in 146 GP fundholding practices in Wales.

Carers

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female carers there are in each county in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [41247]

Mr. Richards: This information was collected for the first time this year as part of the Welsh health survey. Comprehensive results from the survey will be published early in 1996.

Voluntary-aided Schools

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many voluntary-aided schools there are in each of the Welsh counties; and if he will make a statement. [41251]

Mr. Richards: The number of voluntary-aided primary and secondary schools in each local education authority as at January 1995 is shown in the table. Details of school denomination are collected only for primary and secondary schools.

Local Education Authority	*Primary schools*[1]	*Secondary schools*[1]
Clwyd	25	3
Dyfed	16	1
Gwent	19	2
Gwynedd	7	—
Mid Glamorgan	16	4
Powys	9	—
South Glamorgan	32	6
West Glamorgan	112	2
Wales	136	18

[1] Includes Voluntary Church in Wales aided and Voluntary Roman Catholic. Provisional data.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to publish a consultation paper on self-government for voluntary-aided schools; and what time period will be allowed for responses to be made. [41715]

Mr. Richards: A bilingual consultation paper was issued on 31 October. Responses are requested by 24 November.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement. [41541]

Mr. Hague: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him today by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department, and in how may cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41577]

Mr. Hague: My Department has not yet laid any draft orders before the Committee.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41559]

Mr. Hague: There are no plans to repeal any regulations by the end of 1995.

Continuing and Respite Care

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many NHS continuing care beds have been available in each *(a)* region and *(b)* district in each of the last five years for which figures are available; [41422]

(2) how many *(a)* NHS and *(b)* private respite care beds were available (i) by region and (ii) by health authority in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [41407]

Mr. Richards: Information concerning the number of beds in NHS hospitals is collected centrally on the basis of specialties recognised by the royal colleges. As neither continuing care nor respite care are recognised specialities the information requested is not available for NHS hospitals.

Private and voluntary residential care homes and private nursing homes make returns to the Welsh Office of the numbers of residents who were admitted as short-stay residents. These are defined as persons for whom the home is intended to provide a holiday or temporary care, for example while their relatives or usual carers are on holiday. The most recent figures are shown in the table.

Number of residents in short stay care

As at 31 March

	Clwyd	*Dyfed*	*Gwent*	*Gwynedd*	*Mid Glamorgan*	*Powys*	*South Glamorgan*	*West Glamorgan*	*Wales*
1990									
Residential Care Homes[1]	21	16	6	24	3	1	19	15	105
Nursing Homes[2]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1991									
Residential Care Homes[1]	26	13	9	21	8	5	45	22	149
Nursing Homes[1]	9	6	6	18	—	2	3	13	57
1992									
Residential Care Homes[1]	35	10	3	12	2	8	56	23	149
Nursing Homes[1]	19	9	40	10	3	—	5	14	100
1993									
Residential Care Homes[1]	56	16	2	14	1	3	51	37	180
Nursing Homes[1]	34	20	36	4	2	—	8	29	133
1994									
Residential Care Homes[1]	41	18	5	12	3	7	48	22	156
Nursing Homes[1]	61	39	31	18	3	1	14	12	179

[1] Excluding residents in residential care homes for people with substance misuse and in homes with fewer than four residents in total.

[2] Numbers of short stay residents were not collected for nursing homes before 1991.

NHS Financial Reserves

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will itemise the financial reserves of each *(a)* trust and (b) health authority in each of the last three years for which figures are available; [41424]

(2) what financial reserves have been held *(a)* by trusts and *(b)* by health authorities in each region in each of the last three years. [41417]

Mr. Richards: As the information requested is detailed, I have placed a copy in the Library of the House.

Welsh Language

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how Welsh-speaking medical students are currently undertaking courses leading to a qualification as a general medical practitioner in the university of Wales; and what the figures were in 1990 and 1995. [41486]

Mr. Richards: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to increase the number of Welsh-speaking general medical practitioners in Wales. [41485]

Mr. Richards: My right hon. Friend has no jurisdiction in this matter. Recruitment policies are the responsibility of family health services authorities and, in the case of partnerships, the existing doctors in the practice. The distribution of doctors throughout England and Wales is the responsibility of the Medical Practices Committee.

Science Education

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the promotion of science education in Wales. [41624]

Mr. Hague: The basis for action on the promotion of science education in Wales is to be found in the two documents "Science in the National Curriculum" and "A Bright Future: Getting The Best for Every Pupil at School in Wales", copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Regional Selective Assistance

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his latest outturn forecast for regional selective assistance offers and expenditure in Wales in 1995–96 and its relationship to planned expenditure. [41783]

Mr. Hague: The latest estimate of the total value of regional selective assistance offers accepted by businesses in Wales during 1995–96 is £60 million. The original voted expenditure for the year was £42.429 million, but subject to parliamentary approval of a supplementary estimate, a further £11.009 million will be made available to meet anticipated additional demand in-year.

Grant is paid in instalments against progress on projects, typically over a period of three to five years, so much of the grant offered in 1995–96 will not fall to be paid until later years.

OSIRIS

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *231*, what is the life of the OSIRIS contract. [41835]

Mr. Hague: The life of the OSIRIS contract is expected to be seven years.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *231*, which firms have tendered for the OSIRIS project; and what is the approximate estimated annual rental payment for the capital, repair and running costs of the system and the duration of the approximate rental period. [41837]

Mr. Hague: The information requested cannot be given as it is commercially confidential.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *231*, on the OSIRIS system, what evaluation he has made of the relative merits of having fewer staff with more personal computers as against the present level of staff with fewer computers; and if he will make a statement. [41836]

Mr. Hague: The requirement for the OSIRIS contract was evaluated on the basis of any given level of staff gaining efficiency by sharing better access to, and usage of, information.

Estatecare Division (Sale)

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on what date he submitted his proposed advertisement for the sale of the Estatecare division of the Welsh Health Common Services Authority to the European Communities *Official Journal.* [41839]

Mr. Hague: There is no requirement to advertise the sale in the *Official Journal.*

NHS Trusts

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *101–2*, if he will list the procedures for merging trusts or amending their area of coverage; what consultations he has had with the chairmen of the trusts in Wales in relation to mergers and takeovers and if he will make a statement. [41843]

Mr. Hague: Applications from trusts significantly to alter their configuration are subject to public consultation in the normal way. If an application is approved, the existing trust(s) would be dissolved and immediately re-established in line with the approval. I have had no consultations with trust chairmen on this issue.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *101–2*, if he will list those mixed function trusts which are deemed to cover a different geographical area for different functions. [41841]

Mr. Hague: Trusts are not confined to particular geographical areas for the services they offer. Currently those mixed function trusts which are deemed to cover a different geographical area for different functions are:

Llandough Hospital and Community NHS trust
Rhondda Healthcare NHS trust
Bridgend and District NHS trust
Glan-y-Mor NHS trust
Cardiff Community Healthcare NHS trust
Gwent Community Health NHS trust.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *101–2*, if he will list for each trust the total money turnover figure estimated for the present financial year and, for those trusts with more than one category at health care provision, the financial turnover in each category. [41840]

Mr. Hague: The estimated operational income of each NHS trust in Wales in 1995–96 is shown in the following table:

£ thousands

NHS Trust	*Operational Income*
Mid Glamorgan Ambulance	8,330
North Wales Ambulance	12,830
South and East Wales Ambulance	17,883
West Wales Ambulance	10,218
East Glamorgan	49,122
Glan Clwyd	60,246
Glan Hafren	90,103
Gwynedd Hospitals	59,959
Morriston Hospital	69,148
Nevill Hall and District	42,452
Swansea	59,179
University of Wales Healthcare	166,591
Velindre	11,524
Wrexham Maelor Hospital	57,020
Pembrokeshire	42,480
Carmarthen and District	39,170
Ceredigion and Mid Wales	22,487
Llandough Hospital	58,686
Llanelli/Dinefwr	30,974
Powys Healthcare	42,339
Rhondda Healthcare	30,349
Bridgend and District	66,999
Glan y Mor[1]	70,505
Cardiff Community	57,261
Clwydian Community Care	61,643
Gwent Community	58,173
Gwynedd Community	48,605
Derwen	23,403
University Dental Hospital	8,338

[1] In shadow form. A breakdown of these figures into each category of health care provision is not held centrally.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *101-2*, what representations he has received in relation to trusts taking over directly managed units; and what consultations he has had with Welsh Association Health Authorities and Trusts in relation to collusion by trusts interested in taking over directly managed units. [41844]

Mr. Hague: Three months' public consultation on applications from Bridgend and District NHS trust and Glan Hafren NHS trust to merge with the Hensol health unit and the Rhymney Valley health unit respectively commenced on 25 September 1995. To date, nine representations have been received. WAHAT has been consulted but has not responded to date.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *101-2*, if he will list the principal differences between the trusts he has listed as providing community services, either on their own or in combination with acute, and those trusts he has listed as offering community services in combination with mental health services. [41842]

Mr. Hague: Apart from the range of services provided, there is no fundamental difference in the way which trusts are established or managed.

Derwen NHS Trust

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the geographical area of coverage of the Derwen national health service trust. [41785]

Mr. Hague: Trusts are not confined to particular geographical areas for the services they offer. Currently, the Derwen national health service trust provides mental health/illness and learning disability services for the areas of the new unitary authorities of Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, and in-patient psychiatric services for Pembrokeshire.

A-level Students

Mr. Ainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many students sat A-level examinations in the summer term 1995 in each secondary school and further education college in Wales. [41684]

Mr. Richards: I intend to publish the information requested in school and college performance booklets later this month. Copies of the booklets will be sent to the hon. Member and further copies will be placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Ainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many students were registered to begin A-level courses in September 1993 in each secondary school and further education college in Wales. [41685]

Mr. Richards: The information requested is not readily available. I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library of the House.

European Structural Funds

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *230*, what consultations he has had with Welsh local authority associations regarding his proposals for *(a)* elected member and *(b)* local government officer representation on the monitoring committees of the structural funds. [41838]

Mr. Hague: I shall be meeting the local authority associations next month to discuss their proposals for an economic development strategy for Wales. I understand that the associations will wish to discuss at that meeting various matters concerning the management of the structural funds.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mortgage Protection Insurance

14. **Mr. Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps he has taken to monitor the effect on social security recipients of mortgage protection insurance policies. [39698]

Mr. Roger Evans: We continue to monitor the quality, availability and cost of mortgage protection insurance and welcome the developments so far. We are also monitoring the scheme to ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained between public and private provision.

Occupational Pensions

15. **Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his assessment of the current regulatory environment for occupational pensions. [39699]

Mr. Heald: The Pensions Act 1995, to which Royal Assent was given in July, introduces a number of measures which will give greater security and accountability to the occupational pensions sector, including the establishment of the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority.

20. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what measures he will take to combat fraud in occupational pensions. [39704]

Mr. Heald: The measures in the Pensions Act 1995, which received Royal Assent in July, reflect the Government's commitment to safeguarding the security of occupational pension scheme assets.

Benefits and Taxation

16. **Mr. Hain:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to reform the relationship between benefits and taxation. [39700]

Mr. Burt: In 1988 we reformed the relationship between income-related benefits and tax to reduce the incidence of high marginal tax rates. In line with the Government's long-standing policy that benefits which replace earnings should be taxable in the same way as earned income, incapacity benefit became taxable in April 1995. We have already announced that the back-to-work bonus and the child maintenance bonus will not be subject to taxation. Any further plans on taxation are a matter for my right hon. and Learned Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Jobseeker's Allowance

17. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will specify minimum wage rates for jobs offered to persons who will be in receipt of the jobseeker's allowance after its introduction in 1996 which would allow those persons to refuse a job on the grounds of unacceptably low wages. [39701]

Mr. Roger Evans: No. We shall be carrying forward established practice.

Social Security Reforms

18. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what effect he estimates his social security reforms will have had on public spending by the year 2020 in 1994–95 prices. [39702]

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess).

Poverty and Homelessness (Young People)

21. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what action he is taking to tackle poverty and homelessness among 16 to 24-year-olds. [39705]

Mr. Roger Evans: We are getting the unemployed back to work. In last year's Budget we announced a £700 million package of benefit and employment measures to do just that.

Social Security Fraud

22. **Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has for further action to control social security fraud. [39706]

Mr. Heald: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today by my right hon. Friend to the Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Evans).

Incapacity Benefit

23. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people and what percentage have *(a)* passed and *(b)* failed the new incapacity benefit all-work test in (i) England and (ii) Wales. [39707]

Mr. Burt: Separate figures for England and Wales are not available. By the end of September, in Great Britain as a whole, 116,349 medical examinations had been performed but decisions had not been made on all cases: 18,895 people had been found capable of work. A figure for those found incapable of work following examination is not available.

These figures are provisional. It is too early to draw conclusions about the long-term effect of the new procedures.

25. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what recent representations he has received from organisations representing people with disabilities about the exclusion of claimants from incapacity benefit. [39709]

Mr. Burt: None.

Pensioner Households (Consumer Goods)

24. **Sir Michael Neubert:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many pensioner households had *(a)* a fridge, *(b)* a car, *(c)* a freezer, *(d)* a telephone and *(e)* a television in 1979; and how many do today. [39708]

Mr. Heald: In 1979, 57 per cent. of pensioners were in households with a telephone; by 1992–93 this figure had risen to 93 per cent. There were rises from 88 per cent. to 99 per cent. for ownership of fridges; 32 per cent. to 78 per cent. for freezers or fridge freezers; and 34 per cent. to 50 per cent. for cars or vans. The proportion with televisions rose from 96 per cent. in 1979 to virtually 100 per cent. in the 1990s.

Pensioner Incomes

26. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what recent estimate he has made of the adequacy of the state retirement pension and income support to pensioners. [39710]

Mr. Heald: The value of the basic state retirement pension has been maintained in line with prices. Since 1988 pensioners receiving income-related benefits, including income support, have seen a real terms increase in benefit worth around £1.2 billion a year.

Post Office Payment of Pensions

27. **Mr. Thomason:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if pensioners will continue to be able to choose to have their benefits paid through the Post Office. [39711]

Mr. Heald: Pensioners will continue to be able to choose to have their benefits paid directly into their bank or building society accounts by automated credit transfer or to collect them at the post office.

Plans to automate the system for paying benefit at post offices are well advanced. For customers, this will mean that order books and giros are replaced with a benefit payment card, which they will hand to the post office clerk to obtain details of the benefit due to them. Starting next year, this change is likely to be phased in over a period of two to three years. Pensioners and other benefit recipients will be informed about what is happening, and exactly what they will need to do, nearer the time when cards are to be issued to them. People who choose to be paid by ACT will not be affected by this change and will not need a benefit payment card.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement about the length of time it takes for assessments to be made by the Child Support Agency. [39694]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: In straightforward cases, where both parents co-operate, the agency aims to complete the assessment in six to 12 weeks. In other cases, the process is inevitably more lengthy.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many of the parents with care who withdrew income support claims within four weeks of being contracted by the Child Support Agency had been claiming income support for *(a)* less than one month, *(b)* between one month and three months, *(c)* between three and six months, *(d)* between six months and one year, *(e)* between one and two years and *(f)* over two years; [41039]

(2) pursuant to his answer of 25 October, *Official Report*, column *711*, how many parents with care withdrew their claims to income support within eight weeks of an investigation under the requirement to co-operate; and if he will provide a month-by-month breakdown for 1994–95 and the current financial year. [41081]

Mr. Mitchell: The information is not required for the agency's business and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 23 April, *Official Report*, column *484*, on the benefit savings achieved by the liable relatives unit in 1991–92, in how many cases the unit took action to arrange, increase or enforce payments of maintenance; and in how many of those cases a claim for income support was withdrawn within four weeks. [41083]

Mr. Mitchell: The information requested is not available in the form requested. However, information on legal proceedings taken to obtain maintenance during the calendar year ending 1991 is in the table.

	Number
New orders applied for	1,321
Number granted	1,316
Enforcement/variation of existing order applied for	316
Number granted	292

We have no figures for claims withdrawn, but the number of claims involving liable relatives where income support ceased within four weeks, in the year 1991–92, was 80,261.

Benefits (Residence Qualification)

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to require all foreign visitors to the United Kingdom to establish residence before qualifying for benefit. [39703]

Mr. Roger Evans: Residence requirements have always played a significant part in social security benefits. We have also recently announced proposal to extend restrictions on persons from abroad claiming benefits.

State Pensions

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the current value in real terms of the state retirement pension for *(a)* single pensioners and *(b)* married couples if it had been uprated in line with prices or incomes, whichever was the higher; what would be the value in current value in real terms of the Christmas bonus to *(a)* single pensioners and *(b)* married couples on the same basis for the same period; what would be the cost of restoring the link between pensions and incomes or prices, whichever was the higher, during the current financial year expressed as a weekly amount of national insurance contributions to an employee on average earnings and his or her employer; what is the amount of weekly average earnings on which this figure is based; what would be the cost of restoring the link based on the whole burden of retirement pensions being transferred to taxation expressed as a percentage increase in general taxation; and if he will make a statement. [39321]

Mr. Heald: It is estimated that the weekly rate of category A basic retirement pension would be £79.45 from April 1995 and the combined rate of category A and category B basic retirement pension payable to a couple would be £127.15 if the rates had been increased in line with the higher of earnings of prices since 1980.[1]

It is estimated that the Christmas bonus would be £28.80 if it had been increased in line with the higher of earnings or prices since 1980.[1]

Expenditure on retirement pension and linked benefits for those over state pension age would, as a result of restoring the link between pensions and the higher of incomes or prices, be increased by an estimated £9.8 billion in the 1995–96 financial year.[2]

The increase in national insurance contributions to support this would result in an extra weekly cost of £8.45 to an employee on male average earnings and an extra £7.92 for his employer.

Male average earnings of £377 at April 1995 have been used.

The whole burden of retirement pension is estimated as £41.2 billion; this is the current cost of retirement pensions and linked benefits paid to people over state pension age, £31.4 billion, plus the extra cost of restoring the link, £9.8 billion. To raise £41.2 billion would mean increasing the basic rate of income tax from 25 per cent. to 47 per cent. If income-related benefits are taken into account, £38.5 billion would be transferred to taxation and the basic rate of income tax would increase to 45 per cent.

Notes:

[1]Estimates provided by Department of Social Security, Analytical Services Division—in each step of the calculation the benefits have been rounded to the nearest 5 pence.

The Retail Prices Index (all items) as published by the Central Statistical Office has been used for prices uprating.

Earnings upratings have been calculated on the basis of the Department for Education and Employment's Average Earnings Index (Whole economy unadjusted) as amalgamated in the Abstract of Statistics published by the Department of Social Security, Analytical Services Division.

[2]Estimate provided by the Government Actuary's Department based on benefit rates calculated as per note 1. The estimate includes the extra costs of Retirement Pension and linked benefits paid to people over State pension age in particular Widow's Benefit and Incapacity Benefit.

Habitual Residence Test

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list by postcode for Doncaster and Mexborough the number of claimants who have been prevented from receiving benefits as a result of the habitual residence test for each month since its inception; of those refused, how many went to appeal; and how many won their appeals. [39559]

Mr. Roger Evans: Information is not available in the format requested. Statistics are not collected by reference to a claimant's postcode and appeal statistics are not collected against different types of decisions.

Information on the number of people who have failed the habitual residence test is recorded in the *Official Report*, 23 October 1995, columns *486–89*.

Public Appointments, South Yorkshire

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will list the public appointments for which his Department is responsible in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating in each case the duration of the appointment, the date when a new appointment is due, and the salary; [39457]

(2) if he will list all the non-departmental public bodies to which his Department makes appointments in the county of South Yorkshire, indicating the total annual budget and the number of appointments made or renewed for each body in each of the last four years. [39442]

Mr. Burt: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is responsible for the appointments to the South Yorkshire and Humberside war pensions committee. The current committee of 30 members was convened on 1 January 1991 for five years. The committee has no annual budget and no salaries are payable.

The numbers of new appointments, to replace members who have resigned or died, are shown in the table.

Year	*Appointments*
1991	1
1992	2
1993	2
1994	5
1995	0

Statutory Maternity and Sick Pay

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what plans he has to simplify the administration of statutory maternity pay; [40091]

(2) what plans he has to simplify the administration of statutory sick pay. [40092]

Mr. Heald: We intend to introduce a number of simplifications to the statutory sick pay and statutory maternity pay schemes from April 1996. These will include a considerable reduction for employers in the amount of mandatory SSP record-keeping; more flexible time limits for providing SSP information to employees; removing the exclusion from SSP and SMP of employees, including certain mariners, air personnel and continental shelf workers, who are outside the European Economic Area during a period of sickness or maternity; reducing to one month the period for notifying sick absence to an employer where there is good cause for delay, removing the need for employers to issue a form to every leaver who was recently sick and allowing this form, where issued, to be a computer print-out. We will be laying regulations to give effect to these changes in due course.

These proposals arise out of a consultation paper that was issued in March which sought views from all sides of industry on cutting red tape in the SSP-SMP schemes. The consultation formed part of the Government's on-going deregulation programme of lifting burdens on business. We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who responded. Their contributions proved very valuable in helping us to decide the way forward. Copies of the responses will be placed in the Library.

The consultation paper also sought views on whether employers should be allowed to opt out of SSP if they pay at least the equivalent in occupational sick pay. Employers' organisations were generally in favour of opting out as a means of reducing administration costs, but there were concerns that small businesses could not opt out as they did not generally have occupational sick pay schemes. Employees' organisations were concerned that employees' statutory rights would be removed.

In the light of these concerns, we propose to retain the underlying liability to pay SSP but exempt any employer who pays contractual remuneration, including occupational sick pay, at or above the SSP rate for a day of incapacity for work, from the need to operate the detailed SSP rules. This revised scheme will ensure that employees' rights are fully protected, reduce administrative burdens and also be available to employers with or without an occupational sick pay scheme. We aim to introduce the new arrangements from April 1997 by means of an order under the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994, following further consultation on the detailed proposals.

Other changes to the SSP scheme which received support but which require amendment of primary legislation will be considered as soon as a suitable opportunity arises. They include changing the rule on SSP entitlement during a trade dispute; removing the links between separate contracts of service with the same employer and removing the exclusion from SSP of women who have received maternity allowance within eight weeks of the start of a period of sickness.

These changes build on the simplification of the SSP and SMP schemes which we implemented last year. The lower rate of SSP was abolished so that all employees who qualify now receive the same rate of SSP. For SMP three service qualification tests of 26 weeks, two years and five years were replaced by one test of 26 weeks employment. In addition, all women qualifying for SMP now receive 90 per cent. of their earnings for the first six weeks of maternity leave and a flat rate for the next 12 weeks. Previously, the rate of SMP paid depended on the length of service a woman had with her employer.

Income Support

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps are being taken to identify those disabled people who were underpaid income support as a result of a failure by the Benefits Agency to include the severe disability premium in their assessments, and who are no longer in receipt of income support; and what steps are being taken to invite fresh claims from those disabled people who were wrongly refused income support in order that the arrears of benefits due to them will be paid. [40144]

Mr. Roger Evans: On 19 December 1994, the Secretary of State announced that the Benefits Agency was to examine all live claims for income support with potential entitlement to the severe disability premium, and to establish what action was required to those cases where income support was no longer in payment. The exercise to examine live claims is now nearing completion. An announcement will be made shortly about plans for further action.

Motability

Mr. William O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what guidelines his Department issues to Motability about the refusal of insurance cover to disabled drivers; and if he will make a statement; [40643]

(2) how many disabled persons are currently without the use of a car because of the application of rules on insurance introduced by Motability; and if he will make a statement; [40645]

(3) in what circumstances Motability refuses insurance cover to disabled drivers; [40649]

(4) what penalties are imposed by Motability on drivers under its charge who have been penalised by the courts for driving with excess alcohol; and if he will make a statement; [40644]

(5) how many disabled drivers have been refused insurance cover by Motability; for what reasons; and if he will make a statement. [40677]

Mr. Burt: Motability is an independent organisation. The rules and administration of the scheme's insurance cover are decided by the governors and are not matters for the Secretary of State. Any questions on these issues should be referred to the director, Noel Muddiman.

Disability Benefits

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to learn whether his request to the House of Lords for leave to appeal against the Halliday-Fairey decision of 14 October 1994 has been successful. [40895]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The petition for leave to appeal is under consideration by the House of Lords. The respondent has been invited to lodge objections to the petition by 7 November. A decision will be made thereafter.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what amount of housing benefit was paid to or for private landlords in the last year for which figures are available. [40901]

Mr. Roger Evans: The information available is set out in the table and relates to Great Britain only. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is reponsible for the payment of social security benefits in Northern Ireland.

Rent Allowance Expenditure

Year	*Expenditure (£ million)*
1993–94	4,173

Source:

Table 3, Social Security Departmental Report 1995.

Private Pension Provision

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social security what is the total amount of funds in private pension provision in the United Kingdom; and what is the equivalent figure for the two next largest European Union countries. [39683]

Mr. Heald: In 1992, the total amount of funds in private pension provision in the United Kingdom was around £500 billion. This is more than three times the amount in either of the two European Union countries with the next largest level of pension funds—£160 billion for Germany and £140 billion for the Netherlands.

Disabled People

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what he estimates to be a practical timetable for implementing proposals to eliminate discrimination against disabled people; and if he will make a statement. [39684]

Mr. Burt: We will establish the National Disability Council early next year. After consultation and publication of draft regulations we plan to introduce the new rights in the employment field towards the end of 1996. The first of the many rights of access to goods and services—the right not to be refused service—will start at the same time, as will protection for disabled people seeking to rent or buy property. Following a similar process of consultation the remaining rights will be phased in subsequently.

War Widows

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to end local variation in the treatment of war widows and war disabled pensioners. [39723]

Mr. Heald: We have no such plans.

Personal Pensions

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what proposals he has to improve the flexibility of personal pensions in retirement. [40036]

Mr. Heald: We have introduced two measures in the Pensions Act 1995 which will improve the flexibility of personal pensions in retirement. The first measure will bring the age-related rebates for personal pension holders who have contracted out of the state earnings-related pension scheme, which will make such pensions attractive across a broader age range. The second measure permits more flexible use of personal pensions savings, by allowing personal pension holders to draw an income from their fund each year and defer buying an annuity until a time of their choosing up to age 75.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security of how many cases he is aware in which an attendance allowance was awarded to a person with limited leave to remain in the United Kingdom in each of the years 1993, 1994 and 1995. [41037]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The information requested is not available.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a cost compliance assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a cost compliance assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41549]

Mr. Heald: The following regulations are due to be repealed by the end of 1995:

Social Security (invalid Care Allowance) Regulations 1976—Regulation 8(2)(b);

Occupational Pension Schemes (Equal Access to Membership) Regulations 1976;

Occupational Pension Schemes/Equal Access to Membership/Amendment Regulations 1995.

The requirement to carry out a cost compliance assessment applies to regulations which impose additional burdens on business. As these regulations did not impose a burden on business cost compliance assessments were not required.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement. [41523]

Mr. Heald: This Department will not be repealing or amending any rules or regulations by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995. However, we aim to introduce from April 1997 an easement to allow employers to substitute contractual remuneration for statutory sick pay for any day of sickness by means of an order under the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and in how many cases a cost compliance assessment has been carried out. [41524]

Mr. Heald: The Department has not yet repealed any rules or regulations by reference to the Deregulation Committee.

Nursing Homes

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) of 27 October, *Official Report*, column *853*, if he will list the number of nursing home residents with preserved rights to higher levels of income support in *(a)* April 1993, *(b)* November 1993, *(c)* April 1994 and *(d)* the latest figure available (1) nationally, (2) regionally and (3) by area. [41435]

Mr. Roger Evans: Information is not available in the format requested. Information is available only for residents in nursing homes with preserved rights who are in receipt of income support and is set out in the table:

	May 1993	*November 1993*	*May 1994*	*November 1994*
England	104,060	90,620	79,140	70,240
Scotland	11,460	10,360	8,760	7,940
Wales	9,060	7,880	6,860	6,600
Great Britain	124,600	108,860	94,760	84,780

Source:

Income Support Statistics Residential Care/Nursing Home Quarterly Enquiries.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what estimates have been made by his Department on the effects on asylum seekers' children of the loss of social security benefits to their parents. [41827]

Mr. Roger Evans: We have made no such estimate. The Government believe that it cannot be right to pay benefits to asylum seekers who apply for asylum after being admitted to this country as visitors unless there has been an upheaval in their home country. Those people who apply for asylum on entry to the United Kingdom will still have access to benefits while their asylum application is considered.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what representations he has received concerning the effects of removing social security benefits to asylum seekers. [41826]

Mr. Evans: The Government referred proposals affecting the benefit entitlement of asylum seekers and other persons from abroad to the Social Security Advisory Committee on 11 October. The committee has invited representations. I expect to receive its report and recommendations during December. I have also received a number of items of correspondence.

Earnings Top-up

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he will announce his further plans for earnings top-up, the proposed pilot benefit for working people without dependent children.

Mr. Lilley: I have today announced my decisions on the eight areas in which the earnings top-up pilot scheme will operate from October 1996. I have also placed in the Vote Office the draft rules of the scheme.

The rules set out the scheme list by postcode for the eight pilot areas in which earnings top-up will be paid—four at a higher rate, scheme B, and four at a lower rate, scheme A. The two benefit rates are intended to test the relative effectiveness of different levels of assistance in meeting the aim of the scheme: to help lower-paid people to move into work and be better off in it.

The areas have been selected from an original shortlist using wholly objective criteria related to unemployment rates, vacancy rates, population density and operational feasibility. They are areas from which we expect to be able to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of this approach if extended nationally.

The eight pilot areas are:

Scheme A (Lower Rate): These pilot areas will give an estimated average weekly boost to income of £16 for single people under 25, and £24 for couples:

Newcastle upon Tyne TTWA[1], including parts of Stanley, Consett, Newburn, Gateshead, Shields Road, Felling, West Moor, Blaydon on Tyne, Cramlington, Whitley Bay, Wallsend, North Shields, and Prudhoe.

Castleford and Pontefract TTWA, including parts of Knottingley, and Normanton;

Wakefield and Dewsbury TTWA, including parts of South Elmsall, Hemsworth, and Batley;

Barnsley TTWA, including part of Wombwell, and Hoyland.

Southend TTWA, including parts of Brentwood, Rayleigh, Burnham on Crouch, Basildon, Canvey Island, Stanford le Hope, Grays, and Tilbury.

Bangor and Caernarfon TTWA, including parts of Penygross and Beaumaris; Conway and Colwyn TTWA, including parts of Colwyn Bay, Llanwrst, and Lundudno;

Denbigh TTWA;

Dolgelllau and Barmouth TTWA;

Holyhead TTWA including parts of Llangefni and Amlwych;

Shotton; Flint and Rhyl TTWA, including parts of Mold and Holywell;

Wrexham TTWA, including parts of Cefnmawr and Llangollen.

Scheme B (Higher Rate): These pilot areas will give an estimated average weekly boost to income of £18 for single people under 25, and £25 for couples:

Sunderland TTWA, including parts of Birtley, Chester le Street, Houghton Le Spring, Peterlee, East Boldon, and Washington.

Doncaster TTWA, including parts of Thorne.

Bournemouth TTWA, including parts of Wimbourne, Christchurch, and Ringwood.

Perth and Crieff TTWA:

Dumbarton TTWA, including parts of Alexandria, and Helensburgh;

Stirling TTWA.

We expect that about 20,000 people will benefit from the earnings top-up pilot. The four areas which have been selected as controls for the evaluation of the pilot are:

Middlesbrough TTWA

Hartlepoole and Stockton on Tees TTWA

Rotherham and Mexborough TTWA

Worksop TTWA

Southampton and Isle of Wight TTWA

Blaenau Gwent and Abergavenny TTWA

Brecon TTWA

Llandeilo TTWA

Llanelli TTWA

Monmouth TTWA

Pontypool and Cwmbran TTWA

Notes:

[1] TTWA = Travel to Work Area. These are areas in which 75 per cent. of the population working in the area also live there, and vice versa.

The rules of the scheme will be published in final form once there has been an opportunity for Parliament to consider the proposals.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many cases of benefit fraud have come to light in each year since 1990 as a result of unsolicited information passed to the Benefits Agency by members of the public; [38753]

(2) if he will list those areas selected to pilot Operation Speakeasy; [38755]

(3) what is the cost of Operation Speakeasy; [38754]

Mr. Heald: The investigation of benefit fraud is a matter for Mr. Peter Mathison, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. Gordon Prentice, dated 3 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about the number of benefit fraud cases which have come to light in each year since 1990 as a result of unsolicited information passed to the Benefits Agency by members of the public, the areas selected to pilot the fraud referral hotline, previously known as Operation Speakeasy and the cost involved.

Information on the number of benefit fraud cases that have come to light as a result of unsolicited information from members of the public is only available from April 1995.

During the period 1 April 1995 to 30 August 1995 we have received 127,301 referrals from the public. These have resulted in 72,474 investigations and of the investigations completed so far, 30,687 of these have proved to be cases of benefit fraud.

The fraud referral hotline was launched in September this year. This is a freephone telephone line which allows members of the public to report allegations of benefit fraud to trained fraud staff. It is to be piloted in four areas Hull, Stockport, Blackburn/Burnley and Tunbridge Wells.

The pilot has incurred an initial outlay of around £30,000 but the final cost will not be known until the exercise is completed.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

Invalidity Benefit

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what guidance applies to the award of invalidity benefits to people who have undergone laryngectomies and tracheotomies. [39680]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The administration of Social Security benefit is a matter for Mr. Peter Mathison, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member with such information as is available.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. Jim Cunnigham, dated 3 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Social Security has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about what guidance applies to the award of invalidity benefits to people who have undergone laryngectomies and tracheotomy.

Invalidity Benefit and Sickness Benefit were replaced by Incapacity Benefit with effect from 13 April 1995. The Adjudication Officers Guide is available to Adjudication Officers to assist them in reaching a decision on benefit entitlement. In addition, they have access to the Medical Advisors Guide and the Background Information to Incapacity for Work Guide which provide background information on certain medical conditions. No specific guidance is given to Adjudication Officers awarding benefits to people who have undergone laryngectomies and tracheotomy.

Factors such as breathlessness and fatigue are taken into account in deciding on the appropriate level of limitations for every activity if a person is assessed under the functional All Work Test.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 7 November 1995

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Nursery Facilities

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chairman of the Administration Committee what plans his committee has for the construction of nursery facilities in the Palace of Westminster. [42012]

Mr. Michael J. Martin: The Committee has no power to authorise the construction of facilities of any kind. This is a matter for the House of Commons Commission.

New Parliamentary Building

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chairman of the Finance and Services Committee what is the current estimated cost of the new phase 2 Parliamentary Building. [41175]

Mr. Channon: The approved estimate for the new Parliamentary Building is £154 million at 1992 prices, plus any increases in building prices which occur before the contracts are completed in 1999. There are no indices to cover this period so the final cost could be only speculative at this stage.

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chairman of the Accommodation and Works Committee how many *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* others he estimates will be accommodated in the new Parliamentary Building phase 2 indicating an upper and lower projection. [41174]

Mr. Ray Powell: The new Parliamentary Building will provide offices for at least 210 hon. Members. It will also accommodate an equivalent number of Members' support staff, but the building has been designed flexibly so that Members can, subject to the rules then current, accommodate more staff in either their own or their support offices if they wish.

Public Access

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chairman of the Accommodation and Works Committee what plans his Committee has to alter the entrance for the public to the Palace of Westminster to enable Westminster Hall to be the entrance route via New Palace Yard. [42019]

Mr. Ray Powell: None.

Catering Facilities (Refurbishment Cost)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chairman of the Accommodation and Works Committee what was the total cost of the recent refurbishment of catering facilities in the Palace of Westminster. [42011]

Mr. Ray Powell: The contract value for the work undertaken this year to modernise the Members' and Strangers' cafeterias and kitchen and the Speaker's state kitchen is £1,600,000.

Norman Shaw North and South

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chairman of the Accommodation and Works Committee what consideration was given to the recycling of materials discarded from Norman Shaw North during refurbishment work; and if he will make a statement. [42015]

Mr. Ray Powell: The recycling of materials discarded during the refurbishment of Norman Shaw North is a matter for the main contractors.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chairman of the Accommodation and Works Committee what future plans there are for refurbishment of Norman Shaw North and South; and if he will make a statement. [42013]

Mr. Powell: It is planned to install the Parliamentary Data Video Network on the first and second floors of Norman Shaw North next year and the remaining floors in 1997. The opportunity will be taken to carry out a limited refurbishment on a similar basis to the work successfully undertaken on the ground floor this year.

Only limited work was carried out in Norman Shaw South when it was acquired from the Metropolitan police and it will shortly require complete refurbishment. The long-term programme envisages that this work should be started once the new Parliamentary Building is completed at the end of the decade.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chairman of the Accommodation and Works Committee what is the total cost of the refurbishment of the ground floor of Norman Shaw North during the recent recess. [42016]

Mr. Powell: The project was undertaken to fulfil the decision of the House to make the PDVN available to hon. Members and their staff. This year's phase of the work involved the provision of the network on the ground floor, together with refurbishment work which it was sensible to carry out at the same time, and the installation of monitors to allow Members on the upper floors and in Norman Shaw South to receive the "clean feed" of the proceedings in the Chamber. The estimated cost of the phase is £0.7 million.

DEFENCE

Radar Interference

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to neutralise the recently installed radar equipment at HMS Cambridge at Wembury, south Devon so as to prevent interference with hearing aids of residents in nearby villages and to prevent security lights from being tripped; and if he will make a statement. [41491]

Mr. Soames: The new Watchman radar which is sited at HMS Cambridge provides air traffic control cover above the Plymouth sea exercise areas for flag officer sea training, whose activity has recently moved from Portland to Plymouth.

These radars first entered service about five years ago and there are now more than 50 in use in the UK. We are not aware that similar problems are being encountered elsewhere and therefore had no expectation of any in south Devon. However, we have arranged for a team of technical experts to visit the area to examine the impact of the radar and to investigate the problems that local residents are reporting. This is planned to commence on 9 November. The team proposes to conduct a "surgery" in the area, followed by technical investigations. Should it be established that the radar is indeed causing these problems, we shall of course do all that we can to resolve them.

French Nuclear Tests

Mr. Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make it his policy that the United Kingdom Government will decline to receive, consider or make use of any information or data resulting from the current French nuclear testing programme; [41494]

(2) if the United Kingdom Government have, at any time, made it their policy to decline to receive, consider or make use of any information or data resulting from French nuclear tests other than the present series. [41495]

Mr. Arbuthnot: We have neither asked for, nor been offered, information or data resulting from the current French test programme. The UK is not involved in any way in these tests. Data from French tests would not be directly relevant to our nuclear weapons. The Government believe that it would be irresponsible to rule out for the future any form of co-operation with any of our allies, consistent with our international non-proliferation obligations, which might help us fulfil our responsibility to ensure the safety and reliability of our nuclear deterrent.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions and on what dates, aircraft carrying *(a)* supplies and *(b)* nuclear materials to the French nuclear test site at Muroroa Atoll in the South Pacific have been authorised to use United Kingdom airspace since June of this current year. [42064]

Mr. Soames: I know of no such flights in United Kingdom airspace.

Forces Manpower

Mr. Mans: To ask the Secretary of State for defence if he will list the front-line level of uniformed manpower in the British Army, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force in April 1985, April 1990, April 1995 and the projected level in April 1996 and April 1997. [41379]

Mr. Soames: The approximate strength of uniformed manpower for each of the three services in April of the years requested is as follows:

	1985	*1990*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*
Royal Navy	70,000	63,000	51,000	48,000	46,000
British Army	170,000	160,000	116,000	113,00	112,000
Royal Air Force	93,000	90,000	71,000	65,000	57,000

These figures are inclusive of trainees and, in the case of the Army, Gurkhas—but not the Royal Irish Regiment, Home Service Force. Estimates of strength for 1996 and 1997 are sensitive to assumptions about recruitment and retention rates.

Aircraft Loaders

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what military purpose two self-propelled aircraft loaders are required, as set out in future purchase No. SMC31ARAF076; what consideration was given to leasing or contract hire of such vehicles; and if he will make a statement. [41320]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The two self-propelled aircraft loaders are required to support C130 and VC10 aircraft. Their military purpose is to transport air cargo loads between the aircraft and storage areas, and to transfer those loads both into and out of the aircraft. The leasing of equipment is routinely considered as part of the replacement decision. In general, however, there is no commercial equipment available which meets the specific military requirements and the leasing or contract hire of purpose-built self-propelled aircraft loaders has been shown to be uneconomic. As the specialist nature of these vehicles rules out the leasing of commercially available types, and as the high cost of refurbishment of existing vehicles, which are over 20 years old, precludes that option, purchase was assessed to be the most economic means of meeting its operational requirement.

Materials Handling Equipment

Mr. Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the operation of the fleet of materials handling equipment. [41586]

Mr. Soames: I will write to the hon. Member.

Defensive Monitoring Units

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which unit of *(a)* the Army and *(b)* the Royal Navy is responsible for defensive monitoring of Army and Royal Navy frequencies; and if he will make a statement. [41588]

Mr. Soames: It is not our policy to comment on operational matters of this kind.

Nuclear Materials (Transport)

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to change the escort status of nuclear material conveyed by road through South Yorkshire. [41619]

Mr. Soames: No changes are currently planned to the escort arrangements for nuclear material convoys operated by the Ministry of Defence. It is not our practice to comment on the routes used by such convoys.

Accident, Padarn Lake

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer of 24 October, *Official Report*, column *587*, if he will place in the Library a report of the RAF board of inquiry into the accident at Padarn lake on 12 August 1993. [41576]

Mr. Soames: Copies of the summary of the board of inquiry are being placed in the Library today.

Tornado Aircraft

Mr. Hutton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Tornado aircraft are stationed at RAF Bruggen; and how many currently have two serviceable engines. [41346]

Mr. Soames: There are currently 54 Tornado GR1 aircraft stationed at RAF Bruggen. However, 14 of these aircraft are currently deployed elsewhere on operations and training or undergoing major maintenance. Of the remaining 40 aircraft, 28 currently have two serviceable engines.

Mr. Hutton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many RAF service men were engaged on servicing Tornado aircraft in 1992; and how many *(a)* service men and *(b)* civilians are doing so now. [41349]

Mr. Soames: The following figures relate to Tornado maintenance carried out by the RAF Maintenance Group Defence Agency at RAF St Athan and RAF Sealand:

	1992	*1 November 1995*
Service Personnel	641	1,031
MOD Civilians	421	470
Total	1,062	1,501

Servicing of Tornado aircraft at front-line operating bases is also carried out by service personnel; however, the number of personnel involved is not readily available.

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer from the Attorney-General on 30 October 1995, *Official Report*, columns 12–14, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and what was the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41216]

Mr. Soames *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I refer to the answer given today by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Asbestos Injuries

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to review the recent court case on asbestos injury; and what assessment he has made of the effect the court case will have on the claims from ex-service personnel who had contact with asbestos during their military service. [41850]

Mr. Soames: Any former service personnel suffering an illness as a result of exposure to asbestos dust during their time in the armed forces is eligible for a war pension. However, where the exposure to asbestos dust occurred in service prior to May 1987, section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947 precludes payment of common law compensation for resultant illness. Following repeal of section 10 of this Act, compensation may be paid if exposure occurred after May 1987. The recent court case referred to has not altered this position.

Defence Contracts

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the percentage and cash values of contracts given to British companies by his Department for defence products; and how many jobs were retained and created as a result of such contracts for each of the last five years. [33096]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I will write to the hon. Member.

Maintenance Trolleys

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what military purpose 16 aircraft hydraulic system maintenance trolleys are required, as set out in future purchase No. SMC31BRAF574; what consideration was given to leasing or contract hire of such vehicles; and if he will make a statement. [41321]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The 16 hydraulic system maintenance trolleys are required to support the VC-10 and Tristar fleets. Their military purpose is to test the hydraulic systems of these aircraft as an aid to fault diagnosis and to prove system performance following maintenance or rectification whether carried out at RAF stations in the UK or when deployed abroad. The tender documents for this contract will include a clause encouraging innovative proposals and any lease or hire options which are put forward by industry will be considered on their merits.

Armoured Vehicles

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what response has been received to his recent invitation to companies to supply modern wheeled armoured vehicles for a demonstration of such vehicles for senior officers; how much notice was given of this proposed demonstration to potential exhibitors; for what reason the demonstration is to include driving experience for selected officers; on the basis of what previous experience of driving armoured vehicles these officers will be selected; and if he will make a statement. [41239]

Mr. Arbuthnot: Companies have been invited to provide, at their own cost, examples of wheeled armoured vehicles, to give a general demonstration of the capabilities of such vehicles in the context of the Army's potential future equipment requirements. The demonstration will not in any sense be a formal assessment of the vehicles. As part of the demonstration, senior officers with responsibilities relating to the use of armoured vehicles will be given an opportunity to receive first-hand experience of driving the vehicles, in order to gain a better understanding of modern wheeled vehicle technology. Five companies have responded. They were originally given one month's notice, but the demonstration has now been postponed until spring 1996.

Fuel Tankers

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the tankers in service with the Royal Air Force are capable of the mid-air refuelling of F–16 aircraft. [41489]

Mr. Arbuthnot: No.

Rolls-Royce Engines (Tornadoes)

Mr. Hutton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cause of the delay at Rolls-Royce in reconditioning RB199 engines for RAF Tornadoes; how many are currently with Rolls-Royce or waiting to be sent to it; how many would be unserviceable at any one time under usual conditions; and what steps the Government are taking to ensure that Rolls-Royce resolves the problems it currently faces and meets the terms of its contract for servicing RB199 engines for the RAF. [41347]

Mr. Arbuthnot: Complete RB199 engines are not currently, nor have been held at, Rolls-Royce for reconditioning. Modules for incorporation into the RAF Tornado RB199 engine are reconditioned by Rolls-Royce. Production delays have been experienced because of industrial action at Rolls-Royce plants earlier this year. RAF logistics command has maintained continuous pressure on Rolls-Royce to meet the RAF's requirements and a programme of measures has been initiated to achieve required production levels. CinC Logistics Command met Rolls-Royce senior executives last week and used the occasion to impress on them the need for their personal and continued commitment in meeting new production targets.

Spare Parts (Tornadoes)

Mr. Hutton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent on spare parts for RAF Tornado aircraft each year for the past five years; and how much is in the estimates for this purpose in the current year. [41350]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The value of spares expenditure incurred for Tornado airframe and engine spares, avionics, special to type ground equipment and test sets for each of the past five years was as follows:

1990–91: £176 million
1991–92: £214 million
1992–93: £200 million
1993–94: £184 million
1994–95: £161 million

The provision for the current year is £149 million.

These figures do not include details of expenditure in respect of local purchases, spares orders placed by commodity range managers and spares purchased from other nations under mutual supply support arrangements, which are not available centrally.

Ammunition

Mr. McWilliam: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made as to the necessity of the retention of a comprehensive domestic capability to manufacture ammunition required by British armed forces; and if he will make a statement. [41635]

Mr. Arbuthnot: We keep under review the availability and dependability of our sources of supply for ammunition. This does not necessarily require the maintenance of a comprehensive domestic capability to manufacture every type of ammunition in service.

Defence Joint Ventures

Mr. McWilliam: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contact there has been between Ministers or civil servants and Royal Ordnance or BAE regarding the setting up of a joint company or other arrangement involving GIAT of France; and if he will make a statement. [41637]

Mr. Arbuthnot: My Department has been kept informed about a possible joint venture between Royal Ordnance and GIAT, and the progress of discussions. Such exchanges are in confidence. Any firm proposals which arose would be subject to the approval of the regulatory authorities in the usual way.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the public finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41732]

Mr. Arbuthnot: To date my Department has approved one project under the private finance initiative; the value of this scheme is commercially confidential.

Artillery Shells

Mr. Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many 155 mm artillery shells were sold off by his Department in each year between 1980 and 1990; and if he will list each country purchasing the shells and the average price obtained. [42060]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The records of sales conducted by the Ministry of Defence, prior to the privatisation of Royal Ordnance in 1985, or of surplus shells between 1985 and 1990, are not available. Questions related to sales conducted by Royal Ordnance plc since that date are a matter for the company.

Mr. Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what were the number and value of 155 mm shells and cartridges produced for export by the United Kingdom in each of the years 1980 to 1990; and to which countries these items were exported. [42062]

Mr. Arbuthnot: It remains Government policy not to reveal details of exports of defence equipment. Such information is confidential between the customer and the supplier.

Mr. Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many 155 mm shells were purchased by his Department for the Falklands war; and what was the country of origin of those shells and shell components and the average price paid. [42061]

Mr. Arbuthnot: No 155 mm guns were used in the Falklands war and therefore no 155 millimetre shells were purchased.

Mr. Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many 155 mm shells and parts of 155 mm shells were purchased by his Department each year between 1980 and 1990; and what was the average price paid for these shells. [42057]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The information required could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many persons in his Department are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list their names; and how much each is paid. [42507]

Mr. Arbuthnot: The number of staff in my Department wholly employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry is two and their direct annual salary costs is £60,632. It is not possible to identify the number of people involved on a part-time or occasional basis within the Department or as external consultants or advisers, but the amount so far spent by my Department on external advice is £48,601.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by his Department relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42058]

Mr. Arbuthnot: Ministers, former Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39854]

Mr. Arbuthnot *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's ownership responsibilities for the 23 defence agencies are usually discharged in the first instance by a designated officer or official in the Department or one of the service commands. Meetings between Ministers and defence agency chief executives occur infrequently, when the nature of the business requires it.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41734]

The Solicitor-General: To date, the Law Officers' Departments have not used the private finance initiative for the funding of any schemes. However, use of the PFI is being considered for future projects where appropriate.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Attorney-General how many persons in his Department are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or a full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list their names; and how much each is paid. [42076]

The Attorney-General: Leaving aside members of Sir Richard Scott's inquiry team, a number of staff in my Departments work on matters related to the Scott inquiry from time to time as part of their duties and it is not possible to estimate the overall cost. The amount so far spent by my Departments on external advice is £9,940. It is not the practice to name staff or external advisers in these circumstances. The costs of staff in the Treasury Solicitor's Department providing legal services to client departments in connection with the inquiry are included in charges invoiced to Departments.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Attorney-General how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by his Department relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42077]

The Attorney-General: Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Marchioness Inquest

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Attorney-General when the Director of the Crown Prosecution Service expects to receive the transcripts of evidence to the inquest into the deaths which followed the sinking of the Marchioness; and when the Crown Prosecution Service will take a decision on whether to initiate a prosecution. [41951]

The Attorney-General: The Crown Prosecution Service expects to receive transcripts of the evidence given at the inquest within the next four weeks. Once they have been considered, and any further inquiries which may prove necessary have been completed, a decision on whether criminal proceedings should be instituted can be made. It is not yet possible to say when that stage will be reached.

LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41733]

Mr. John M. Taylor: For the Lord Chancellor's Department, including the Court Service and the Public Trust Office, no such schemes have yet been approved.

Law Commission

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will make a statement setting out the criteria by which suitability for appointment to the Law Commission is assessed; and if he will bring forward to the House proposals to ensure that future appointments are first subjected to detailed parliamentary scrutiny. [42109]

Mr. John M. Taylor: Appointments to the Law Commission are statutory and are made by the Lord Chancellor under section 1 of the Law Commissions Act 1965. The 1965 Act, as amended by the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990, requires that appointees must be legally qualified or have experience in a judicial office or as a teacher of law in a university. Appointees must also satisfy the Lord Chancellor of their good health.

The chairman of the Law Commission is appointed by the Lord Chancellor, usually from the ranks of experienced High Court judges. Before reaching his decision, the Lord Chancellor customarily consults senior members of the judiciary. In considering the suitability of candidates for membership of the Law Commission, the Lord Chancellor appoints, in accordance with the principles of fair and open competition, those candidates who appear from the information available to have the best qualifications and experience for appointment. Successful candidates will be lawyers of recognised standing, experience and ability who can make significant contributions to the reform and development of the law.

There are no proposals to make future appointments to the Law Commission subject to detailed parliamentary scrutiny.

Mrs. Winterton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list the current members of the Law Commission, indicating in each case the date upon which they were appointed, the date upon which their term of appointment ceases and the specific qualities and experience which were the basis of their appointment. [42108]

Mr. Taylor: The dates of the terms of appointment of the current members of the Law Commission are set out in the table. The criteria on which appointments are based are set out in my earlier answer to my hon. Friend.

Name	*Date of appointment*	*Date of expiry of appointment*
The right hon. Mr. Justice Brooke	1 January 1993	31 December 1995
Charles Harpum	1 January 1994	31 December 1998
Diana Faber	31 January 1994	30 January 1999
Stephen Silber QC	11 April 1994	10 April 1999
Andrew Burrows	1 October 1994	30 September 1999

Mrs. Winterton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will make it his policy to appoint to the Law Commission in future only those individuals who have demonstrated by their own lifestyles a commitment to the institution of marriage and respect for human life. [42112]

Mr. Taylor: No. The Lord Chancellor wishes to maintain his present policy with regard to appointments to the Law Commission, which are made in accordance with the procedures set out in my earlier answer to my hon. Friend.

Mrs. Winterton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what has been the total cost of the Law Commission, including accommodation costs at estimated market rates, in each of the year since it was established; if he will give a breakdown of those costs indicating the amounts spend on *(a)* staff costs, *(b)* allowances and fees, *(c)* publication costs, *(e)* the estimated cost of accommodation at market rates and *(f)* all other identifiable costs. [42110]

Mr. Taylor: The available information about the cost of the Law Commission is given in the table.

The other information requested is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The cost of the Commission 1982–1994[1]

Sub head	*1982–83*	*1983–84*	*1984–85*	*1985–86*	*1986–87*	*1987–88*	*1988*
Accommodation charges[2]	308,200	340,500	400,400	364,200	343,000	344,000	355,200
Headquarters overheads[4]	64,200	64,900	78,700	133,300	141,100	140,600	168,500
Printing and Publishing: supply of information technology, office equipment and books	339,900	272,490	217,000	190,600	270,100	107,600	137,300
Salaries of Commrs (including ERNIC)	221,500	203,100	182,600	203,700	213,600	223,200	204,500
Salaries of draftsmen, legal staff, secondees and consultants (including ERNIC)	518,900	533,000	537,600	623,100	635,300	712,900	826,900
Salaries of non-legal staff (including ERNIC)	203,500	245,300	264,100	276,000	284,200	295,400	316,500
Superannuation	140,900	201,500	174,100	171,300	148,600	177,900	213,500
Telephone/postage	16,600	16,800	21,600	12,400	14,400	18,600	17,700

The cost of the Commission 1982–1994[1]

Sub head	*1982–83*	*1983–84*	*1984–85*	*1985–86*	*1986–87*	*1987–88*	*1988*
Travel and Subsistence	4,900	9,200	6,600	10,400	7,600	9,500	4,500
Entertainment	300	400	500	200	200	500	300
Miscellaneous	700	2,610	3,000	1,400	4,200	4,400	3,300
Total	1,819,600	1,889,800	1,886,200	1,986,600	2,062,300	2,034,600	2,248,200

Sub head	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Accommodation charges[2]	377,800	377,800	460,100	465,500	502,900	[3]916,900
Headquarters overheads[4]	205,100	205,100	228,000	345,500	379,200	603,800
Printing and Publishing: supply of information technology, office equipment and books	139,600	139,600	[5]243,100	215,400	217,400	187,100
Salaries of Commisioners (including ERNIC)	250,700	250,700	276,200	300,300	386,500[6]	361,300
Salaries of draftsmen, legal staff, secondees and consultants (including ERNIC)	989,500	989,500	1,058,300	1,120,600	[7]1,485,900	1,406,600
Salaries of non-legal staff (including ERNIC)	345,600	345,600	372,400	380,600	[7]401,400	357,400
Superannuation	245,800	245,800	265,800	308,100	[8]—	—
Telephone/postage	24,600	24,600	[9]35,900	25,800	33,500	28,600
Travel and Subsistence	6,500	6,500	5,500	8,400	10,300	7,000
Entertainment	1,000	1,000	600	500	500,	[10]—
Miscellaneous	5,700	5,700	11,900	18,300	26,200	15,200
Total	2,591,900	2,591,900	2,957,800	3,279,000	3,443,300	3,883,900

[1] These figures have been published in the annual reports of the Commission. Until 1988, the figures were related to a "parliamentary year". As from 1988, the figures have related to the calendar year. In no case has the financial year been used as the base.

[2] Component relating to ground rent, rates and major works supplied by the Lord Chancellor's Department, for the years 1988 to date.

[3] This figure reflects the costs of a five yearly rent review, which produced a 130 per cent. increase, and necessary new works to the building (e.g. a new security system).

[4] Portion of the total cost of the Lord Chancellor's Department headquarters attributed to the Commission. The portion attributed to individual parts of the Department is proportional to the number of staff paid as established staff, including research assistants. The 1993 figure excluded any sum for the information technology services provided by the Lord Chancellor's Department, as they were used very little. In 1994, they were used very much more, and a notional figure has therefore been attributed for them in 1994.

[5] Included in the 1991 and 1992 figures for office equipment are sums of £90,000 and £60,000 respectively, which represent the cost of converting the computer system.

[6] This figure included not only superannuation (see n9 below) but also a lump sum paid on retirement.

[7] Figures from 1993 onwards show the actual expenditure on salaries. In previous years, salaries were shown as a multiple of the December monthly salary figures, which gave an exaggerated result.

[8] As of April 1993 superannuation is included in the Lord Chancellor's Department's salary budget and is not shown separately.

[9] This includes some £9,000 spent on converting to a system of direct dialling in.

[10] As from 1994 Entertainment is included in Miscellaneous.

Mrs. Winterton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list the package of remuneration and expenses which may be claimed by members of the Law Commission. [42111]

Mr. Taylor: The current chairman of the Law Commission is a High Court judge and, as such, receives a salary of £98,957 per annum. He does not receive any additional remuneration for his work as chairman of the Law Commission. The salary of other members of the Law Commission is currently £69,500 per annum. The office of commissioner is pensionable, but superannuation arrangements depend on individual circumstances. As elsewhere in the Crown's service, travel and subsistence expenses may be payable, on the same basis as senior civil servants, if and when a commissioner is required to travel or stay away overnight in the course of his or her duties.

Mrs. Winterton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list the square footage and address of all accommodation currently occupied by the Law Commission; and if he will estimate the current market rent which could be realised through the letting of that accommodation. [42113]

Mr. Taylor: A total of 1,651.1 sq. m. at Conquest house, 37–38 John street, London WC1N 2BQ. The market rent, as valued at June 1995, is £122,000 per annum.

Mrs. Winterton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will make it his policy to abolish the Law Commission [42107]

Mr. Taylor: No, that is not the Lord Chancellor's intention.

Mrs. Winterton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will make it his policy to make a statement to the House on each and every occasion that the Law Commission *(a)* commences and *(b)* concludes a consideration of a particular area of law. [42105]

Mr. M. Taylor: The Lord Chancellor is required by the Law Commissions Act 1965 to lay before Parliament any programmes prepared by the commission, and approved by him, for the examination of different branches of the law. The sixth programme was laid before Parliament in June. He is similarly required by the Act to lay before Parliament any proposals for reform formulated pursuant to such programmes.

Right of Audience

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department when a decision will be made by the Crown Prosecution Office as to extended right of audience. [42097]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The Law Society's application to be authorised to award qualifications for rights of audience in the higher courts to employed solicitors is under consideration in accordance with the procedure set out in the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990. There is a related application by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Treasury Solicitor to have rule 402(1)(c) of the Bar's code of conduct deemed not to have been approved under the provisions of s31(1)(b) of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990. This is the rule which restricts employed barristers rights of audience.

The Lord Chancellor and the designated judges announced that they would adjourn their consideration of this related application until they had considered the advice from the Lord Chancellor's advisory committee on legal education and conduct on the Law Society's application. The Lord Chancellor has recently received ACLEC's advice and this is being considered together with other representations. The Lord Chancellor and the designated judges will make an announcement in due course.

Advisory Committee Membership

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list the members and qualifications of the Lord Chancellor's advisory committee. [42096]

Mr. John M. Taylor: I understand the question to refer to the Lord Chancellor's advisory committee on legal education and conduct. Details of the members appear in the latest annual report of the committee, published on 27 October 1995, copies of which have been placed in the libraries of both Houses. The members and their qualifications are as follows:

Members	*Qualifications*
The Right Honourable The Lord Steyn (Chairman)	Lord of Appeal in Ordinary
His Honour Judge Gower QC (Vice Chairman)	Resident Judge, Crown Court, East Sussex
Lee Bridges	Principal Research Fellow, University of Warwick
Professor Richard Card	Head of School of Law and Professor of Law, De Montfort University, Leicester
Eric Hammond OBE	Member of the Employment Appeal Tribunal; General Secretary, Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications Union, 1984–92
Professor Bob Hepple	Professor of Law; Master of Clare College, Cambridge
Dr. Neville Hunnings	Editor, Common Market Law Reports since 1964
Ian McNeil JP	Chartered Accountant in Practice. Former President of Institute of Chartered Accountants and currently Chairman of the Institute's Professional Conduct Directorate
Charles Plant	Solicitor
Ms Usha Prashar CBE	Civil Service Commissioner; Director, National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 1986–91
Nicholas Purnell QC	Barrister
Professor Peter Scott	Professor of Education, University of Leeds
Graham Smith CBE	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation
David Steel QC	Barrister
Mrs. Mary Tuck CBE	Former Head of Home Office Research and planning Unit, former National Chair, Victim Support, member of the Parole Board
David Ward	Solicitor and former President of the Law Society
David Wilkins	Educational Consultant; former Chief Inspector of Schools, Nottinghamshire

Land Ownership

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will make it his policy to require all land to be registered. [41271]

Mr. John M. Taylor: Because of the security and simplicity of titles afforded to land owners under the land registration system, it has been the policy of successive Governments to promote the progressive registration of unregistered titles. Compulsory registration of titles on sale and on the grant of long leases was first introduced in 1899 in central London. Since then, compulsory registration has been extended progressively to other parts of England and Wales—a process which was completed in December 1990. There are currently over 15.5 million registered titles and it is estimated that there remain between 4 and 5 million titles which are as yet unregistered.

While the existing statutory provision of compulsory registration on sale will continue to reduce the number of unregistered titles, there are a significant number of unregistered titles which are likely to remain unsold, and therefore unregistered indefinitely. Accordingly, the Law Commission, together with the Lord Chancellor's Department and the Land Registry, have been considering in the context of reviewing the commission's third and fourth reports on land registration what additional mechanisms might usefully be put into place to accelerate the process of registering the remaining land in England and Wales. As a result, there was published in September this year a joint report by the Law Commission and the Land Registry, Law Com. No. 235, Cm 2950, which proposes extending compulsory registration to the following additional dispositions of unregistered land: assents, vesting deeds, conveyances by way of gift, conveyances pursuant to a court order and first legal mortgages.

The appendix to the report contains a draft Bill which, if enacted, would give effect to these proposals, together with certain other recommended reforms, and a suitable opportunity is being sought to bring forward such a Bill for consideration by Parliament.

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department what estimates he has made of the acreage of rural land in England which is in foreign ownership. [41355]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The question concerns a specific matter on which the chief executive of Her Majesty's Land Registry Executive Agency is best placed to provide the answer. I have accordingly asked the chief executive to reply direct.

Letter from John Manthorpe to Mr. Gordon Prentice, dated 7 November 1995:

I have been asked by the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department, to reply to your recent question on the acreage of rural land in England which is in foreign ownership.

I regret that statistics relating to land acreage or the nationality of registered proprietors are not maintained by the Registry and I am therefore unable to supply the information requested.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by his Department relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42075]

Mr. John M. Taylor: Ministers, former Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how many persons in his Department are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or a full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list those their names; and how much each is paid. [42074]

Mr. Taylor: There are no members of staff in my Department employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry, on either a full-time or a part-time basis. My Department does not employ an external consultants or advisers in relation to the inquiry.

HEALTH

Psychiatric Hospitals

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many beds there were in each of the psychiatric hospitals that have closed *(a)* in 1995 and *(b)* in each year since 1979. [41101]

Mr. Bowis: The information available centrally is published in "Bed availability for England", copies of which are available in the Library.

Mental Health Services

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what reports have been commissioned by his Department to review mental health services in the last five years; and what action has been taken as a result of the findings of such reports. [41102]

Mr. Bowis: The reports commissioned by my Department are set out in the following list. They have provided useful in helping to develop of a comprehensive range of mental health services to support Government policy. Copies of the published reports will be placed in the Library.

The Clinical Standards Advisory Group report on Schizophrenia;

The report of the Mental Health Nursing Review Team;

Services for the Mental Health of Children and Young People in England: A National Review;

The Health Advisory Service (HAS) Review, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: Together we stand;

The HAS Review of the Adolescent Forensic Psychiatry Service;

The HAS Review, People who are Homeless, A Place in Mind;

The HAS Review, Suicide Prevention, The Challenge Confronted;

The Homeless Mentally Ill Initiative—an evaluation of four clinical teams;

Factors Influencing the implementation of the Care Programme Approach;

Survey of English Mental Illness Hospitals, March 1993 and March 1994;

Confidential Inquiry into Homicides and Suicides by Mentally Ill People;

Review of Health and Social Services for Mentally Disordered Offenders and others with similar needs;

Report of the Working Group on High Security and related Psychiatric Provision;

Report of the Department of Health and Home Office Working Group on Psychopathic Disorder;

The Extent of Local Arrangements for the Diversion of the Mentally Abnormal Offender from Custody;

The Brixton Diversion Project;

Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Complaints about Ashworth Hospital;

The relationship between the NHS and the Criminal Justice System;

The NHS and the Penal and Criminal Justice Systems;

The Education and Training of Doctors in the Health Care Service for Prisoners;

Psychopathic and Antisocial Personality Disorders;

Bentham Unit—Summary Report;

Good Practice in Medium secure units;

An Analysis of Pump Priming for Multi-Agency Projects;

The Survey of English Mental Illness Hospitals March 1993 and March 1994.

GP Fundholding

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners in *(a)* the Ealing, North constituency and *(b)* the remainder of the London borough of Ealing are fundholders; how much cash is involved in each case; and if he will make a statement. [41770]

Mr. Malone: The information available centrally for Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow family health services authority indicates that 67 general practitioners are fundholders. For further information, I refer my hon. Friend to Sir William Staveley, the chairman of North Thames regional health authority.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his oral answer of 31 October, *Official Report*, column 90, if he will list the repeated independent assessments of the substantial savings and improved patient care achieved by general practitioner fundholders to which he referred. [41927]

Mr. Malone: Considerable independent research into the general practitioner fundholding scheme has been carried out by a number of people and organisations—for example, Professor Howard Glennerster, Professor Julian Le Grand, Professor John Howie, the King's Fund, the National Audit Office and the Office of Economic Co-operation and Development.

Mental Health Services (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many patients with mental illness were treated at Walsgrave hospital in each year since 1990; [41603]

(2) how many rehabilitative beds for mental health patients have been lost during the past year in Walsgrave hospital, Coventry. [41600]

Mr. Bowis: Walsgrave hospital did not have a mental illness specialty for the years in question.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many staff with responsibility for mental health in Walsgrave hospital, Coventry, have left their post in the last year; [41599]

(2) if he will make a statement on projected mental health provision at Walsgrave Hospital. [41601]

Mr. Bowis: These are matters for the Walsgrave Hospitals national health service trust. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the trust for this information.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in Coventry require hospital treatment for mental illness. [41602]

Mr. Bowis: Coventry health authority is responsible for purchasing mental health services for the people of Coventry. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the authority for this information.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many representations from mental health organisations he has received expressing concern about the level of mental health provision in *(a)* Coventry and *(b)* England and Wales in the last year. [41604]

Mr. Bowis: We receive many representations on a wide variety of mental health subjects.

Community Care

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been refused community care in East Sussex without a reassessment of their needs since the introduction of the current scheme. [41235]

Mr. Bowis: This information is not available centrally. My hon. Friend may wish to contact the chairman of social services for that county.

Child Care

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the average cost of keeping a child in local authority care for one year. [41501]

Mr. Bowis: The latest estimates available centrally are for 1992–93 and relate to the average annual gross expenditure by local authorities on children looked after in foster placements and in residential accommodation. These were £7,100 and £45,200 respectively.

Injection Pens

Mr. Heppell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to make *(a)* injector pens and *(b)* needles for injector pens available on the NHS for people with diabetes. [41993]

Mr. Malone: Disposable injection pens are available on general practitioner prescription and manufacturers supply reusable ones to people with diabetes through hospital diabetic clinics. There are no plans to make reusable pens and needles prescribable by GPs.

NHS Treatments

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list all the treatments that are available on the NHS; and if he will specify for each health authority area what treatments are available on the NHS and what treatments are available only privately. [41990]

Mr. Sackville: This information is not available centrally.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to establish a national database which lists, by health authority area, which treatments are available on the NHS and which treatments are available only privately. [41989]

Mr. Sackville: None.

NHS Pension

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to extend the NHS pension provision to practice nurses and other practice staff who are contracted to a practitioner rather than to the NHS direct. [41885]

Mr. Malone: This matter is currently under consideration.

Property Dealings

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list which health authorities and trusts have lost money as a result of property dealings as described in a memorandum from Mr. Brian Marsden, deputy director of the NHS executive's finance and performance directorate to all trust and health authority chief executives on 30 September; if he will list which private organisations were involved in each case and the amount of money lost in each case; and if he will make a statement. [41984]

Mr. Sackville: It would not be appropriate to comment on leaked confidential documents.

Hospices

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what guidelines are issued by his Department for the allocation of capitation weighted funding to hospices outside a health authority's geographic area; [41978]

2) if he will make a statement on the relationship between capitation weighted funding for hospices by health authorities and the cost of core services provided by these hospices. [41979]

Mr. Sackville: The Department issues guidance to health authorities and total purchasing pilot general practice fundholders on the purchase of hospice and palliative care services. The Department does not issue specific guidance on the use of general allocations for this purpose as this is a matter for local determination.

The weighted capitation formula is used to inform allocations to health authorities for hospital and community health services. The national formula uses forecast resident population adjusted for age, relative health need and the geographical variation in the cost of providing services.

It is then for health authorities to purchase health care for their resident population taking account of local circumstances and characteristics, and within the framework of national policies and priorities.

Purchasing Plans

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library copies of all the health care purchasing plans agreed by every health commission and health authority in England in the last two years. [41991]

Mr. Malone: Copies of health authorities' purchasing plans are not available centrally. The plans are available on request from individual health authorities.

Expenditure

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list, for each year since 1992, the average cost to the NHS and community centre services of someone aged *(a)* under five, *b)* five to 15, *(c)* 16 to 24, *(d)* 25 to 44, *(e)* 45 to 64, *(f)* 65 to 84), *(g)* 85 or over and *(h)* 16 to 64 overall; and if he will provide estimates for the number of people in those age groups of each sex and in total and the respective average cost to the NHS and community care services for each group in 2000, 2010 and 2020. [41983]

Mr. Sackville: The information available on the average estimated cost per head to the national health service by age is shown in the table. Information on personal social services expenditure by age group is not available centrally.

£

Age group	*1992–93*	*1993–94*
Under 5	530	577
5 to 15	289	300
16 to 64	411	431
65 and over	1,419	1,457

Notes:

1. Figures are expressed in real terms at 1993–94 prices.
2. The figures are per head of population and cover expenditure on hospital and community health services and family health services only.
3. A more detailed breakdown is not available for total NHS expenditure.

Population projections for the years 2000, 2010 and 2020 are shown in the table. No estimates have been made of expenditure by age for these years.

Population Projections for the years 2000, 2010 and 2020

Thousands

	2000			*2010*			*2020*		
Age	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*M*	*F*	*Total*	*M*	*F*	*Total*
Under 5	1,661	1,583	3,243	1,517	1,445	2,962	1,546	1,473	3,019
5 to 15	3,643	3,452	7,095	3,585	3,406	6,991	3,350	3,191	6,541
16 to 24	2,756	2,614	5,370	3,051	2,901	5,952	2,938	2,796	5,734
25 to 44	7,491	7,203	14,693	6,892	6,574	13,465	6,535	6,263	12,798
45 to 64	5,783	5,844	11,627	6,789	6,776	13,565	7,156	7,016	14,172
65 to 84	2,970	3,806	6,777	3,282	3,895	7,177	4,011	4,616	8,627
85 and over	282	758	1,040	374	853	1,227	461	891	1,353
16 to 64	16,030	15,661	31,690	16,732	16,251	32,982	16,629	16,075	32,704

Note:

Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Oral Contraceptives

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the dates and those attending the meetings he or his officials have held with those companies involved in the marketing of third generation oral contraceptives containing gestodene and desogestrel since the statement made by the Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products on 27 October. [41488]

Mr. Sackville: No meetings have taken place between the Medicines Control Agency and pharmaceutical companies regarding oral contraceptives containing desogestrel or gestodene since October 27.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for health further to his oral contraceptive statement of 23 October, *Official Report*, column *701–2*, if he will review the advice given to general practitioners and family planning professionals in the light of the statement made by the CPMP on 27 October, concerning those oral contraceptives which contain gestodene and desogestrel. [41487]

Mr. Sackville: The Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products assessment makes it clear that, on the basis of three studies, oral contraceptives containing desogestrel or gestodene are associated with an increased risk of venous thromboembolism. Its position statement also envisages that it may be appropriate to inform doctors and women about the risks of oral contraceptives but it does not specify what information should be provided about the increased risk of venous thromboembolism. This and the fact that the CPMP's statement is not a binding opinion indicates that it is a mater for individual member states to deal with based on their particular prevailing circumstances.

The advice recently given by the Committee on Safety of Medicines on oral contraceptives containing desogestrel or gestodene has been reviewed in the light of the CPMP's statements. The action we have taken in the United Kingdom is consistent with the CPMP's statements and therefore no additional action is necessary at present. The matter will be kept under close review in the light of any new scientific evidence which may emerge.

NHS Expenditure

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if expenditure on the national health service in 1995–96, in cash terms, will exceed the planned amount, as set out in the "Financial Statement and Budget Report, 1995–96"; and if he will make a statement. [41802]

Mr. Sackville: Government spending on the national health service in 1995–96 is currently expected to be in line with the plan set out in the "Financial Statement and Budget Report".

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what was the expenditure on the national health service in 1979; and what is at present on a cash basis; [41872]

(2) what has been the percentage change in real terms in expenditure on the national health service between 1979 and the current year. [41877]

Mr. Sackville: Total national health service expenditure has risen from £6,273 million in 1978–79 to an estimated £31,974 million in 1995–96, an increase of 69.7 per cent. in real terms.

Advertising

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the future of the referral system following changes to rules governing advertising by doctors; [41632]

(2) what is his policy regarding the control of advertising of medical services; and if he will make a statement. [41633]

Mr. Malone: I will write to the hon. and learned Member.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the public finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41741]

Mr. Sackville: For information on the number and type of schemes approved under the private finance initiative, and the value of those schemes, I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) on 6 November.

Public sector contributions will depend upon the performance of the private sector in each individual contract awarded.

Microbiological Food Safety

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much Government funding is being put into research into *E. coli* 0157 in the current financial year; and what plans he has to increase the amount of Government-funded research into this bacteria. [41639]

Mr. Sackville: The Government are spending just over £0.5 million on research into *E. coli* 0157 in the current financial year and an overall total of nearly £1.5 million up to March 1998. Further substantial funding is planned over the next two to three years.

Psychiatric Beds

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many psychiatric beds have been lost in each region in each of the last five years; and what are the planned numbers for further closure. [41942]

Mr. Bowis: The information available is published in "Bed Availability for England", copies of which are available in the Library.

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement in respect of the number of children occupying adult psychiatric beds *(a)* nationally, *(b)* regionally and *(c)* at health authority level in each of the last five years. [41946]

Mr. Bowis: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children's psychiatric beds have been available in each of the last three years *(a)* nationally, *(b)* regionally and *(c)* by health authority. [41940]

Mr. Bowis: I refer the hon. Member to "Bed Availability for England", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Residential Care

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *208*, what is the estimated cost in a full year of raising the threshold for contribution to the cost of residential care for the elderly from £8,000 to *(a)* £10,000, *(b)* £12,000, *(c)* £14,000 and *(d)* £16,000, assuming that the total capital disregard figure (i) remains at £3,000 and (ii) is increased to £6,000. [41928]

Mr. Bowis: The table shows the estimated increased cost in a full year to local authorities personal social services expenditure of placing elderly people into residential care homes[1].

Estimates have been made on the basis of generalised data from the elderly population as a whole and are a guide only. The figures quoted do not take account of any possible effects of such changes on Department of Social

Security expenditure, or of demographic changes. Such estimates would also depend on the rate of tariff income between the upper and lower thresholds.

Illustrative figures for raising thresholds to:

(£ million England)

Upper threshold £	*Lower threshold– £3,000*	*Lower threshold– £6,000*
10,000	3	20
12,000	4	22
14,000	5	23
16,000	7	25

[1] Figures do not include residents in nursing homes.

Personal Social Services

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the level of spending on personal social services, discounting the effects of the special transitional grant and other specific grants, for *(a)* the elderly, *(b)* children, *(c)* those with learning disabilities, *(d)* young physically disabled persons, *(e)* mentally ill persons and *(f)* others. [41982]

Mr. Bowis: The information requested is not available centrally.

Care Homes (Abuse)

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many investigations have been undertaken in each of the last five years into abuse of residents in *(a)* children's, *(b)* residential and *(c)* nursing homes; and what have been the outcomes. [41944]

Mr. Bowis: This information is not available centrally.

Spending Statistics

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 30 October, *Official Report*, column *47*, on spending statistics, when figures for *(a)* 1994–95 and *(b)* 1995–96 will be available. [41953]

Mr. Malone: Figures for 1994–95 will be published shortly. No decisions have yet been made on the timing of publication of figures for 1995–96.

Capital Expenditure

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 30 October, *Official Report*, column *34–35*. on capital expenditure, when 1994–95 figures will be available. [41952]

Mr. Sackville: Provisional figures are expected to be available by the end of November 1995.

Mental Hospitals

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many mental hospitals have closed in each region during each of the last five years; and what further closures are planned. [41941]

Mr. Bowis: Information is available on the closure of large mental illness hospitals in the report "Survey of English Mental Hospitals March 1994—Monitoring the Closure of the Water Towers, copies of which are available in the Library.

Community Psychiatric Nurses

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his Department's recommended level of community psychiatric nurses per head of population. [41945]

Mr. Bowis: Decisions on appropriate staffing levels are for local managers. They are in the best position to determine the number of staff needed in the light of local circumstances.

Dental Services

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the average annual payment, for each of the last three years for which figures are available, for patients who paid for NHS dental treatment, per family health service authority. [39799]

Mr. Malone *[holding answer 30 October 1995]:* I will write to the hon. and learned Member.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

China

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he takes to ensure that no United Kingdom aid to China disbursed via the World bank or EC involves the use of forced labour camps in Chinese prison camps. [41278]

Mr. Hanley: We have no evidence to suggest that either World bank or EC funding for projects in China has involved the use of forced labour. The World bank, however, is taking very seriously recent allegations about links between a World bank-funded project in Xinjiang province and labour camps and has launched an investigation of the claims, while confirming that it would not condone lending for projects involving the use of forced labour.

OECD Countries (Aid Expenditure)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the per capita spending on overseas aid in the last year for which figures are available for each member country of the OECD. [41263]

Mr. Hanley: The table gives a breakdown of OECD member countries' per capita spending on overseas aid for 1994.

OECD members' per capita spending on overseas aid

	1994 Net oda US$ millions	*1993 Population (millions)*	*US$ Per capita expenditure*
Australia	1,087	17.71	61.4
Austria	561	7.94	70.7
Belgium	677	10.06	67.3
Canada	2,230	27.82	80.2
Denmark	1,450	5.19	279.4
Finland	289	5.07	57.0
France	8,447	57.65	146.6
Germany	6,751	80.77	83.6
Ireland	105	3.57	29.4
Italy	1,967	57.84	34.0
Japan	13,239	124.85	106.0

OECD members' per capita spending on overseas aid

	1994 Net oda US$ millions	*1993 Population (millions)*	*US$ Per capita expenditure*
Luxembourg	59	0.40	147.5
Netherlands	2,531	15.28	165.6
New Zealand	111	3.46	32.1
Norway	1,137	4.31	263.8
Portugal	296	9.85	30.1
Spain	1,247	39.13	31.9
Sweden	1,703	8.71	195.5
Switzerland	978	6.98	140.1
United Kingdom	3,197	58.04	55.1
United States	9,851	258.06	38.2

Source:
1994 net oda—OECD Statistics.
1993 population—World Bank Atlas 1995.

Brazil

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what monitoring is being carried out by the British Government on the spending of G7 money on the G7 financed pilot plan for the Amazon, and if he will make a statement on the steps being taken to protect the Makuxi Indian people in Brazil. [41823]

Mr. Hanley *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* Britain contributes to the pilot plan trust fund, which is managed by the World bank and monitored by an independent international advisory group. We attend regular meetings of participants and in-country co-ordination. One component of the pilot plan is a project to protect indigenous peoples and their lands.

Cash Limits

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals he has to change the Overseas Development Administration cash limits for 1995–96. [41142]

Mr. Hanley *[pursuant to his reply, 31 October 1995, c. 140]:* The answer should have read: "Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the cash limit on the external assistance vote (class II, vote 5) will be increased by £4,919,000 from £1,759,358,000 to £1,764,277,000. The increase is in respect of rollover of underspending against the 1994–95 external assistance vote. The increase will be offset by a claim on the reserve and will not, therefore, add to the planned total of public expenditure. The cash limit includes the cost of services provided in connection with the privatisation of the Crown Agents. This expenditure is not included in the control total".

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible requiring a private sector contribution where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [3595]

Mr. Boswell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Harwich (Mr. Sproat) on 31 October 1995, *Official Report*, columns *186–87*.

Racing Pigeons

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement regarding the use of drugs in pigeon racing, and what discussions he has had with the Belgian Minister of Agriculture regarding the situation in Belgium. [40681]

Mrs. Browning: Veterinary medicines for racing pigeons are subject to the normal controls on the manufacture, sale and supply of veterinary medicines. No product may be marketed in the United Kingdom other than in accordance with a marketing authorisation, issued following an assessment by the independent Veterinary Products Committee against the statutory scientific criteria of safety, quality and efficacy.

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate has pursued reports of illegal sales in the UK to pigeon fanciers of veterinary medicines imported from the Community and will continue to follow up and further reports that may be received.

I understand that the Belgian authorities are concerned about the misuse of veterinary medicines to enhance the performance of racing pigeons and are putting in place legislation to test birds for drug misuse. The Ministry has no evidence of pigeon fanciers in the UK misusing drugs on their birds in order to enhance their performance.

If the hon. Member has a specific concern, I will be happy to look into it if he could write to me with the details.

Departmental Buildings, Clwyd

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has undertaken of the safety of the site, grounds and infrastructure of his Department's former buildings at Rhydymwyn, Clwyd. [41243]

Mr. Boswell: Dames and Moore, environmental consultants commissioned by Drivers Jonas, acting on behalf of my Department, produced an environmental assessment of the Valley factory site at Rhydymwyn in May 1994. This is under consideration. There is no danger to local residents so long as they do not trespass on the site.

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he intends to publish proposals for the use of his Department's former buildings at Rhydymwyn, Clwyd. [41240]

Mr. Boswell: A report jointly commissioned by my Department, the Welsh Development Agency and Delyn borough council on the remediation of the site is expected by the summer of 1996. Proposals will be published as soon as agreement with those with a direct interest in the site has been reached.

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions his Department has had with the National Rivers Authority regarding toxic waste entering the watercourse at Rhydymwyn, Clwyd, from his Department's former buildings on site. [41241]

Mr. Boswell: Representatives from the National Rivers Authority were present at a meeting between Ministry officials and Delyn borough council in March 1995 to discuss the site. The NRA has been given the results of the environmental consultants' investigations. I understand that the NRA has a monitoring point on the site which has been in place for some years. However, the NRA has not indicated to the Ministry that it is concerned about water quality within the watercourse.

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions his Department has had with the Welsh Development Agency regarding the future use of his Department's factory at Rhydymwyn, Clwyd. [41242]

Mr. Boswell: Officials from my Department have met the Welsh Development Agency on two occasions. My Department continues to work closely with both WDA and Delyn borough council with a view to reaching agreement on the future of the site.

Cheese

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish for England and for the United Kingdom the total volume of cheese production in tonnes and in pounds sterling at constant 1995 prices for each of the last three years. [41464]

Mrs. Browning: The total volume of cheese production in the United Kingdom for the years in question was as follows.

Year	*Production 000 tonnes*
1992	327
1993	333
1994	331

Production statistics for England alone are not available. We do not routinely monitor the monetary value of UK cheese production.

Training Courses, North-west

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the institutions in the north-west offering *(a)* agricultural and *(b)* horticultural training; and if he will make a statement on the nature of the courses; and if he will list the number of places offered and the number of vacancies. [41493]

Mr. Boswell: In the north-west of England, Myerscough college, Preston, and Newton Rigg college, Penrith, offer a variety of agricultural and horticultural courses leading to the attainment of degrees, diplomas, certificates and national vocational qualifications. A full list and details of the courses, including places offered and vacancies, can be obtained from the colleges themselves. Alternatively, the "Directory of Courses in Land-Based Industries", published by the farming press, contains comprehensive information on all full-time and sandwich courses currently available in the land-based industries.

Details of training courses and providers can be obtained from the Industry Training Organisation for Agriculture and Commercial Horticulture, ATB-Landbase Limited, based at the National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG, telephone 01203 696996.

Microbiological Food Safety

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated into *E. coli* 0157 bacteria in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [41638]

Mrs. Browning: The Department is supporting, and will continue to support, research on this important food poisoning organism, including the detection of the organism and conditions leading to its growth, survival and death in foods. In addition, research is also directed at gaining a greater understanding of the incidence of the organism in cattle and its carriage into the food chain.

In formulating future research priorities in this area, the Department will take account of the recommendations for research on this organism identified by the independent advisory committee on the microbiological safety of food in its report published in June of this year. In producing the report, the advisory committee evaluated all the scientific information on this organism which was currently available. Officials will continue to assess new developments in this area in conjunction with colleagues in the Department of Health.

Coastal Protection

Mrs. Helen Jackson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the projects, their location and cost funded last year and the year before from his budget on coastal protection. [41691]

Mr. Boswell: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is responsible for flood and coastal defence policy in England. The Ministry administers the Coast Protection Act 1949 and provides financial assistance for approved capital works, and studies, undertaken by coast protection authorities to protect land from erosion and encroachment by the sea. A list of the schemes approved for grant aid and supplementary credit approval to enable authorities to borrow to cover the residual costs in the 1993–94 and 1994–95 financial years is as follows:

Coast protection schemes approved in 1993–94

Local authority	*Scheme*	*Estimated eligible cost (£000)*
Restormel B.C.	Towan Beach, Newquay	167
Kerrier D.C.	Porthleven Phase 8	325
Penwith D.C.	Chyandour to Long Rock, Penzance	1,372
Penwith D.C.	Strategic Study–Lizard Point to Lands End	85
East Devon D.C.	Emergency Works–Sidmouth	545
Poole B.C.	Strategic Study–Poole	80
New Forest D.C.	Emergency Works–Hurst Spit	125
New Forest D.C.	Emergency Works–Calshot Spit	27
New Forest D.C.	Barton on Sea Phase 4	170
Medina B.C.	Emergency Works–Sea Wall near Cowes Castle	16

Coast protection schemes approved in 1993–94

Local authority	*Scheme*	*Estimated eligible cost (£000)*
Gosport B.C.	Preliminary Study–Lee on the Solent	25
Portsmouth C.C.	Preliminary Study–Camber Quay	12
Portsmouth C.C.	Ten Gun Battery	33
Havant B.C.	Sandy Point, Hayling Island	269
Chichester D.C.	Strategic Study–Pagham to Langstone	210
Arun D.C.	Pagham Beach, Phase 2	489
Adur D.C.	Preliminary Study–River Walk, Shoreham	3
Wealdon D.C.	Preliminary Study–Birling Gap	6
Eastbourne B.C.	Emergency Works–Langney Point and the Redoubt	99
Canterbury C.C.	Beach Monitoring Programme–Canterbury Coastline	60
Canterbury C.C.	Wave and Tide Measurement–Canterbury Coastline	36
Canterbury C.C.	East Cliff, Herne Bay	217
Canterbury C.C.	Swalecliffe	119
Canterbury C.C.	Hampton Pier Avenue, Herne Bay	623
Canterbury C.C.	Preliminary Study–Tankerton Bay	185
Tendring D.C.	Clacton on Sea Phase 1a	4,941
North Norfolk D.C.	Sheringham, Stage 1	2,238
Holderness B.C.	Preliminary Study–Aldbrough	3
Holderness B.C.	Preliminary Study–Cowden	4
Holderness B.C.	Preliminary Study–Withernsea	13
Holderness B.C.	Preliminary Study–Hornsea	3
Holderness B.C.	Emergency Works–Withernsea	1,191
Scarborough B.C.	Strategic Study–Scarborough	10
Easington D.C.	Strategic Study for the Durham Coast	17
Sunderland B.C.	Hendon Sea Wall	697
Berwick upon Tweed B.C.	Preliminary Study–Spittal Point	34
Berwich upon Tweed B.C.	Preliminary Study–Holy Island Road	4
Allerdale D.C.	Preliminary Study–Silloth-Skinburness	13
Allerdale D.C.	East Cote Groyne, Silloth	81
Barrow in Furness	Earnse Bay, Walney Island	788
Lancaster C.C.	Morcambe Phase 4	4,580
Eastleigh B.C.	Preliminary Study–Hamble Common	3
Eastleigh B.C.	Preliminary Study–Netley Cliff	10

Coast Protection Schemes approved in 1994–95.

Local Authority	*Scheme*	*Estimated Eligible Cost (£thousands)*
West Somerset D.C.	Strategic Study—Hartland Point to Sand Bay	23
North Cornwall D.C.	Trevone, Padstow	79
Restormel B.C.	Beach Monitoring—Towan Beach, Newquay	9
Kerrier D.C.	Breageside. Porthleven Helston	114
Caradon D.C.	Emergency Works—Portwrinkle	6
South Hams D.C.	Sedgewell Cove, Bigbury-on-Sea	84
East Devon D.C.	Sidmouth phase 2	6,664
West Dorset D.C.	Preliminary Study for Seaton, Lyme Bay	15
West Dorset D.C.	Emergency Works—Ringstead	9
West Dorset D.C.	Emergency Works—Charmouth	3
West Dorset D.C.	Lower Sea Lane, Charmouth	236
Pool B.C.	Emergency Works—Sandbanks Peninsula	37
Bournemouth B.C.	Bournemouth	56
South Wight D.C.	Eastern Esplanade Phase 1—Ventnor	329
South Wight D.C.	Brambles Chine, Colwell Bay	84
South Wight D.C.	Preliminary Study—Castle Haven, Niton	22
South Wight D.C.	Horseshoe Bay, Bonchurch, Ventnor	160
South Wight D.C.	Western Esplanade, Ventnor	379
Medina B.C.	Egypt Point—Gurnard Bay	835
Chicester D.C.	Park Copse, Selsey	408
Arun D.C.	Kingston and Rustington	294
Arun D.C.	Eastern Seawall, Bognor Regis	93
Arun D.C.	Aldwick Groyne, Renovations phase 2	62
Arun D.C.	Strategic Study	141
Arun D.C.	Beachy Head—Selsey Bill	145
Adur D.C.	Ropetackle River Wall, Shoreham-by-Sea	344
Lewes D.C.	Emergency Works—Peacehaven Phase 1	65
Shepway D.C.	Strategic Study–South foreland to Beachy Head	80
Shepway D.C.	Hythe	2,009
Dover D.C.	Deal and Kingsdown	1,687
Thanet D.C.	St. Mildred's Bay, Westgate-on-Sea	1,038
Thanet D.C.	Pegwell Cove to Western Undercliff	625
Canterbury C.C.	Strategic Study—Isle of Grain to Dover Harbour	105
Tendring D.C.	Strategic Study—Harwich to Canvey Island	93
Tendring D.C.	East Terrace, Walton-on-the-Naze	424
Suffolk Coastal D.C.	Strategic Study, Suffolk Coast	67
Great Yarmouth B.C.	Emergency Works—Caister Sea Wall	230
Great Yarmouth B.C.	Emergency Works—Caister	170
Great Yarmouth B.C.	Rock Armour Fish-Tail Groynes at Caister	677
North Norfolk D.C.	Overstrand	1,676
Holderness B.C.	Withernsea Sea Wall, Refurbishment Phase 1	1,860
Holderness B.C.	Emergency Works—Groynes At Withernsea	114
East Yorkshire B.C.	Bridlington, Alexandra Promenade	595
Scarborough B.C.	Emergency Works—Holbeck Cliff, South Bay	1,881
Berwick-upon-Tweed B.C.	Emergency Works—Spittal Promenade	26

Coast Protection Schemes approved in 1994–95.

Local Authority	*Scheme*	*Estimated Eligible Cost (£thousands)*
Copeland B.C.	Preliminary Study for Selker Bay to Tarn Bay	10
Lancaster C.C.	Preliminary Study for Sunderland Point	5
Blackpool B.C.	Emergency Works—Red Bank	24
Isles of Scilly Council	Bryher	685
Isles of Scilly Council	Preliminary Study for the Isles	20
Isles of Scilly Council	Porth Cressa, Hugh Town St. Mary's	966

Notes:

1. C.C.–City council.
2. B.C.–Borough council.
3. D.C.–District council.

Rules and Regulations

Mr. Steen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement. [41537]

Mr. Boswell *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the oral answer given by my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade on 6 November 1995, *Official Report*, column *490*.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41557]

Mr. Boswell *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* Examples of regulations which are expected to be brought forward for repeal this year include a series of national measures relating to food composition and food additives and contaminants.

The requirement to carry out a cost compliance assessment applies to regulations which impose additional burdens on business while the programme of repeals and amendments is concerned with reducing the burden.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and in how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41538]

Mr. Boswell *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* My Department has laid two draft deregulation proposals to date, removing certain burdens under the Corn Returns Act 1882 and in relation to slaughterhouses. No estimate has been made of the likely savings to the Exchequer as a result of these proposed orders, but they are likely to be small.

The explanatory document which is presented to the committee alongside each draft order is required to contain an assessment of the cost of savings to business and any other persons whom the draft order is intended to benefit.

Cash Limits

Mrs. Currie: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what changes are proposed in his Department's cash limits for 1995–96. [40630]

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[pursuant to his reply, 27 October 1995, c. 828–29]:* I should like to add that the running costs limit for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will increase by £5,278,000, from £329,416,000 to £334,694,000.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what communications his Department has had from the World court project since June on the action started on 30 October at the International Court of Justice in The Hague on the legality of nuclear weapons. [41471]

Mr. David Davis: The World court project United Kingdom wrote to us on 26 September 1995. A reply was sent.

Argentina

Mr. Allason: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans there are to return the British Council library to Buenos Aires. [41644]

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The British Council has never had its own library in Argentina. The library in Buenos Aires belonged to the Buenos Aires Cultura—Anglo-Argentine cultural association. That still exists but is no longer co-located with the Council. The British Council continues to work closely with the Culturas throughout Argentina to meet the needs for books in English.

Northern Cyprus

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with whom he has discussed the education facilities for young people over the age of 16 years who live in the Karpas area of occupied northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement on what facilities and regulations apply to such youngsters who are seeking further and high education. [41854]

Mr. David Davis: The high commission and British Council office in Nicosia maintain regular contact with the Cypriot education authorities. In the Karpas area, there is a middle school in the town of Galacia, and high schools in the towns of Trikomo and Yialousa. There is also a vocational high school covering the Karpas area. There are four universities in northern Cyprus, with a total enrolment of around 13,000.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the number of children under the age of 18 years who are now living in the Karpas area of occupied northern Cyprus. [41855]

Mr. Davis: We have no information on this subject. There has been no census in northern Cyprus since 1992, and detailed census figures are not made publicly available.

Nigeria

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list, with dates of implementation, all European and international action and agreements to which the United Kingdom Government are party, that have been taken against the Nigerian military regime. [41338]

Mr. Hanley: In response to the annulment of the presidential elections in 1993, and the subsequent return to power of the military government, we and our European partners introduced a series of measures against the Nigerian military. The details of those measures were set out in an answer to the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) on 2 December 1993, *Official Report*, column *680*.

Mr. Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the dates and content of meetings that Her Majesty's Government have had with representatives of the Nigerian military regime since 17 November 1993. [41351]

Mr. Hanley: There have been no meetings between British Ministers and members of the Nigerian military regime in either Britain or Nigeria since the European Union adopted its measures in December 1993. There has been occasional contact in the margins of international meetings in third countries. Contact has been maintained at official level in furtherance of British policy towards Nigeria.

Mr. Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards Nigeria's military regime including details of the policy towards arms sales to the regime and its relation to European Union agreements. [41352]

Mr. Hanley: We continue to press for an early return to democratic civilian rule and a restoration of full human rights in Nigeria. In line with EU measures agreed with our partners against the Nigerian military in December 1993, all applications for new licences for the export of defence equipment to Nigeria have been reviewed case by case, with the presumption of denial. We are keeping these measures under review in the light of progress towards civilian democratic rule.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Nigeria concerning the death penalty ordered against Ken Saro-Wiwa and others; and if he will make a statement. [42002]

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his Department will make representations to the Government of Nigeria about the death sentence imposed on Ken Saro-Wiwa. [41465]

Mr. Hanley: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) on 1 November, *Official Report*, column *266*.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contact he has had with the United Kingdom embassy in Lagos concerning the safety of Abdul Onibiyo following his recent deportation from the United Kingdom. [42004]

Mr. Hanley: Her Majesty's high commission in Lagos has had no contact with Mr. Onibiyo since his removal from the United Kingdom.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings have been held by Her Majesty's ambassador in Lagos to discuss human rights; and if he will make a statement. [42001]

Mr. Hanley: Her Majesty's high commissioner in Lagos has regular meetings with representatives of non-governmental human rights organisations. Human rights issues are also raised regularly with the Nigerian authorities and discussed at meetings of European Union heads of mission in Lagos.

Burundi

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has received about a massacre of Hutus near Ngozi in Burundi; and what representations his Government have made to the Government of Burundi. [41998]

Mr. Hanley: The UN secretariat has reported to the Security Council that a number of people have been killed in recent operations involving guerilla forces and the Burundi army, including 50 deaths at Ngozi. Together with our partners in the EU, we continue to give our strong backing to the efforts of the UN and OAU to assist the moderate and broad-based government, and bring an end to the inter-ethnic violence in Burundi.

Sudan

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to influence the Government of the Sudan to prevent the persecution of Christians and Animists in southern Sudan. [41634]

Mr. Hanley: We continue to express our concerns about the human rights situation in Sudan to the Sudanese Government, bilaterally, with EU partners, and through the United Nations. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary raised the subject with the Sudanese ambassador on 13 September, as I did on 2 August.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41740]

Mr. Hanley: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, including the Overseas Development Administration, has not yet approved any schemes under the private finance initiative. All new capital spend is considered under the PFI, including spending on home and overseas estate, information technology and other technical equipment.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many persons in the Secret Intelligence Service and at GCHQ are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or a full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry, and how much each is paid. [42051]

Mr. Hanley: There are no staff in the Secret Intelligence Service or at GCHQ wholly employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry. It is not possible to identify the number of people involved on a part-time or occasional basis within the Department or as external consultants or advisers, nor is it our practice to comment on financial matters relating to the security and intelligence agencies or to name their staff or external advisers.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many persons in his Department are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list them; and how much each is paid. [42049]

Mr. Hanley: The number of Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff wholly employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry is three and their annual salary cost is £74,539, at 1994–95 rates. It is not possible to identify the number of people involved on a part-time or occasional basis within the Department or as external consultants or advisers, but the amount so far spent by this Department on external advice is £318,165.46. It is not the practice to name staff or external advisers.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by the Secret Intelligence Service and GCHQ relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42052]

Mr. Hanley: Ministers, former Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by his Department relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42050]

Mr. Hanley: Ministers, former Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Harjit Singh

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his officers last contacted the Indian authorities concerning the progress of the court case into the disappearance of Harjit Singh; and what was the outcome of their representations. [42098]

Mr. Hanley: We remain in touch with the Indian authorities about the case of Harjit Singh. The final court hearing was held on 29 August. Judgment is now awaited.

Bankruptcy

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many petitions for bankruptcy have been begun by his Department for businesses with under 500 employees in each of the last five years. [40524]

Mr. Hanley *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* None.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will estimate the number of individuals in his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non departmental public bodies whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeded (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000, (iii) £300,000 in (1) 1985–86, (2) 1990–91, (3) 1992–93, (4) 1994–95 and (5) 1995–96. [40808]

Mr. Hanley *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies and NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pensions scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules, which have been deposited in the Library of the House. The number receiving annual remuneration above the sums specified, excluding pension benefits in the years in question, were:

	1985–86	*1990–91*	*1992–93*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*
(i)	none	none	1	1	1
(ii)	none	none	none	none	none
(iii)	none	none	none	none	none

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the *(a)* the lowest and *(b)* the highest full-time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40809]

Mr. Hanley *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands. Accordingly, the lowest full-time salary for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office fell within the band:

	1994–95 £	*1995–96* £
The lowest full-time salary fell within the band	7,000–12,000	7,000–12,000
The highest full-time salary fell within the band	106,000-111,000	110,000-115,000
At the agency Wilton Park, the lowest full-time salary fell within the band	7,000-12,000	7,000-12,000
At the agency Wilton Park, the highest full-time salary fell within the band	39,000-44,000	39,000-44,000
For Non-Departmental Public Bodies, the lowest full-time salary fell within the band	7,000-10,000	7,000-10,000

	1994–95 £	*1995–96* £
For Non-Departmental Public Bodies, the highest full-time salary fell within the band	85,000-89,999	90,000-94,999

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the oral answer of the Attorney-General of 30 October, *Official Report*, column *12*, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and if he will further indicate the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41207]

Mr. David Davis *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The table contains a list of the judgments in cases before the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights in which UK Departments have participated since 16 October 1993. The UK has also gained from ECJ decisions, or the threat of court action in cases involving other member states, such as the penalties incurred by the Italian and Spanish Governments for breaching the EC milk quota regulations.

Judgements in cases before the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights in which United Kingdom Departments have participated since 16 October 1993

European Court of Justice

Date of ECJ Judgement	*Reference*	*Case description*	*Cost to UK Public Funds (excluding the cost of Government counsel)*
20 October 1993	C92/92	Colins v. Imrat Handelsgesellschaft	None
27 October 1993	C338/91	Mme H Steenhorst-Neerings v. Bestuur van de Bedrijfsver eniging voor Detailhandel Ambachten en Huisvrouwen	None
27 October 1993	C337/91	Mme A M van Gemert-Derks v. Bestuur van de Nieuwe Industriele Bedrijfsverenigine	None
27 October 1993	C93/91	Evrard	None
27 October 1993	C69/91	Decoster	None
27 October 1993	C92/91	Taillandier	None
27 October 1993	C127/92	Enderby v. Frenchay Health Authority	None[1]
10 November 1993	C48/91	Kingdom of the Netherlands v. Commission of the European Communities	None
10 November 1993	C60/92	Otto v. Postbank	None
17 November 1993	C2/91	Meng	None
17 November 1993	C185/91	Reiff	None
17 November 1993	C245/91	Ohra	None
29 November 1993	C132/92	Birds Eye Walls Ltd. v. Friedal M. Roberts	None
30 November 1993	C317/91	Renault v. Audi	None
14 December 1993	C110/91	M. Moroni v. Firma Collo GMBH	None
15 December 1993	C116/92	Huyton and others	None
15 December 1993	C63/92 and C33/93	Lubbock Fine and Co. v. Commissioners of Customs and Excise/Empire Stores v. Commissioners of Customs and Excise. (Date of judgment 2 June 1994)	Costs directly attributable to these two cases are estimated at between £500,000 and £1 million. In both cases, as a result of ECJ judgments, there will have been a marginal reuction in the overall estimated future revenue yield.
16 December 1993	C275/92	Schindler	None
22 December 1993	C152/91	David Neath v. Hugh Steeper Ltd.	None
19 January 1994	C364/92	Eurocontrol	None
25 January 1994	C212/91	Angelopharm GmbH v. Freie und Hanses Tadt Hamburg	None
27 January 1994	C287/92	Alison Mainland Toosey v. Chief Adjudication Officer	None
23 February 1994	C236/92	Comitato di coordinamento per la Difesa della Cava and others v. Regione Lombardia and OthersNone	
24 February 1994	C368/92	Administration des Duanes v. Solange Chiffre	None
24 March 1994	T3/93	Air France v. Commission	None
24 March 1994	C80/92	Commission v. Belgium	None
13 April 1994	C128/92	H. J. Banks and Co. v. British Coal Corporation	None
24 April 1994	C2/92	The Queen v. the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, ex parte Dennis Clifford Bostock	None
24 April 1994	C40/92	Commission v. United Kingdom (supervision of Milk Marketing Boards)	None
5 May 1994	C21/92	Marlies and Heinz Bernd Kamp v. Hauptzollamt Wuppertal	None
5 May 1994	C421/92	Habermann Beltermann v. Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bezirksuerband	None

Judgements in cases before the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights in which United Kingdom Departments have participated since 16 October 1993

European Court of Justice

Date of ECJ Judgement	*Reference*	*Case description*	*Cost to UK Public Funds (excluding the cost of Government counsel)*
5 May 1994	C38/93	H. J. Glawe Spiel und Unterhaltungsgerate Aufstellungsgesellschaft mbH and Co. KG v. Finanzamt Hamburg-Barmbeck-Uhlenhorst	None
19 May 1994	T2/93	Air France v. Commission	None
2 June 1994	C313/92	Van Swieten	None
2 June 1994	C401 & 402/92	Criminal proceedings against tankstation't heukske vof and j.b.E Boermans	None
2 June 1994	C69 & 258/93	Punta Casa	None
2 June 1994	C356/93	Techmada Internationale Medizinisch-Technische Marketing und Handels GMBH and Co. KG V. Oberfinanzdirektion Koeln	None
9 June 1994	C153/93	Delta Schiffahrts	None
22 June 1994	C9/93	Ideal Standard	None
3 July 1994	C432/92	The Queen v. the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, ex parte S.P. Anastasio (Pissouri) Ltd. and others	£179,000
7 July 1994	C420/92	Elizabeth Bramhill v. Chief Adjourdication Officer	None
14 July 1994	C91/92	Dori v. Recreb	None
14 July 1994	C32/93	Webb v. Emo Air Cargo	None[1]
9 August 1994	C43/93	Raymond Vander Elst v. Office des Migrations Internationals	None at present
9 August 1994	C396/92	Bund Naturschutz in bayern e V Richard Stahnsdorf and Others v. Freistaat Bayern	None
15 September 1994	C293/93	Houtwipper	None
28 September 1994	C128/93	Madame G.C. Fisscher v. 1 Voorhuis Hengelo BV and 2. Stichting Bedrijfspensioenfonds	Eventual capital cost of up to £15 million. Figure represents estimated maximum likely capital costs of judgements for public service pension schemes
28 September 1994	C28/93	Van den Akker v. Shell	None
28 September 1994	C57/93	Mme A. A. Vroeg v. 1 NCIV Institut voor Volkshuisvesting BV and 2. Pensioenfonds NCIV	Included in C128/93 (Fisscher)
28 September 1994	C200/91	Coloroll Pension Scheme Trustees Ltd. v. Russell and others	None
28 September 1994	C408/92	Constance Christina Ellen Smith and others *v.* Avdel Systems Ltd.	None
28 September 1994	C7/93	Bestuur van het Alegmeen Burgerlijk Pensioenfonds Pensions *v.* G.A. Beune	None
5 October 1994	C280/93	Federal Republic of Germany *v.* Council of the European Union	None
5 October 1994	C96/94	Centro Servizi Spediporto	None
5 October 1994	C165/91	S.J.M van Munster *v.* Rijksdienst Voor Pensioenen	None
15 November 1994	Opinion 1/94	World Trade Organisation	None
6 December 1994	C410/92	Elsie Rita Johnson *v.* Chief Adjudication Officer	None
15 December 1994	C399/92	Helmig *v.* Stadt Lengerich	None
15 December 1994	C409/92	Schmidt *v.* Deutsche angestellten-krankenkasse	None
15 December 1994	C425/92	Herzog *v.* Arbeiter-samariter-bund landverband hamburg	None
15 December 1994	C34/93	Lange *v.* bundesknappschaft bochum	None
15 December 1994	C50/93	Kussfeld *v.* Firma detlef bogdol gmbh	None
15 December 1994	C78/93	Ludvig *v.* Kreis Segeberg	None
14 February 1995	C279/93	Finanzamt Koln-Altstadt *v.* Roland Schumackers	None
16 February 1995	C425/93	Firma Calle Grenzshop Andresen GmbH and Co. KG *v.* Allegmeine Ortskranken-kasse fur den Kreis Schleswig-FlensburgNone	
23 February 1995	C358/93 and 416/93	(Joined Cases) Criminal proceedings against Aldo Bordessa, Vicente Mari Mellado and Concepcion Barbero Maestre *v.* Audiencia Nacional Spain	None
24 March 1995	Opinion 2/92	OECD National Treatment Instrument	None

Judgements in cases before the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights in which United Kingdom Departments have participated since 16 October 1993

European Court of Justice

Date of ECJ Judgement	*Reference*	*Case description*	*Cost to UK Public Funds (excluding the cost of Government counsel)*
28 March 1995	C324/93	R *v.* Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Evans Medical Ltd., intervener: Generics (UK) Ltd.None at present	
30 March 1995	C65/93	European Parliament *v.* Council of the European Union	None
5 April 1995	C103/94	Zoulika Krid *v.* Caisse National D'Assurance Vieillesse des travailleurs Salaries	None
6 April 1995	C4/94	BLP Group plc *v.* Commissioners of Customs and Excise	None
10 May 1995	C384/93	Alpine Investments	None
31 May 1995	C400/93	Specialarbejderforbundet 1 Danmark v. Industri	None
9 June 1995	C394/92	Michielsen	None
13 July 1995	C116/94	Jennifer Meyers *v.* Adjudication Officer	Not yet known. Case referred back to Social Security Commissioner. Costs will depend on his decision
11 August 1995	C92/94	1. Secretary of State for Social Security 2. Chief Adjudication Officer *v.* Mrs. Rose Graham and others	None
5 October 1995	C440/93	Regina *v.* Licensing Authority of the Department of Health and Norgine. Ex parte: Scotia Pharmaceuticals Ltd.None	
12 October 1995	C85/94	V.Z.W.P.I.A.G.E.M.E and others *v.* B.V.B.A. Peeters	None
19 October 1995	C137/94	Richardson	£44 million per annum, plus a cost of £11 million for respective claims going back 3 months.

[1] For these cases the annual costs to public funds will depend on how many public sector employeer now succeed in sex discrimination or equal pay claims which would, before the decision of the court, have failed. Government lawyers estimate that any such costs should be very low.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by the Attorney General on 30 October, *Official Report*, column *12-14*. This answer included nine cases concerning the 1968 Convention on Jurisdiction and the Enforcement of Judgments in which the UK chose to submit written observations. In none of these cases was the UK a party and there was therefore no question of paying legal costs to another party, or compensation.

European Court of Human Rights

Date of ECHR judgment	*Case description*	*Cost to UK public Funds (excluding Government counsel)£*
26 October 1993	Darnell	8,207.40
23 February 1994	Stanford	None
18 July 1994	Wynne	55.23
21 September 1994	Al Fayed	None
28 October 1994	Murray	None
28 October 1994	Boner and Maxwell	14,373
9 February 1995	Welsh	15,010.33
24 February 1995	McMichael	8,000
5 May 1995	Air Canada	None
13 July 1995	Tolstoy	91,516.94
27 September 1995	McCann	To be determined

I do not yet have complete information on the following ECJ cases:

Case number	*Case reference*
C109/92	Max Wirth
C392/92	Schmidt
C382/92	Commission *v.* United Kingdom
C383/92	Commission *v.* United Kingdom
C28/92	Maria Belleke
C458/93	Saddik
C434/93	Bozkurt

Ministers in the Departments responsible for these cases will write to the hon. Gentleman shortly.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Greenbury Report

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the Government's response to the recommendations addressed to them in the report by the study group on directors' remuneration chaired by Sir Richard Greenbury. [42094]

Mr. Lang: The study group on directors' remuneration chaired by Sir Richard Greenbury published its report on 17 July. In an oral statement to the House that day, *Official Report*, columns 1311–12, I set out the Government's initial response, welcoming the group's work and the emphasis placed by its report on the need for pay to be justified by performance. The support which the report has commanded since its publication, and the fact that those to whom the report is addressed have already begun to act upon its recommendations, are further confirmation both of the value of the group's work and of the effectiveness of the self-regulatory approach that it promotes.

In the short time since the recommendations were published, it has become clear that the Greenbury report will do much to improve accountability and communication with shareholders, and to foster best practice in setting executive remuneration.

The Government welcome the stock exchange's agreement to enforce the Greenbury recommendations through its listing rules, which are binding on listed companies. Since publication of the report, the stock exchange has consulted on the wording of amendments to its listing rules designed to give effect to recommendations contained in the Greenbury report relating to the determination and disclosure of executive directors' remuneration and the explanation of company policy on executive remuneration. The stock exchange has now issued amended listing rules, which will come into effect for reporting periods ending on or after 31 December 1995. It is undertaking further consultation on incorporating other aspects of the Greenbury recommendations into its rules.

The Greenbury recommendations are primarily addressed to listed companies whose shares are traded widely, and the decision of the stock exchange to amend the listing rules is therefore an appropriate way forward. The Government do not propose to duplicate these requirements in legislation, but will seek to ensure that the legislation relating to disclosure of directors' remuneration is consistent with the Greenbury recommendations as implemented through the listing rules. In particular, the Government accept the recommendation that the Companies Act 1985 should be amended to remove overlap with the group's recommendations for full disclosure of directors' remuneration. We also note the conclusions reached by the Greenbury group on the disclosure of pension entitlements, and the recommendation that the information which companies supply on directors' pension entitlements should reflect the value of the pension entitlements to the director, rather than the pension contributions made by the company. We accept the recommendation that the Government should review the Companies Act requirements for disclosure of information on directors' pensions once the technical issues raised by the Greenbury recommendation have been resolved and companies are able to make the new form of disclosure.

We will undertake public consultation on detailed proposals for amending the Companies Act by statutory instrument, which will take account of these two specific recommendations and more generally will ensure consistency of approach between the Companies Act requirements and the Greenbury recommendations.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced his intention to make amendments to the rules on the taxation of executive share options in the next Finance Bill.

The Government welcome the emphasis which the Greenbury report places on accountability to shareholders. We recognise the need to ensure that both institutional investors and private shareholders can continue to play their part in the affairs of the companies in which they invest. A company's annual general meeting provides a focus for shareholder involvement, particularly for private shareholders. Recent events have demonstrated the importance which shareholders rightly attach to the opportunity offered by the annual general meeting to express their views and to debate issues of general concern to the company. This is a matter to which the Employment Select Committee drew particular attention in its recent report on the remuneration of directors and chief executives of privatised utilities. The committee recommended that the Companies Act should be amended to require shareholders' resolutions, where they are supported by a sufficient number of shareholders and are limited in length, to be circulated by the company to all shareholders without cost. The Government will next year be seeking views on the existing statutory rules under which shareholders may table resolutions for discussion at general meetings, and whether any amendments are necessary in order to ensure that the arrangements work effectively without imposing undue burdens either on the company or on its shareholders.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement about the arrangements for providing Export Credits Guarantee Department support to Jordan. [42228]

Mr. Lang: I have been advised by the Export Credits Guarantee Department's accounting officer that, in his view, the risks involved in giving medium-term guarantees for exports to, and investments in, Jordan under sections 1(1) and 2 of the Export and Investment Guarantees Act 1991 do not meet ECGD's normal underwriting criteria.

However, in view of the importance which the Government attach to assisting the economic development of Jordan, given its key role in the middle east peace process, I have instructed him to make arrangements for such guarantees to be issued in support of commercially viable projects which will benefit Jordan's economy. These guarantees will be excluded from ECGD's break-even objective for new business.

European Space Agency Council

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement about the outcome of the recent European Space Agency ministerial Council at Toulouse. [42229]

Mr. Ian Taylor: I attended the meeting at ministerial level of the European Space Agency Council in Toulouse on 19 October. Important decisions were taken which will reinforce ESA's contribution to the UK's industrial and scientific goals for space and to European space collaboration generally. My ministerial colleagues and I agreed unanimously to set a level for the ESA science programme capped at 347 million ESA accounting units a year for 1996-2000, except to the extent that inflation exceeds 3 per cent.—that is, some 15 per cent. below earlier proposals. This decision was vital to allow the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council to devote adequate resources to domestic scientific activity which exploits the opportunities provided by the ESA programme. We endorsed the introduction of reforms to ESA's procurement practices and to internal management and structures, including a 12 per cent. staff reduction, which will significantly improve the agency's value for money and contribution to industrial competitiveness. We further agreed to develop and bring forward proposals in a year's time on industrial policy, including reforms to the agency's system of geographical industrial return. The ecu was adopted as ESA's unit of account, for both national contributions and contracts with industry, a change which also brings about the end of the system of retroactive exchange rate adjustments to member states' contributions. Agreement was reached on the European contribution to the international space station, in which the UK does not participate, and on the Ariane complementary programmes for which I indicated political support. A further formal ministerial meeting was envisaged to take space in Belgium in 1998, together with an informal meeting at the end of next year.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41747]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: Private finance was used in the refurbishment of the DTI's premises at 1 Victoria street and the relocation of the Radiocommunications Agency to South Quay 3 in docklands. These projects were valued at £68 million and £5.5 million respectively and were completed in the current financial year. Commercial rents will be paid in respect of the buildings. No further projects have yet been approved under PFI but all DTI projects are now considered under the initiative and likely proposals have been identified.

Export Licences

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if the practice not to disclose details of export licences has precluded providing information on the country of origin and destination of goods which are the subject of trans-shipment licences on every occasion that applications for such information has been made in 1993. [42018]

Mr. Nelson: To ascertain whether the practice precluded the provision of such information in 1993 would involve disproportionate cost. I would refer the hon. Member to my answer to her on 1 November 1995, *Official Report,* column *354–35.*

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if export licences have been applied for or granted for the export of logging trucks to Jakarta, Indonesia, in the past five years. [42017]

Mr. Nelson: None in the period 1990 to 1995. Examination of manual records for earlier years would entail disproportionate costs.

Electronic Batons (Exports)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what were the countries of origin and the destinations of the electronic batons which were covered by transhipment licences issued in *(a)* 1985, *(b)* 1986, *(c)* 1987, *(d)* 1988, *(e)* 1989 and *(f)* 1990. [40650]

Mr. Oppenheim: No transhipment licenses for such goods were issued in 1989 or 1990. To confirm the position in respect of the earlier years could be undertaken only at disproportionate cost.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by his Department and the Export Credits Guarantee Department relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42054]

Mr. Nelson: Ministers, former Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Westcountry Development Corporation

Mr. Harvey: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what consideration the Government have given to the Westcountry development corporation's Coopers and Lybrand report about public sector funding of the south-west; and what action it intends to take in response. [41646]

Mr. Page: The Prime Minister commissioned the regional director of the Government office for the south-west to evaluate the claims made in the Coopers and Lybrand report and to report back. That report is with Ministers. My hon. Friend the Minister for Trade and the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Urban Regeneration are meeting Westcountry development corporation on 5 December to discuss the report. The findings of the report will be made public soon after.

Gas-powered Domestic Water Heaters

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many people have died or been injured by accidents due to a fault in gas-powered domestic water heaters in each of the past four years. [41668]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: The estimated numbers of people receiving treatment at accident and emergency units in the United Kingdom, for injuries from faults in gas-powered water heaters, are presented in the table. The corresponding numbers for fatalities in England and Wales are also given. However the figure for 1993, normally provided by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, is not available.

Data year	*Non-fatal accidents (UK)*	*Fatalities (England and Wales)*
1990	56	0
1991	114	1
1992	88	2
1993	50	0

Nuclear Material (Road Transport)

Mr. MacShane: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what discussions he has had with the Association of Chief Police Officers about escorting nuclear material by road. [41618]

Mr. Page: None. The escort of nuclear materials is carried out, where necessary, by the UK Atomic Energy Authority constabulary, with whom the appropriate arrangements are in place. These include provision for notification of local Home Office and Scottish Office police forces, where appropriate.

GIAT of France

Mr. McWilliam: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what contact there has been between Ministers or civil servants and Royal Ordnance or BAe regarding the setting up of a joint company or other arrangement involving GIAT of France; and if he will make a statement. [41636]

Mr. Eggar: My Department has regular contact with British Aerospace about collaborative opportunities, including possible arrangements between Royal Ordnance and GIAT. These discussions are commercially confidential.

British American Business Groups

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the total number of British-American business groups in the United Kingdom with whom his Department is in contact; and if he will make a statement. [41860]

Mr. Nelson: My Department has regular contact with a number of associations in the United Kingdom interested in promoting trade with the USA, including the British-American chamber of commerce in London and the British-American business groups in the north-west and in Bristol.

Consultancy Brokerage Service

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade with what he intends to replace the Consultancy Brokerage Service; and at what cost to public funds. [42005]

Mr. Page: The Consultancy Brokerage Service will not be replaced by any centrally driven initiative.

My Department will, however, be working with business links to ensure that they each have in place an acceptable approach to consultant selection. The Department would not rule out a modest contribution to the development of that work but no applications for support have been agreed nor have any funds been allocated.

Manufacturing Labour Costs

Sir John Stanley: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what are the manufacturing labour costs per hour in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* each EU country for which equivalent figures are available, *(c)* the USA, *(d)* Canada and *(e)* Japan at the latest available date. [41871]

Mr. Oppenheim: The information is provided in the table.

International comparisons of hourly compensation costs in US Dollars for production workers in manufacturing, 1994

Country	*Hourly compensation costs in US Dollars*
United Kingdom	13.62
Germany	27.31
Belgium	22.97
Austria	21.73
Netherlands	20.91
Denmark	20.44
Finland	18.89
Sweden	18.81
France	17.04
Italy	16.16
Spain	11.45
Portugal	4.57
Canada	15.68
USA	17.10
Japan	21.42

Source:

"International Comparisons of Hourly Compensation Costs for production Workers in Manufacturing, 1994. Supplementary tables".

"US Department of Labour—Bureau of Labour Statistics.

World Trade (Shares)

Sir John Stanley: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the share of world trade held by each of the 20 countries in the world that had the largest shares of world trade in 1979; and if he will provide the equivalent information for the most recent year for which figures are available. [41870]

Mr. Oppenheim: The answer is in the following table:

Shares of world visible exports—20 largest exporters 1979 and 1994

Rank	*Country*	*Per cent. share*
1979		
1	USA	11.9
2	F R Germany	11.3
3	Japan	6.7
4	France	6.6
5	UK	5.7
6	Italy	4.7
7	Netherlands	4.2
8	Saudi Arabia	3.8
9	Canada	3.8
10	Belgium/Luxembourg	3.7
11	Sweden	1.8
12	Switzerland	1.7
13	USSR	1.7
14	Iraq	1.3
15	Kuwait	1.2
16	Iran	1.2
17	South Africa	1.2
18	Spain	1.2
19	Nigeria	1.1
20	Libya	1.1
1994		
1	USA	12.2
2	Germany	10.0
3	Japan	9.4
4	France	5.7
5	UK	4.9
6	Italy	4.5
7	Canada	3.9
8	Hong Kong[1]	3.6

Shares of world visible exports—20 largest exporters 1979 and 1994

Rank	*Country*	*Per cent. share*
9	Netherlands	3.2
10	China	2.9
11	Belgium/Luxembourg	2.6
12	Singapore[1]	2.3
13	Korea	2.3
14	Taiwan	2.2
15	Spain	1.8
16	Switzerland	1.7
17	Russia	1.5
18	Sweden	1.5
19	Malaysia	1.4
20	Mexico	1.4

Note:

[1] Includes significant re-exports.

Source:

IMF Direction of Trade.

Artillery Shells

Mr. Simpson: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what were the number and value of 155 mm shells and cartridges produced for export by the United Kingdom in each of the years 1980 and 1990; and to which countries these items were exported. [42063]

Mr. Nelson: This is a matter for my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement, and I refer the hon. Member to his answer of today.

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the President of the Board of Trade, pursuant to the reply of the Attorney-General of 30 October, *Official Report,* column *12* relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and if he will further indicate the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41206]

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to him today by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the hon. Member for Boothferry (Mr. Davis).

BCCI

Mr. Vaz: To ask the President of the Board of Trade when he last met the liquidators of BCCI to discuss progress with the liquidation. [41288]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* My officials last met the joint liquidators on 31 March 1995.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many creditors reports have been published by the liquidators of BCCI. [41289]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* Three annual reports to the Secretary of State made under regulation 14 of the Insolvency Regulations 1994 have been made available to the creditors of BCCI. In addition, the joint liquidators have reported to the creditors on specific issues as they have arisen in the liquidation.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement on the outstanding settlement issues in the BCCI liquidation. [41290]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* No. These are matters for the joint liquidators.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how much creditors' money is currently held by the liquidators of BCCI. [41291]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The joint liquidators are holding funds of £415 million. Additional sums have been recovered and are held in pool realisation accounts on behalf of the pooled liquidation. Sums held in these accounts currently amount to $694 million.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how much money has been recovered by the liquidators of BCCI since the liquidation commenced. [41292]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The joint liquidators had recovered £694 million since their appointment. In addition, $694 million has been recovered directly into pooled realisation accounts by the liquidators of the pooled liquidation.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how much money has been received by the liquidators of BCCI from *(a)* the USA settlements *(b)* other parties and *(c)* the sale of First American bank. [41291]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The pooled liquidations have received $487 million in respect of American settlements. The liquidators of the pooled liquidations have not yet received any funds from the sale of the First American bank.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what has been the total of fees taken by the liquidators of BCCI, Touche Ross, in respect of the liquidation *(a)* in dollars, *(b)* in £ sterling. [41295]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* Total authorised fees drawn by the joint liquidators to 15 October 1995 amount to £116 million.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what has been the total fees taken by the solicitors acting for the liquidators of BCCI Messrs Lovell White Durrant in respect of the liquidation *(a)* in dollars and *(b)* £ sterling. [41296]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* Legal fees paid to Messrs Lovell White Durrant and other solicitors by the joint liquidators amount to approximately £50 million.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the President of the Board of Trade when he now expects the creditors of BCCI to receive their first compensation payment. [41297]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The joint liquidators have advised my officials that the timing and amount of any distribution to creditors is dependent on the determination of the appeal currently before the Court in Luxembourg.

Felixstowe-Zeebrugge Ferry Service

Mr. David Porter: To ask the President of the Board of Trade when his Department was first informed of the closure of the P and O ferry service from Felixstowe to Zeebrugge; what steps his officials took to assess the impact of the closure on the economy of Suffolk; and if he will now make a statement. [41082]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* My Department was first made aware of the closure of the Felixstowe to Zeebrugge ferry service on 27 September. While regrettable, the closure of the service is a commercial matter for the company. The Government office for eastern region monitors the state of the economy in Suffolk but no separate assessment has been made of the impact of the closure of the ferry service.

Felixstowe is this country's largest container port. It is expanding and only two weeks ago exceeded its own container handling records. I have no plans to make a statement.

Post Office Closures

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what steps he is taking to prevent post office closures in rural areas. [41687]

Mr. Oppenheim *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* The commercial prospects of the network of post offices have already been much enhanced by Government initiatives on automation, and on freedom to take on new business. We will continue to work with the Post Office to make sure that the benefits of these initiatives are captured.

Rom Data Corporation

Mr. Jamieson: To ask the President of the Board of Trade, pursuant to his answer of 2 March, *Official Report*, column *719*, if his Department was aware of the previous business and bankruptcy record of directors of Rom Data Corporation in Cornwall before making grants to the Company in *(a)* 1991–92 and *(b)* 1994. [34648]

Mr. Lang *[pursuant to his reply, 19 July 1995, c. 1562]:* The Department has now conducted its own investigation into the circumstances of the regional selective assistance grant made to the Rom Data Corporation and has passed the relevant information to the SFO, which has agreed to investigate the matter further. In addition, the Department's internal inquiries to date suggest that the background to the directors of the Rom Data Corporation may not have been investigated at the time that the decision was made to make the grant in 1991, in which case the replies given by my hon. Friends on 2 March 1995, column *719* and 19 July 1995, columns *1561–62* may not be correct. As soon as these inquiries have been completed, I will report further.

SCOTLAND

Toll Exemptions

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the exemptions for which vehicles displaying disabled orange badges are eligible on the *(a)* Tay bridge *(b)* Erskine bridge *(c)* Forth road bridge and *(d)* Skye bridge. [40141]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Disabled persons who display orange badges on their vehicles to officers at the Tay, Erskine and Forth road bridge toll booths and complete the appropriate form are exempt from tolls. The procedure applies for each trip across these bridges. Disabled drivers who are exempt from payment of vehicle excise duty are exempt from tolls on Skye bridge. Other users of Skye bridge can buy a book of 10 tickets and can cross at £2.44 for each journey. This is less than the 50 per cent. fare reduction provision—£2.70—offered by the ferry operators, Caledonian MacBrayne, for vehicles displaying an orange badge whose drivers can produce documentary proof of their disability. The exemption arrangements were put before the public local inquiry which considered the Skye bridge toll arrangements and no objections were received. However, I have written to the chairman of Skye Bridge Ltd. in order to discuss the exemption arrangements.

Caledonian MacBrayne

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the annual revenue earned by Caledonian MacBrayne from carriage of commercial goods vehicles on all routes to and from the Western Isles in *(a)* 1980, *(b)* 1985, *(c)* 1990 and *(d)* 1995 at 1995 values. [40140]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is set out in the table:

Year	*Revenue £000*	*RPI adjusted (base December 1994) £000*
1980	1,190	2,582
1985	1,530	2,341
1990	2,193	2,527
1994–95	2,566	2,566

Sporting Venues (Security)

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consideration has been given to the establishment of an inspectorate for sport to lay down basic rules for security and safety at sporting venues following the death of boxer, James Murray. [41129]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: There are a number of provisions in place to deal with security and safety at sporting venues in Scotland, including powers under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976 and the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980. There are no plans to adjust these provisions or to establish an inspectorate for sport. Medical safeguards for boxing are matters for the British Boxing Board of Control and have recently been the subject of a review.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total workforce; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41116]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Breakdowns by department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—normally those engaged for a period of up to 12 months, but, exceptionally, up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

Farm Woodland Premium Schemes

Mr. Lord: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the cost to public funds of the farm woodland premium schemes in the years ended March 1993, 1994 and 1995; and what is the projected cost for each of the next two years. [40882]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: Expenditure in Scotland on annual payments to farmers participating in the farm woodland scheme and farm woodland premium scheme in each of the last three financial years, estimated expenditure for the current year and the existing PES provision for next year, are shown in the table.

£ Thousand

	Actual expenditure *1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*Current estimate 1995–96*	*Existing PES provision 1996–97*
Farm woodland scheme (closed to new applicants 31 March 1992)	446	461	414	470	470
Farm woodland premium scheme (opened 1 April 1992)	14	485	1,089	1,650	2,200
Total	460	946	1,503	2,120	2,670

Official Inquiries

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all the official inquiries the Lord Advocate's Department has undertaken over the last five years indicating the dates they were initiated and the dates when findings were released to the public. [41454]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Lord Advocate's Department has not undertaken any official inquiries in the last five years. On 14 September 1992, W. A. Nimmo Smith QC and J. D. Friel, regional procurator fiscal of north Strathclyde, were invited by the Lord Advocate to undertake an inquiry into an allegation of a conspiracy to pervert the course of justice in Scotland. Their report was ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 26 January 1993.

Forests

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what financial aid he intends to provide to rural local councils to maintain public access to forests. [41705]

Mr. Kynoch: The Government appreciate the value of our forests for access and recreation, and we have taken steps to strengthen the arrangements for making agreements to maintain public access to forests which are sold by the Forestry Commission. The commission will meet the local authorities' legal costs in drawing up these agreements.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the mean *(a)* tier one payment and *(b)* tier two payment for each environmentally sensitive area in Scotland. [41701]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: The information is set out in the table.

£

	Mean tier 1 payment during 1994–95	*Mean tier 2 payment during 1994–95*
Breadalbane	1,602	3,735
Loch Lomond	1,469	1,369
Stewartry	1,120	4,431
Central Borders	1,200	3,500
Machair of the Uists and Benbecula, Barra and Vatersay	323	975
Central Southern Uplands	952	4,235
Western Southern Uplands	912	5,305
Cairngorms Straths	1,722	3,899
Argyll Islands	1,099	0
Shetland Islands	601	1,570

Mrs. Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total payment for each environmentally sensitive area in Scotland for the past two fiscal years. [41703]

Mr. Robertson: The information is set out in the table.

	£ 1993–94	*£ 1994–95*
Breadalbane	154,000	229,000
Loch Lomond	77,000	77,000
Machair of the Uists and Benbecula, Barra and Vatersay	215,000	109,000
Stewartry	453,000	335,000
Central Borders (formerly known as Whitlaw/Eildon)	50,000	36,000
Central Southern Uplands	11,000	150,000
Western Southern Uplands	3,000	59,000
Cairngorms Straths	—	17,000
Argyll Islands	—	24,000
Shetland Islands	—	8,000
Total	963,000	1,044,000

Mrs. Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many units in each environmentally sensitive area were entered under tier one only in Scotland. [41702]

Mr. Robertson: The total number of agreements under the Scottish environmentally sensitive area scheme is 930: the numbers containing tier one requirements only are set out in the table below:

	Number[1]
Central Southern Uplands	34
Western Southern Uplands	14
Stewartry	4
Argyll Islands	1

[1] As at 3 November 1995.

Decommissioning

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of applications for fishing vessel decommissioning in the most recent decommissioning round received from each port of registration in Scotland from which applications were received; and what was the number of successful applications in each case. [41261]

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* The table lists by port the number of decommissioning applications received in Scotland under the third round of the scheme, and the number of successful applications in each case:-

Port	*Number of applications received*	*Number of successful applications*
Aberdeen	2	2
Arbroath	4	4
Ayr	7	7
Buckie	2	0
Campbeltown	3	1
Eyemouth	3	1
Fraserburgh	6	5
Kirkwall	3	2
Lerwick	5	0
Lossiemouth	3	2
Mallaig	4	3
Macduff	2	0
Oban	1	1
Peterhead	5	4
Pittenweem	1	0
Stornoway	10	10
Total	61	42

Rules and Regulations

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement. [41539]

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given earlier by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and in how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41540]

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* My Department has an interest in two of the draft deregulation proposals laid to date. The explanatory document which is presented to the Committee alongside each draft order contains an assessment of the benefits, including any cost savings, to business and to any other persons whom the draft order is intended to benefit.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41558]

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* The Scottish Office is currently taking forward the review or repeal of legislation in areas as diverse as the sale of farmed salmon roe, social work, slaughterhouses and town and country planning. The requirement to carry out a compliance cost assessment applies to regulations which impose additional burdens on business while the programme of repeals and amendments is concerned with reducing the burden.

NATIONAL HERITAGE

Archaeological Sites

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list the archaeological sites that have been revealed as *(a)* crop marks and *(b)* parch marks in field as a result of aerial photography during the last 12 months. [40006]

Mr. Sproat: Archaeological aerial photography is carried out in England by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, supported by regional aerial archaeologists assisted by RCHME grants. I am pleased to say that advantage was taken of the recent exceptional drought and additional funds were made available to survey Stonehenge and other nationally important areas. However, it is not the RCHME's practice to distinguish between buried archaeological sites displayed in cereal and other arable plants, knows as, "crop marks", and those presenting themselves under conditions of exceptional drought in grass, known as "parch marks". For the purposes of recording and interpretation, parch marks are regarded as a specialised sub-category of crop mark. A list of photographs showing crop marks is not available in an abbreviated form, although details and copies of all photographs funded by grants are readily available for consultation at the RCHME's headquarters in Swindon.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as a revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41743]

Mr. Sproat: In the Department of National Heritage, which includes its two agencies, five projects have been approved to date:

(i) Royal Armouries project (Historic Royal Palaces Agency;
(ii) Hampton Court catering (Historic Royal Palaces Agency);
(iii) Dell Restaurant (Royal Parks Agency);
(iv) Lido, Hyde Park (Royal Parks Agency);
(v) Car Parking, Regents Park and Hyde Park (Royal Parks Agency).

In the bodies sponsored by the Department, one project has so far been approved, for computer equipment for the British Library.

The total value of these projects is:

(i) Royal Armouries: £42.7 million
(ii) Hampton Court: £1.3 million
(iii) Dell Restaurant, Regents Park £0.8 million
(iv) Lido, Hyde Park: £0.5 million
(v) Car parking, Regents Park and Hyde Park: £0.1 million; and,
(vi) British Library computer equipment: £0.55 million.

The initial and continuing public sector contributions are:

	Initial £ million	*Continuing*
(i) Royal Armouries	1.5	£18.5 million over the five years 1993–98
(ii) Hampton Court catering	0.3[1] (1995–96)	+ £0.17 million to date
(iii) Dell Restaurant, Regents Park	0.14	Small positive annual return expected.
(iv) Lido, Hyde Park	0.3	Small positive annual return expected.
(v) Car Parking, Regents Park and Hyde Park	None	+£0.275 million to date (1995–96)
(vi) British Library computer equipment	None	None

[1] Positive figures indicate that projects generate income, and require no continuing revenue support.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40736]

Mr. Sproat: The Department of National Heritage was established in 1992 and figures are not therefore available before the 1992–93 financial year. The cost of ministerial use of the Government car service in the years for which information is available is as follows:

£ thousands
1992–93: 167.2[1]
1993–94: 192.7
1994–95: 151.3

[1] Figure includes cost attributable to Permanent Secretary's office.

No allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles.

Stonehenge

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what success she had had in carrying out the pledges made by the Government in respect of the protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of the world heritage site at Stonehenge; and if she will make a statement. [40005]

Mr. Sproat: Stonehenge, with its surrounding landscape, is one of the most important of Europe's pre-historic monuments. Its significance is recognised by its designation as a world heritage site. The Government fully support the efforts of English Heritage and the National Trust to improve the setting of the stones and provide better facilities for visitors. The possible re-routing of the A303 trunk road is a key factor in any plans for improving the Stonehenge landscape. Discussions have taken place between the Department of Transport, the Ministry of Defence, English Heritage, and my Department; and the Highways Agency will be holding a planning conference in early November for public discussion of route options.

Special Adviser

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what is the job description of her special adviser Mr. John Bercow; how many other applicants applied for the post; what is his salary and length of service contract; and if she will make a statement. [39517]

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: With the approval of the Prime Minister, and after interviewing a number of candidates, I appointed Mr. Bercow personally as my special adviser. For special advisers' roles and salary arrangements, I refer the hon. Member to the reply that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave to the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. McMaster) on 28 February 1995, at columns *484–85*. The appointments of special advisers terminate in the circumstances set out in the model appointment letter for special advisers. A copy is in the Library.

Public Libraries

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage, further to her Department's press release, "Public Libraries in the 1990s," if she will list all the lottery awards made to public libraries to date. [38746]

Mr. Sproat: There have been five awards made to public libraries to date. The awards are as follows:

Distributing Body	*Date*	*Recipient*	*Region*	*Amount* £
Arts Council of Wales	24 March 1995	The Cardiff Old Library Trust	Cardiff	2,000,000
Arts Council of Wales	17 July 1995	Clwyd Library and Information Service	Mold	6,000
Scottish Arts Council	1 September 1995	Scottish Poetry Library	Edinburgh	506,301
The National Heritage Memorial Fund	19 September 1995	Tameside Central Library	Ashton-Under-Lyne	1,400,000
The Arts Council of England	21 September 1995	Bradford Central Lending Library	Bradford	58.310

In addition, the Ruskin library at the university of Lancaster has been awarded a grant of £2,314,259 to provide a new home for the world's greatest collection of the works of John Ruskin, the 19th-century social reformer and critic. Though the library is not, in essence, a public lending library, the award will make the collection easily accessible to the general public for the first time.

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list the number of functioning public libraries in England annually since 1979. [41718]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* Such information is contained in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's "Public Library Statistics", copies of which are held in the House Library. The latest actual information is for 1993–94, but estimates are available for 1994–95.

Television Cabling

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what is the percentage of the land area of each county in England which is *(a)* cabled and *(b)* currently being cabled. [41672]

Mr. Sproat: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will give powers to the Independent Television Commission to alter and amend the boundaries of a local delivery area proposed by a cable franchise applicant so as not to exclude sizeable towns and adjacent settlements. [41674]

Mr. Sproat: The Broadcasting Act 1990 gives the ITC powers to determine the areas to be covered by local delivery licences and to alter those areas when licences come up for renewal.

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many local delivery cable franchise areas stand alone and are not contiguous with another. [41673]

Mr. Sproat: Nineteen of the 127 cable franchises awarded by the Cable Authority, and two of the 22 local delivery franchises advertised by the Independent Television Commission, which replaced the authority, stand alone and are not contiguous with another.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney : To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many staff are currently employed in her Department and in related agencies, on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts given (i) as an internal figure and (ii) as a proportion of the total work force. [41127]

Mr. Sproat: Breakdowns by Department and executive agencies for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the numbers of casual staff—normally those engaged for a two-year period of up to 12 months, but exceptionally up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

Concessionary Television Licences

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what recent representations she has received from *(a)* pensioners and *(b)* other bodies urging the abolition of the television licence concession in favour of a low-cost television licence for all pensioners. [41675]

Mr. Sproat: The Government receive regular representations from and on behalf of pensioners, calling either for the extension of the concessionary television licence scheme or for reduced fee licences for all pensioners. There are few specific requests to abolish the concessionary scheme.

Sport (Disabled People)

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what part the British Academy of Sport will be playing in the furtherance of sailing for the blind and sailing for disabled people; and when she expects to make an announcement on plans for disabled sports men and women. [41593]

Mr. Sproat: The precise functions of the British Academy of Sport will not be decided until the Sports Council's consultation is completed and bids to establish it are invited. The Government have no plans to make an announcement on disabled sports men and women, though we expect that the measures and recommendations announced in the sports policy statement, "Sport: Raising the Game", which the Government published on 14 July, will be interpreted and adapted for all sportsmen and women, regardless of their individual circumstances.

Mr. Field: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many medals *(a)* able-bodied and *(b)* disabled British sailing sports men and women have won in the last four years. [41592]

Mr. Sproat: I understand from the Royal Yachting Association that British crews have won a total of 18 medals in International Yacht Racing Union sanctioned world championships in the last four years, and one medal at the 1992 Olympic games. In the same period, disabled British sailors have won a total of five medals in their respective world championships and the 1992 Paralympics.

Mr. Field: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what proportion of British athletes took medals at *(a)* the last Olympic games and *(b)* the last Paralympic games. [41591]

Mr. Sproat: A total of 45 British competitors from a team of 389 won medals in 20 events at the 1992 Olympic games; 83 from a team of 205 won 128 medals at the 1992 Barcelona Paralympics; and 26 from a team of 93 won 11 medals at the 1992 Madrid Paralympics.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from her Department; and in how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41528]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* My Department has not yet laid any draft orders before the Committee.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what regulations her Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if she proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41552]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* There are no plans to repeal any further legislation by the end of 1995, but we are currently consulting on a number of proposals for deregulation. The requirement to carry out a compliance cost assessment applies to regulations which impose additional burdens on business, while the programme of repeals and amendments is concerned with reducing the burden.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list the rules and regulations she proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if she will make a statement. [41527]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the oral answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 6 November 1995, *Official Report*, column 590.

National Lottery

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what estimate her Department has made of the short-term effects of the balances held by the lottery distribution fund on the PSBR; and what discussions her Department has had with Her Majesty's Treasury on this matter. [40087]

Mr. Sproat: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury today. My Department has regular discussions with Her Majesty's Treasury and exchanges information on the flow of lottery funds which enable it to assess the effect of lottery funds on the PSBR.

Dr. John Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what steps she is taking to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of Millennium Commission funds between Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the regions of England. [41226]

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what guidelines she has *(a)* given and *(b)* proposed for determining the geographical balance of grants from the millennium fund as between *(a)* Wales, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Northern Ireland, *(d)* England and *(e)* the regions of England; and if she will make a statement. [40725]

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Millennium Commission has been directed by the former Secretary of State for National Heritage under the section 26 directions concerning matters to be taken into account when making funding decisions. Direction 2 (H) states that the Millennium Commission shall take into account

"the objective of ensuring that major projects are supported in each country of the United Kingdom".

The spread of national lottery awards on a regional basis is a matter for the Millennium Commission. The commission seeks to ensure a fair geographical distribution of lottery proceeds. In its second round of awards the commission is encouraging applications from those regions which submitted few in the first round.

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will make it her policy to make available figures for the distribution of national lottery proceeds by constituency. [41237]

Mr. Sproat: My Department is currently developing a dedicated database system which will enable me to make available figures on the distribution of national lottery proceeds across the United Kingdom by constituency.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list the distribution of grants awarded by the Millennium Commission between Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the regions of England in both monetary and percentage terms. [41228]

Mr. Sproat: A report on the distribution of national lottery proceeds is placed in the Library of the House each month which includes information in the format requested. The October edition will be placed in the Library of the House in the coming week.

Ms Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will give a breakdown by standard planning region of lottery grants since the introduction of the national lottery. [41221]

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list the total lottery moneys allocated to be spent to date within each of the English regions, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. [41234]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* A report on the distribution of national lottery proceeds is placed in the Library of the House each month which includes information in the format requested. The October edition will be placed in the Library of the House in the coming week.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what proposals she has for providing representation from Wales in the membership of the Millennium Commission. [40728]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Members of the Millennium Commission are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. They are not appointed to represent specific areas of the United Kingdom. The commissioners have a broad range of experience and travel widely before making any decisions concerning the allocation of national lottery funds.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many individuals in *(a)* her Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies received annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeding (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in each year since 1985–86. [40860]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies and NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pension scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules which have been deposited in the Library of the House.

The Department of National Heritage was created in April 1992. It has two agencies—the Historic Royal Palaces Agency, created in October 1989, and the Royal Parks Agency, created in April 1993. Prior to the year 1994–95 no staff in the Department of National Heritage, its agencies and non-departmental bodies received annual remuneration above £100,000. The numbers receiving annual remuneration above the sums specified in the following year was:

Organisation	*1994–95*
Department of National Heritage	0
DNH agencies	0
DNH non-departmental public bodies	1

Notes:

1. The above figures relate to staff based in the United Kingdom.
2. Figures for the current financial year 1995–96 will not be available until after the end of the financial year.

No staff received remuneration in excess of £200,000.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full-time salary paid to any employee in her (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40861]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands.

Organisation	*1994–95* £	*1995–96* £
The lowest full-time salary fell within the following bands		
Department of National Heritage	5,000–9,999	5,000–9,999
DNH agencies	5,000–9,999	5,000–9,999
DNH non-departmental public bodies	0–4,999	0–4,999
The highest full-time salary fell within the following bands		
Department of National Heritage	85,000–89,999	90,000–94,999
DNH agencies	60,000–64,999	60,000–64,999
DNH non-departmental public bodies	100,000–104,999	100,000–104,999

Notes:

1. The above figures relate to staff based in the United Kingdom.
2. Figures for the current financial year 1995–96 are estimates only (actual figures will not be available until after the end of the financial year).

TREASURY

Gross Domestic Product

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the per capita gross domestic product for each of the 20 countries in the world that had the highest wealth per head in 1979; and if he will list the equivalent information for the most recent year for which figures are available. [41869]

Mrs. Angela Knight: The figures requested are available only for countries who are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The most recent year for which data are available is 1993. These are shown in "National Accounts Main Aggregates: Volume 1", published by the OECD and held in the House of Commons Library.

Shareholding

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many individuals in the United Kingdom he estimates were shareholders in the 1979; and how many he estimates are shareholders at the latest date for which figures are available. [41873]

Mrs. Angela Knight: In 1979 there were 3 million shareholders in the United Kingdom. The figure had risen to 10 million by 1993.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by *(a)* the Treasury, *(b)* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and *(c)* the Bank of England relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42080]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Ministers, former Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many persons in *(a)* the Treasury, *(b)* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and *(c)* the Bank of England are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or a full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list their names; and how much each is paid. [42048]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: There are no staff in the Treasury wholly employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry. In HM Customs and Excise, there are two staff wholly employed on these matters and their direct salary cost is £36,114 per annum. It is not possible to identify the number of people involved on a part-time or occasional basis, but the amount so far spent by the Treasury on external advice is very small. HM Customs and Excise has so far spent £4,112.50. It is not the practice to name staff or external advisers.

Bank of England staff or consultancy costs would not be public expenditure. I understand that no Bank of England staff are wholly employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry, and the bank has incurred no expenditure on external advice.

Disposable Incomes

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average annual money increase in net disposable income *(a)* between 1974 and May 1979 and *(b)* between June 1979 and the present date at constant prices. [41880]

Mrs. Angela Knight: The average annual increase in real personal disposable income at 1990 prices between the first quarter of 1974 and the first quarter of 1979 was £1.27 billion. Between the second quarter of 1979 and the second quarter of 1995 the average increase was £1.97 billion.

Inflation

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average annual rate of inflation from *(a)* 1974 to May 1979 and *(b)* June 1979 to date. [41881]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Between the start of 1974 and May 1979 the average rate of inflation, as measured by the retail prices index, was 15.5 per cent. per annum. This compares with 6.3 per cent. for the period June 1979 to September 1995, the latest month for which information is available.

Strikes

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average annual number of working days lost through strikes *(a)* from 1974 to 1979 and *(b)* from 1979 to date. [41878]

Mrs. Angela Knight: The average annual number of working days lost in the United Kingdom through strikes from 1974 to 1979 was 12.2 million and from 1979 to 1994 was 6.6 million.

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the number of working days lost through strikes in *(a)* 1978 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available. [41879]

Mrs. Knight: In 1978, 9.4 million days were lost to strikes in the United Kingdom. This compares with a 1994 total of 278,000.

Private Medical Insurance

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the cost of tax relief on private medical insurance for those over 60 years who are non-taxpayers. [39093]

Mr. Jack: Relief is given to all individuals, whether taxpayers or not, who pay qualifying private medical insurance premiums for those aged 60 or over. The cost of giving relief to non-taxpayers is estimated to be £3 million in 1995–96.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which he is responsible. [39494]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Estimated outturn for 1994–95 and plans for 1995–96 for civil service manpower and pay bill are set out in the Treasury's annual report, Cm 2817, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House. A breakdown by grade and individual agency could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

National Lottery

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the effects of the moneys held by the national lottery distribution fund on the public sector borrowing requirement. [40085]

Mr. Waldegrave: So far, the direct effect of the moneys held by the national lottery distribution fund has been to reduce the PSBR by £1.1 billion. This reflects timing lags between receipt of the money into the NLDF and its spending on good causes.

The effect of the lottery on the PSBR will be unwound in due course as the NLDF runs down its surplus by increasing its grants to good causes.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the impact on the public sector borrowing requirement of the national lottery, distinguishing between revenue raised through taxation, lottery money not yet distributed and lottery money remaining unclaimed. [40778]

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The table gives the relevant figures. The direct impact of the national lottery, before allowing for the displacement of other tax receipts, was to reduce the PSBR by £0.4 billion in 1994–95. The summer economic forecast projected that the direct effect of the lottery would be to reduce the PSBR by £1.4 billion in 1995–96. This assumed lottery spending of £5 billion.

Lottery prize money that remains unclaimed after 180 days is paid into the national lottery distribution fund. At the end of September, unclaimed lottery prize money received by the NLDF was £15 million.

The effect of the lottery on the PSBR will be unwound in due course as the NLDF runs down its surplus by increasing its grants to the good causes.

The direct effects of the lottery on the PSBR

	Outturn 1994–95	*Forecast 1995–96*
		£million
Receipts		
Betting duty on Lottery	104	600
Payments into the NLDF	295	1,350
Total General Government Receipts	399	1,950
Payments		
Payments from the NLDF	6	550
Total General Government Expenditure	6	550
PSBR	–393	—1,400

To date the total receipts of the NLDF, including interest, are £1.2 billion. This includes unclaimed prize money of £15 million. Deductions from the NLDF, for payment of both expenses and draw down to distributing bodies, so far totals £71.7 million. To date 2,329 projects have been approved, with a total value of £671 million. Most of the schemes approved are for capital spending, with a resultant lag between commitment and cash flow from the NLDF.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the effect on the public sector borrowing requirement in the first six months of 1995–96 of the cash flows associated with the receipts and disbursements of national lottery funds; and if he will make a statement. [40825]

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* The table gives the relevant figures. The direct impact of the lottery, before allowing for the displacement of other tax receipts, was to reduce the PSBR by £1 billion in the first six months of 1995–96.

The effect of the lottery on the PSBR will be unwound in due course, as the NLDF runs down its surplus by increasing grants to the good causes.

The direct effects of the lottery on the PSBR in the first six months of 1995–96

	£ million
Receipts	
Lottery duty	307
Payments into the distribution fund	747
Total general Government receipts	1,054
Payments	
Payments from the distribution fund	52
Total General Government Expenditure	52
PSBR	–1,002

To date, the total receipts of the NLDF, including interest, are £1.2 billion. This includes unclaimed prize money of £15 million. Deductions from the NLDF, for payment of both expenses and draw-down to distributing bodies, so far totals £71.7 million. To date 2329 projects have been approved, with a total value of £671 million. Most of the schemes approved are for capital spending, with a resultant lag between commitment and cash flow from the NLDF.

Child Allowances

Mr. Peter Bottomley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the comparative administrative costs of child allowances made available as *(a)* cash payments by (i) order and (ii) direct deposit in family accounts and *(b)* tax allowances to (i) one parent and (ii) to either parent, noting the burden in each case on employers. [41137]

Mr. Jack: The total administration costs of child benefit and one-parent benefit were estimated to be £132 million in 1993–94, the latest year for which information is available. It is not possible to split the costs between payments made by order book and those made by automated credit transfer.

The administrative costs of the other items listed would depend on the nature of such schemes.

Mr. Bottomley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for a cost-effective, fair solution to the problem of a taxable child cash allowance being worth more to a married couple with one person earning £100,000 than to a married couple with each earning £15,000. [41140]

Mr. Jack: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on tax matters at this point in the Budget cycle.

Alcohol Tax

Mr. Peter Bottomley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the assumptions for the calculations of the estimated revenue for taxation on whisky and whiskey before and after the last three proposed changes; and if he will estimate the actual revenue in the current year and the past two years and *(b)* the revenue maximising tax rate. [41141]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The estimated revenue effects for changes in spirits taxation follow normal practice. The responsiveness of spirits sales to changes in price is based on elasticities produced by the Institute for Fiscal Studies. It is assumed that changes in duty are fully passed on to consumers and that consumers' real incomes are constant. The effect on revenue reflects both the changes in revenue from spirits itself and also the change in revenue from diversion of expenditure into or from other goods as a result of the duty change,

The actual revenue from excise duty on spirits in the last two years and the forecast for the current year are as follows:

Revenue (spirits)

	£ billion
Actual 1993–94	1.7
Actual 1994–95	1.8
Forecast 1995–96	1.9

The assumptions underlying the revenue costings described imply that current duty levels are below the revenue maximising rate.

Unemployment

Sir Ralph Howell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the basis for the figure of

£13.2 billion as the total cost for unemployment for 1992–93 as given by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury in a letter dated 13 October 1993, ref.cst.ps/dr/llmp12.10, to the hon. Member for Norfolk, North; and if he will publish figures showing the overall cost of unemployment for 1993–94 and 1994–95 calculated on the same basis. [41375]

Mr. Waldegrave: The figure in my predecessor's letter was not an estimate of the cost of unemployment. It was simply the total public expenditure on various items specified by my hon. Friend. The corresponding figures for 1993–94 and 1994–95 are estimated at £14.3 billion and £13.5 billion respectively.

Overseas Aid Budget

Miss Lestor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many letters about the size of the overseas aid budget he has received from members of the public since 1 September; and what was the comparable figure for the same period in the previous year. [41660]

Mr. Waldegrave: The information is as follows:

Letters from general public

	Numbers
1 September 1995 to 3 November 1995	2,000
1 September 1994 to 3 November 1994	35

Miss Lestor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many letters about the size of the overseas aid budget he has received from hon. Members since 1 September; and what was the comparable figure for the same period in the previous year. [41661]

Mr. Waldegrave: The information is as follows:

Hon Members' letters

	Numbers
1 September 1995 to 3 November 1995	340
1 September 1994 to 3 November 1994	20

Miss Lestor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many letters about the size of the overseas aid budget he has received from non-governmental organisations since 1 September; and what was the comparable figure for the same period in the previous year. [41659]

Mr. Waldegrave: We do not keep separate records on the number of letters we receive from non-governmental organisations.

Cash Limits

Mr. Matthew Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the final outturn for 1994–95 for *(a)* each running costs limit and *(b)* the Ministry of Defence's operating costs limit. [42241]

Mr. Waldegrave: The final outturn for each running costs limit and the Ministry of Defence's operating costs limit in 1994–95 are shown in the following table:

	£ thousand
Gross running costs limits	
Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Diplomatic Wing)	491,127
Overseas Development Administration	71,244
Intervention Board Executive Agency	31,073
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	277,839
Department of Trade and Industry	310,237
Office of Fair Trading	18,182
Office of Telecommunications	8,633
Office of Gas Supply	3,791
Office of Electricity Regulation	9,665
Department of Employment	1,421,833
Health and Safety Commission	168,415
Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service	21,407
Department of Transport	387,734
Office of Passenger Rail Franchising	3,468
Office of the Rail Regulator	7,620
Department of the Environment	206,111
Property Holdings	17,044
Office of Water Services	9,042
Home Office	1,649,029
Charity Commission	21,794
Lord Chancellor's Department	412,269
Northern Ireland Court Service	17,684
Public Record Office	25,227
Crown Prosecution Service	222,507
Serious Fraud Office	10,323
Treasury Solicitor's Department	28,320
Crown Office	33,010
Department for Education	86,666
Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools In England	28,836
Department of National Heritage	25,415
Office of the National Lottery	2,559
Department of Health	242,029
Office of Population Censuses and Surveys	47,732
Department of Social Security	2,901,531
Scottish Office	329,938
Scottish Courts Administration	25,258
Scottish Record Office	4,451
General Register Office for Scotland	7,023
Welsh Office	77,412
Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools In Wales	3,208
Northern Ireland	775,698
HM Treasury	72,389
HM Customs and Excise	744,964
Inland Revenue	1,634,138
Department for National Savings	193,578
Registry of Friendly Societies	8,055
National Investment and Loans Office	1,256
Central Statistical Office	47,746
Government Actuary's Department	5,739
Cabinet Office—Office of Public Service and Science	64,646
Central Office of Information	1,235
Cabinet Office—Other Services	40,106
Security and Intelligence Services	437,544
Privy Council Office	2,535

Net running costs limits	*£ thousand*
Wilton Park (FCO)	282
ADAS Agency (MAFF)	11,481
Central Science Laboratory (MAFF)	0
Central Veterinary Laboratory (MAFF)	0
Veterinary Medicines Directorate (MAFF)	0
Accounts Services Agency (DTI)	0
Central Services (DTI)	0
Laboratory of the Government Chemist (DTI)	0
National Engineering Laboratory (DTI)	0
National Physical Laboratory (DTI)	0
Radiocommunications Agency (DTI)	0
Vehicle Certification Agency (DoT)	0
Transport Research Laboratory (DoT)	0
QEII Conference Centre (PH)	6.199
Security Facilities Executive (PH)	0
Building Research Establishment (DoE)	0
Ordnance Survey	12,993
PSA Services	88,163
Forensic Science Service (HO)	0
Historic Royal Palaces Agency (DNH)	0
Social Survey Division (OPCS)	0
Information Technology Services Agency (DSS)	0
Registers of Scotland	0
Valuation Office (IR)	0
Paymaster Agency	0
Civil Service College (OPSS)	2,286
Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency (NI)	0
Operating costs	
Ministry of Defence	17,193,297

Mr. Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes are proposed to the Central Statistical Office's cash and running costs limits in 1995–96. [42193]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the cash limit for class XVII, vote 12 will be increased by £1,630,000 from £48,400,000 to £50,030,000 and the running costs limit by £14,936,000 from £46,630,000 to £61,566,000. These increases reflect:

(a) The take-up of entitlement under the end-year flexibility scheme for running costs (£76,000) and capital (£854,000), as announced by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995, *Official Report*, columns *776–82*.

(b) Additional capital to meet the net additional cash requirement, for 1995–96, of the cost of the move to new premises in London, which CSO will share with OPCS (£700,000).

(c) Additional running costs arising from increased sales, offset by a corresponding increase in appropriations in aid (£518,000).

(d) A transfer of provision from the former Department of Employment, class V, vote 1, to CSO, in respect of the transfer of responsibility for the compilation and publication of labour market statistics (£14,342,000 running costs, £60,000 capital and £240,000 receipts).

The increases are offset by inter-departmental transfers and additional receipts or are agreed charges to the reserve and do not, therefore, add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Consolidated Fund Shareholding

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the effect on the public sector borrowing requirement of selling all shares still held which are listed in table B13 of the Consolidated Fund and national loans fund accounts 1993–94, assuming share prices were those of 24 October 1995. [40773]

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Information on all the shares which are assets of the Consolidated Fund is not held centrally. The Treasury holdings of shares have a total value of around £1,400 million at the closing market prices of 24 October 1995. If it were possible to sell all shares at these prices, the public sector borrowing requirement would be reduced by a like amount, less the costs of sale. In practice, some of the shares could not be sold in this way because they have been retained for bonus share entitlements.

No decisions have yet been taken on the timing or method of any sales.

Salaries

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of individuals in his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies, whose annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceed (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000, (iii) £300,000 in each of the years (1) 1985-86, (2) 1990-91, (3) 1992–93, (4) 1994–95 and (5) 1995–96. [40832]

Mrs. Angela Knight *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Department, agencies or NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pension scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules which had been deposited in the Library of the House. The numbers receiving annual remuneration above the sums specified, excluding pension benefits in the years in question, are as follows:

	1985–86	*1990–91*	*1992–93*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*
Department					
(i)	—	1	2	2	2
(ii)	—	—	—	—	—
(iii)	—	—	—	—	—
Agencies					
(i)	—	—	1	1	—
(ii)	—	—	—	—	—
(iii)	—	—	—	—	—

Note:

Members of the Treasury's NDPBs are either unpaid, or paid a daily fee depending on the work they carry out.

Mr. Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest full time salary paid to any employee in his (i) Department, (ii) agencies and (iii) non-departmental public bodies in (1) 1994–95 and (2) 1995–96. [40803]

Mrs. Knight *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* It is the Government's normal policy to publish civil servants' salaries in bands.

Accordingly, the lowest full-time salary fell within the band:

		1994–95	*1995–96*
(i)	Department	£5,000—£9,999	£5,000—£9,999
(ii)	Agencies	Up to £4,999	Up to £4,999
(iii)	NDPB's[1]	—	—

The highest full-time salary fell within the band:

		1994–95	*1995–96*
(i)	Department	£110,000—£115,000	£115,000—£120,000
(ii)	Agencies	£110,000—£115,000	£90,000—£95,000
(iii)	NDPBs[1]	—	—

[1] Members of the Treasury's NDPBs are either unpaid, or paid a daily fee depending on the work they carry out.

Mr. Peter Wilmott

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he made to Mr. Santer of the European Commission that Mr. Peter Wilmott, Director General of Customs and Indirect Taxation at the European Committee, should be retained in post. [41404]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* Neither my right hon. and learned Friend nor any other Treasury Minister made such representations. United Kingdom policy generally is to ensure that the number of senior posts in the European Commission held by British citizens reflects the UK's importance as a member of the European Union. In the light of Mr. Wilmott's departure, the UK is therefore seeking to maintain the number of posts filled by British citizens at that level within the Commission.

Rules and Regulations

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41560]

Mrs. Angela Knight *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* There are no plans to repeal any further regulations by the end of 1995.

VAT (Harmonisation)

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on which dates during 1995 officials of Her Majesty's Treasury have attended discussions with the European Commission in Brussels on the harmonisation of value added tax within the European Union; and if he will list the individuals whom they met. [41402]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* Officials of HM Customs and Excise regularly attend meetings with the European Commission in Brussels to discuss a wide range of VAT-related issues. In doing so they meet a number of Commission officials at all levels in the Directorate General for Customs and Indirect Taxation.

ENVIRONMENT

PSA Services

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about PSA Services. [42242]

Mr. Gummer: PSA Services' operational functions were either closed or successfully privatised during 1992–93. Since October 1993, when the building management businesses were sold, a residuary unit has been responsible for dealing with a number of post-sale personnel and finance issues and for discharging Government's responsibilities under the sale agreements. By 31 March 1996 these on-going functions will be absorbed by the Department of the Environment; consequently, the PSA will formally cease to exist from that date.

Council Tax

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to the answer of 27 June, *Official Report*, columns *549–60*, if the Government have now studied the full text of Mr. Justin Ognall's judgment on separate valuation for council tax purposes of annexes set aside for elderly relatives and if the Government have decided what action may be necessary. [40256]

Sir Paul Beresford: I will write to the hon. Member.

Housing Corporation

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the total value of public sector loans made by the Housing Corporation under the Housing Act 1974; [40563]

(2) what is the Housing Corporation's total debt outstanding to the national loans fund under its borrowing in the Housing Act 1974. [40564]

Mr. Clappison: The Housing Corporation's lending and borrowing powers are now contained in the Housing Associations Act 1985. As at 31 October 1995, the outstanding principal on the corporation's lending to housing associations was £952.6 million. At the same date, the outstanding principal on Housing Corporation loans from the national loans fund was £942.6 million.

Air Pollution

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the total budget for the enhanced urban network air pollution monitoring programme for 1995–96; [41152]

(2) if he will publish a list of the sites to be included in the enhanced air pollution monitoring programme by 1997, including the time frame for each site. [41153]

Mr. Clappison: In January 1995 the Department of the Environment merged the enhanced urban network and the statutory urban networks to form a harmonised national automatic urban monitoring network. The current contract value for the automatic urban network is £2,084,874, exclusive of VAT, for the financial year 1995–96. This sum includes both the central management, quality assurance and quality control of the network.

The Department intends to expand the automatic urban network by 13 centrally funded sites by the end of 1996. Sites have been announced for Manchester, Glasgow, Sheffield, Nottingham, Bradford, Wolverhampton, Plymouth, Norwich, Stoke on Trent, and a further two locations in London. An additional two sites will be announced next year.

In addition, the Department aims to integrate a total of 35 locally operated sites into the national network by 1996. The location of the first 17 of these sites was announced in October this year. The Department plans to integrate sites at Oxford and the London borough of Brent by November 1995. Within Greater London sites at Sutton, two sites: Greenwich; Haringey, two sites; Kensington and Chelsea; Hounslow; Hackney; Tower Hamlets; Bromley; Camden; Wandsworth; Southwark, two sites and Lewisham will be integrated by April 1996, subject to the approval of the Department's quality assurance and quality control unit.

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many times serious air pollution has occurred without being forecast by his Department in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [41162]

Mr. Clappison: An air quality forecast of the following day's air quality for ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide is updated twice a day and is made available to the public as part of the Department's air quality information service via Freephone, Ceefax, Teletext, the Internet and a wide range of other media outlets. An air quality descriptive banding is predicted for each of nine regions of the United Kingdom. Since 1 April 1991, across the United Kingdom, there have been three occasions of "very poor" air quality when "poor" air quality was forecast and two occasions of "very poor" air quality when "good" air quality was forecast.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many times in the last 12 months motorists have been asked to leave their cars at home due to high levels of air pollution; what estimate he has made of the number who complied; and if he will make a statement. [41754]

Mr. Clappison: In the last 12 months, in periods of elevated air pollution, the Department of the Environment has advised motorists to leave their cars at home four times.

A survey undertaken following a period of poor air quality at the beginning of August this year found that 18 per cent. of drivers surveyed said that they had decided not to use their cars on at least one occasion during the high levels of air pollution. This compares with 10 per cent. reporting taking action when a similar survey was carried out the previous year.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the extent to which standards in houses in multiple occupation need to be improved; and what plans he has to set up a national registration scheme whereby landlords of such property would have to be licensed. [41055]

Mr. Clappison: An assessment of the need to improve standards in houses in multiple occupation was published in "Houses in Multiple Occupation—Consultation paper on the case for licensing", Department of the Environment, November 1994, and "Improving Standards in Houses in Multiple Occupation", Department of the Environment, July 1995. Copies of both are in the Library. I have no plans to set up a national licensing scheme.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to make mandatory grants available to landlords of houses in multiple occupation in order that they may improve the safety and the standards of health in their property. [41056]

Mr. Clappison: Proposals for changes to the house renovation grant system, which includes grants to landlords, are contained in the explanatory paper "The Future of Private Housing Renewal Programmes". A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of current housing stock is made up of houses in multiple occupation. [41054]

Mr. Clappison: The definition of a house in multiple occupation is very wide and for statistical purposes is not capable of precision. In practice, there is considerable case law as to what constitutes an HMO and this will depend on the circumstances in each case. For the 1995 local authority HMO survey, the Department asked authorities to report the presence of six different HMO types, regardless of whether the LA considered them to be HMOs. The percentage of the current English housing stock in all of these types of HMO was found to be is 3.2 per cent., table 1 although more than half of these are buildings converted into self-contained flats which many authorities do not regard as true HMOs.

Total number of HMOs in England 1995

Type of HMO	*Number*	*(Per cent. stock)*
Traditional HMOs (houses converted into bedsits)	111,000	(0.5)
Shared houses/flats	100,000	(0.5)
Households with lodgers	41,000	(0.2)
Purpose-built HMOs	17,000	(0.1)
Hostels, guest houses, boarding houses, B and Bs	17,000	(0.1)
Buildings converted into self-contained flats	352,000	(1.8)
All types of HMO	638,000	(3.2)

Construction Industry

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to introduce a construction contracts Bill designed to improve relations between clients, contractors and subcontractors in the construction industry; and what alterations he has considered. [41016]

Mr. Clappison: The Government's consultation paper "Fair Construction Contracts" set out our proposals for legislation to promote less adversarial contractual arrangements in construction projects with a view to bringing about more co-operative working relationships. We have published the results of the consultation exercise and are considering legislation in the light of these and subsequent discussions with the construction industry.

The Government are working with other members of the construction industry board on a range of initiatives to promote industry relationships based on teamwork.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy in respect of improving the relationship between clients, contractors and subcontractors in the construction industry; and what assessment he has made the improvement in the value for money that would result from such a change. [41015]

Mr. Clappison: The Government share the concern of the construction industry about the level of adversarialism in the industry. We support the view expressed in Sir Michael Latham's report "Constructing the Team" that a real improvement in relationships depends upon moving from a culture based on conflict to one of co-operation. We are actively supporting and encouraging such a culture change and are taking a strong lead, together with other members of the construction industry board, in implementing the Latham recommendations.

While the information available does not permit a precise calculation of the scope for improving value for money by reducing conflict, we follow Sir Michael and the industry consensus in believing that increased teamwork could make the industry significantly more competitive and productive. Sir Michael recommended that, overall, it would be realistic to set a target to achieve 30 per cent. savings in construction costs by the year 2000.

Water Companies (Prosecutions)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many times each of the privatised water companies have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted for water pollution offences in (i) the current year and (ii) each of the last five years; and if he will list the dates. [41164]

Mr. Clappison: The information requested is set out in the tables, except for the dates of prosecutions on which I shall write to the hon. Gentleman shortly. The figures attributed to 1995 are for the period since April.

Company	*1989–90*	*1990–91*	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995*
Prosecutions							
North West	—	1	2	6	9	12	1
Southern	—	1	4	1	1	1	—
South West	—	1	—	2	—	—	—
Wessex	—	2	—	3	3	1	—
Thames	—	3	7	5	7	3	2
Welsh	—	7	15	9	1	1	1
Anglian	—	3	6	5	1	2	—
Northumbrian	1	4	2	2	—	—	—
Yorkshire	1	1	7	1	13	1	—
Severn Trent	—	2	7	2	4	3	2
Convictions							
North West	—	1	2	6	7	11	1
Southern	—	1	4	1	1	1	—
South West	—	1	—	2	—	—	—
Wessex	—	2	—	3	3	1	—
Thames	—	3	7	5	7	3	2
Welsh	—	7	15	9	1	1	1
Anglian	—	3	6	5	1	2	—
Northumbrian	1	4	2	2	—	—	—
Yorkshire	1	1	6	1	13	1	—
Severn Trent	—	2	7	2	4	3	2

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what measures he proposes to reduce the number of sites of special scientific interest that are damaged by road developments; [40912]

(2) what assessment he has made of whether the current system of sites of special scientific interest provides sufficient protection for endangered habitats and rare wildlife species against new developments, including quarries; [40985]

(3) if he will make it his policy to develop a new system of measures to preserve a percentage of each endangered habitat and rare wildlife species in England, Scotland and Wales; [40986]

(4) what assessment he has made of whether the current system of sites of special scientific interest provides sufficient protection for endangered habitats and rare wildlife species; [40989]

(5) what assessment he has made of the extent to which new measures are needed to preserve a percentage of each endangered habitat and rare wildlife species in England, Scotland and Wales. [40991]

Mr. Clappison: The United Kingdom's "Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan" contains some 59 broad targets, including a commitment to develop specific costed targets for key species and habitats for the years 2000 and 2010.

Notification as a SSSI identifies land of scientific interest. It ensures that in the determination of development proposals, the land use planning system takes careful account of nature conservation interests. Where conflict is unavoidable, appropriate mitigation measures are taken to minimise adverse effects. The continuing decline in SSSI loss and damage demonstrates the effectiveness of the system.

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those sites of special scientific interest in English Nature's report on hydrological threats to sites of special scientific interest as being liable to be adversely affected by water abstraction. [41305]

Mr. Clappison: English Nature undertook an internal survey in 1991. This preliminary study identified SSSIs which may be affected. However, these need to be further investigated before a list is published.

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those sites of special scientific interest identified by recent research carried out by English Nature and the university of Liverpool that could be adversely affected by eutrophication. [41306]

Mr. Clappison: English Nature will shortly publish a report containing this information. A copy will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will *(a)* list and *(b)* make a statement on the sites of special scientific interest (i) along the western side of Southampton Water and the Solent and (ii) in the New Forest. [41456]

Mr. Clappison: The information requested is as follows:

Southampton Water—Eling and Bury marshes; Hythe to Calshot marshes;

Solent—North Solent; Hurst castle and Lymington river estuary; Thorness bay; Newtown harbour; Bouldnor and Hamstead cliffs; Yar estuary;

New Forest—the New Forest.

These sites have been notified for their biological and geological importance.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many incidents involving damage to sites of special scientific interest in 1994 have resulted in prosecution. [41972]

Mr. Clappison: None. Prosecution is sought only when circumstances warrant such action. Where a site has been damaged, the first approach is to seek the co-operation of the landlowner in restoring it and avoiding any further damage.

Tenants (Repossessions)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the effects the reduction from 13 to eight weeks for the time a landlord may repossess his property will have on tenants; and if implementation of such a policy will be accompanied by legislation allowing courts to safeguard the security of tenant in extenuating circumstances, with special reference to a delay in the payment of housing benefit. [41057]

Mr. Clappison: For many landlords, having a tenant who does not pay the rent can be very difficult, especially if there is a loan to repay. Under the legislative change we propose, a tenant will have to be at least eight weeks in arrears before the landlord can serve two weeks' notice of possession proceedings. By the time the case reaches court, the tenant will generally owe substantially more than eight weeks' rent. The change is not expected to cause any particular problems for tenants who claim housing benefit—about 80 per cent. of housing benefit cases are possessed within 14 days of all the required information being received. Where claims are delayed, through no fault of the claimant, local authorities have a statutory duty to make payments on account. We do not propose any additional legislative safeguards.

Housing Estates (Regeneration)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what safeguards he will be introducing to ensure that the regeneration of poor-quality estates, outlined in the housing White Paper, will not be affected by cost-cutting building companies; and what regulation he will be implementing to make certain that building standards are safe and tenants' rights are recognised. [41052]

Mr. Clappison: The building regulations establish minimum standards of health and safety for all new dwellings created by new construction or conversion.

In addition, we are actively promoting a competitive construction industry which focuses on quality. For example, we are working with the other members of the construction industry board to implement the recommendations in Sir Michael Latham's report "Constructing the Team".

Waste Management

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what targets are being set in respect of the next *(a)* five years, *(b)* 10 years and *(c)* 20 years by his Department for the reduction of controlled waste going to landfill sites; and what percentage of municipal waste will be targeted for recycling at the end of a 10-year period. [41323]

Mr. Clappison: The Government intend to publish waste management targets in the waste strategy for England and Wales which we expect to publish before the end of the year.

Unified Business Rate

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 16 October, *Official Report*, column *166*, what transitional arrangements he is proposing in respect of the increases in unified business rates in the west midlands. [41326]

Sir Paul Beresford: The transition scheme phasing in the effects of the 1995 revaluation, and contained in the Non-Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) Regulations 1994, SI 1994 No. 3279, limits increases in rates bills from one year to the next to 10 per cent. plus inflation. There are tighter limits for small properties—those with rateable values less than £10,000, or £15,000 in Greater London—of 7.5 per cent. plus inflation, or 5 per cent. plus inflation if there is living accommodation on the same premises.

Environmental Legislation

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans his Department has to initiate legislation concerning the protection of the environment during the next 12 months. [41445]

Mr. Clappison: I would prefer not to anticipate Her Majesty's forthcoming Gracious Speech.

Wild Birds

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds concerning the decline of bird species; and if he will make a statement. [41439]

Mr. Clappison: My Department has regular contact with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds on a wide range of issues relating to conservation of birds. The society regularly publishes reports on trends in wild bird populations. A recent report dealt with farmland birds.

Mr. Mark Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what changes are intended to be made to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 concerning the defences available to those who need to take urgent action to kill wild birds to prevent agricultural damage; and what plans there are to align the licensing provisions in the Act for killing or other use of birds more closely with the provisions of the EC directive on the conservation of wild birds. [42249]

Mr. Gummer: Regulations have today been laid in both Houses which would change the provisions of section 4(3)(c) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which provide certain defences to the killing or injuring of wild birds to protect agricultural interests, to bring them into line with the defences provided in section 10(6) of the Act in respect of the killing or injuring of wild animals. The defences would be available to those who could show that there was no other satisfactory solution to killing or injuring wild birds; that if the need for such action could have been foreseen, a licence should have been applied for as soon as practicable and not yet have been determined; and that the person should notify the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food as soon as reasonably practicable after taking such action.

The regulations would extend the provisions of section 16 of the Act governing licensing authorities' responsibilities and the conditions under which licences may be issued, and would increase the range of licensing purposes.

These changes, which follow consideration of responses to public consultation, would align the Act more closely with the detailed derogation requirements of the birds directive.

Air Monitoring Stations

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the location of all air monitoring stations in the United Kingdom. [41810]

Mr. Clappison: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 31 October 1995, *Official Report,* column *178.*

Small Businesses

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to reduce the burden of business rates on small traders. [41670]

Sir Paul Beresford: Small properties—those with rateable values of less than £10,000 or £15,000 in Greater London—receive more generous treatment under the transition scheme, which is phasing in the effects on rates bills of the 1995 revaluation.

As announced in the rural White Paper published on 17 October, the Government also intend to introduce, at a suitable legislative opportunity, a new rate relief scheme targeted specifically on general stores and post offices in villages.

War Pensioners

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to introduce measures whereby war pensioners will be housed by local authorities only if they have exhausted all their income from war pensions. [41606]

Mr. Clappison: We have no such plans.

Hazardous Waste

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if the EC directive on hazardous waste incineration applies in retrospect to authorisations granted before January 1997 by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution for the burning of liquid fuels in cement kilns; [41985]

(2) if the EC directive on hazardous waste incineration will apply to the burning of secondary liquid fuels in cement kilns. [41986]

Mr. Clappison: The hazardous waste incineration directive requires transposition into UK law by the end of 1996. On the basis that secondary liquid fuels constitute waste, the relevant provisions of the directive will apply to the burning of SLF in cement kilns. Plants for which authorisations to burn SLF are granted before 1 January 1997 will be required to meet these provisions by 30 June 2000 at the latest.

Isle of Wight

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those projects and schemes received by his Department for funds from the single regeneration budget from the Isle of Wight. [41848]

Sir Paul Beresford: One bid for funding from round two of the single regeneration budget challenge fund has been received from a partnership led by the Isle of Wight council, entitled "Altogether Wight".

Mr. Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to announce his decision on the Isle of Wight's application for single regeneration budget funds. [41849]

Sir Paul Beresford: It is intended that decisions on successful bids for the second round of the single regeneration budget challenge fund will be made by Christmas.

Special Protection Areas

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is *(a)* the total number and *(b)* the total area of (i) special protection areas and (ii) special areas of conservation in the United Kingdom. [41851]

Mr. Clappison: Some 107 special protection areas have been designated in the UK covering a total area of some 355,000 hectares. Further designations are expected shortly.

In March, public consultation began on 280 possible special areas of conservation covering over 900,000 hectares. The final list must be agreed with the European Commission. The designation of agreed sites should be completed by 2004.

Liquid Fuel Waste

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to issue guidance to the waste regulation authorities about the classification of secondary liquid fuel as waste. [41987]

Mr. Clappison: Whether or not a substance is waste must be determined on the facts of the case and the interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts. The Department has provided guidance on the interpretation of the definition of waste in DoE circular 11/94.

The Department's views on the classification of secondary liquid fuel as waste were set out in our initial response of 13 June 1995 to the Environment Select Committee's report on the burning of this fuel in cement kilns. We have no plans to revise the guidance issued to waste regulation authorities in DoE circular 11/94.

Mrs. Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will ensure that the Government will respond to the Environment Select Committee's second report on burning of secondary liquid fuels in cement kilns before Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution reaches a decision on the permanent authorisation for the burning of secondary liquid fuels in cement kilns. [41988]

Mr. Clappison: The Government have already given their initial response to the Environment Select Committee and stated that when Parliament enacted the Environmental Protection Act 1990, EPA90, the systems thus created were, and are, sufficiently robust to cope with the regulation of cement kilns and secondary liquid fuels. Her Majesty's inspectorate pollution has a statutory obligation to deliver the requirements of EPA90 for all plants under its control. Under the circumstances, I see no useful purpose in delaying HMIP decisions.

Housing, Sheffield

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will increase resources for the provision of social housing in the Darnall area of Sheffield following the publication of the Darnall review. [40038]

Mr. Clappison: The need for social housing in the Darnall area is a matter best determined by Sheffield city council in consultation with the local community and other housing providers in the area. Allocations under the housing investment programme will be announced in December. Bids for Housing Corporation resources are due on 24 November, and allocations will be announced in early February.

Bats

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if English Nature recommends the removal of bat roosting sites after October. [40556]

Mr. Clappison: English Nature makes every effort to negotiate the retention of bat roosting sites. Where this is not possible, English Nature advises on the least harmful time of year to perform operations on a bat roost. This time will vary according to whether the site is used by the bats during the summer, or during the winter for hibernation. English Nature makes every effort to ensure that any removal of hibernacular sites does not take place between 1 November and 31 March.

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what legislation protects bats and their breeding sites. [40557]

Mr. Clappison: All bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994. Under sections 9 and 10 of the 1981 Act and regulations 39 and 40 of the 1994 regulations, unless a licence has been granted, it is an offence to kill or injure a bat deliberately or intentionally to possess or sell one or offer it for sale or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure bats use for shelter. Certain assemblages of bats may also qualify as a roost notified as a site of special scientific interest.

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what licences have been issued for the further removal of bat roosting sites on the route of the A34 Newbury bypass; and where and when such works will be carried out. [40558]

Mr. Clappison: No licences have been issued for the further removal of bat roosts on the route of the A34 Newbury bypass.

Recycling

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what tonnage of waste is estimated to be recycled, annually; what percentage this constitutes of total waste; and if he will make a statement. [40328]

Mr. Clappison: An average of 38 million tonnes of controlled wastes, excluding sewage sludge and dredged spoils, are estimated to be recycled annually. This represents 22 per cent. of total controlled waste arisings. The Government's overall policy aim for achieving more sustainable waste management is to increase the proportion of waste managed by the options towards the top of the waste hierarchy including recycling.

Vacant Dwellings

Mr. Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the current number of vacant dwellings. [41645]

Mr. Clappison: Estimates of the numbers of vacant dwellings on 1 April 1994, the latest date for which figures are available, are as follows:

	Number of vacant dwellings
Local authority[1]	70,300
Housing associations[2]	20,700
Other public sector[3]	17,000
Private sector[1]	737,000
Total	845,000

Sources:

[1] HIP1 returns.

[2] Housing Corporation HAR10/1 returns.

[3] Government Departments and HIP1 returns.

There are doubts about the quality of some authorities' estimates of the number of private sector vacants; independent survey data suggest that the HIP1 figures may over-estimate the total of these vacants.

Green Belts

Mrs. Helen Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what size land area constitutes a major development site in a green belt area; and what is his definition of a major development site. [41694]

Sir Paul Beresford: PPG2 gives guidance on major existing developed sites in green belts. If such a site is specifically identified in an adopted local plan or unitary development plan, construction of new buildings for the purpose of limited infilling or redevelopment is not inappropriate, providing it meets criteria stated in the PPG. The guidance applies only to sites which are substantial. Its proposed application to any particular site is tested through the planning process.

Mrs. Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to advise or instruct local planning authorities to publish lists of sites for major development in green belt areas as part of his revised PPG2. [41688]

Sir Paul Beresford: PPG2 stipulates that, if limited infilling or redevelopment of a major existing developed site in the green belt is not to require justification by very special circumstances, the site must be specifically identified for this purpose in an adopted local plan or unitary development plan.

Mrs. Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which local authorities have put forward revised guidelines to their urban development plan submissions following the revision to PPG2 for green belt sites. [41689]

Sir Paul Beresford: This information is not collected centrally.

Mrs. Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many extra dwellings he estimates being approved for planning permission in the current year in green belt areas following his revision to PPG2. [41690]

Sir Paul Beresford: I have made no such estimate. The revised PPG2 enables local plans and unitary development plans to provide greater certainty about the future of major existing developed sites and speedier development control decisions. The previous guidance permitted the redevelopment of redundant hospitals and, in very special circumstances, of other sites. The revised guidance stipulates that redevelopment must have no greater impact on the green belt than the existing development, and where possible less; must contribute to green belt land use objectives, such as countryside access and outdoor recreation; and must not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings.

Mrs. Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning applications for major development sites in green belt areas he has called in since he published the revised guidance note on PPG2. [41692]

Sir Paul Beresford: I have called in 18 applications for development in the green belt since January 1995. This figure includes various types and sizes of development on different sorts of site.

Mrs. Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what notice he has had of planning applications for the development of major development sites of green belt areas, which include applications to build more than *(a)* 10, *(b)* 20, *(c)* 50 and *(d)* 100 houses, since his revised guidance note on PPG2. [41693]

Sir Paul Beresford: Planning applications for development in the green belt are formally notified to me only if they are departures from the development plan. Information on the scale of individual proposals is not collected centrally. Applications for the limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites specifically identified for this purpose in adopted local plans or unitary development plans would not be departures.

Public Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the public finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41739]

Sir Paul Beresford: The Department of the Environment and its sponsored bodies attracted around £4 billion in private investment in support of its programmes in 1994–95 and expects to increase that figure in 1995–96. This will assist the delivery of a very large number of projects, most notably ones relating to housing, inner cities and regeneration. Secondary legislation to encourage and facilitate private finance initiative schemes in the local authority sector came into effect from 1 April 1995 and the Government aim to implement further measures by 1 April 1996. It is not practicable for the Department to collect detailed information on each project being advanced under private financing arrangements.

Home Owners

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of home owners in Britain in 1979; and what is the number at present. [41874]

Mr. Gummer: An estimated 10.2 million households owned their own home in 1979, and 15.4 million in 1993, the most recent year for which figures are available for the whole of Great Britain.

These estimates are based on the general household survey and the survey of English housing. Like all estimates from surveys, they are liable to sampling variability.

Training and Enterprise Councils

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money has been allocated to TECs for training from the single regeneration budget for 1995–96. [42008]

Sir Paul Beresford: Planned expenditure by training and enterprise councils on continuing programmes which now form part of the single regeneration budget is £40 million in 1995–96. In addition, there are 45 schemes which were successful under round one of the SRB challenge fund where a TEC is receiving funding as the accountable body on behalf of the SRB partnership concerned. Planned expenditure in 1995–96 on these schemes is £22 million. It is not possible to identify how much of the total of £62 million, expected to be paid to TECs from the single regeneration budget in the current year, will be specifically for training activities. TECs may also be receiving indirect funding from the SRB challenge fund where they are members of SRB partnerships but not the nominated accountable body.

Business Start-up Grants

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment for each training and enterprise council area how many firms have received business start-up grants in each of the last 12 months. [42007]

Sir Paul Beresford: The business start-up scheme was incorporated into the single regeneration budget from 1 April 1994 and ceased as a separate programme on 31 March 1995. For 1994–95, the information requested has been placed in the Library of the House.

Since 1 April 1995, support for new businesses is one of the objectives of the SRB challenge fund. Some 70,000 business start-ups are forecast to be supported under schemes approved in the first challenge fund bidding round. The second bidding round was launched on 12 April and this will provide further opportunities for similar support.

Water Profits

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the profits of each water company in England and Wales in each year since 1989 as recorded by Office of Water Services. [42135]

Mr. Clappison: Current cost operating profits for each of the regulated water companies in England and Wales for each financial year from 1990–91 are given in figure 4 of Ofwat's 1994–95 report on the financial performance and capital investment of the water companies in England and Wales, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Building Research Establishment

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the future of the Building Research Establishment. [42245]

Mr. Gummer: The Building Research Establishment has made great strides in developing new services and improving operational efficiency since becoming an executive agency in 1990. It has played a central role in support of the Government's policy and executive responsibilities as they relate to construction and buildings. Government and other customers of BRE have a continuing need for access to the technical excellence and objectivity of judgment which BRE provides and which is much valued. I wish, however, to see BRE's expertise more directed towards stimulating innovation in construction and to helping industry improve its performance and competitiveness. I believe that closer links between BRE and industry will be achieved more effectively if BRE were in the private sector.

I therefore intend to commission consultants later this month to advise me on the relative advantages and disadvantages of the options for transferring BRE to the private sector. The consultants will be asked to take account of the need of the Government, industry and clients for construction research, advice and technical support which will be accepted as authoritative and independent of sectoral interests. The options examined will include the proposal from representatives of construction interests for a national centre for construction research and advice. Meanwhile, BRE will remain an executive agency of my Department under its present chief executive. I shall make a further statement when I have considered the consultants' report.

Local Government Staff

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will finalise the measures to compensate staff who suffer a drop in remuneration as a result of local government reorganisation. [42246]

Sir Paul Beresford: I am today laying before the House regulations which will give effect to a scheme for detriment compensation. The regulations are being made following two separate consultation exercises, which generated helpful comments. The scheme provides for compensation staff in England and Wales who suffer a drop in remuneration as a result of local government reorganisation. Such staff will, provided they meet certain criteria, receive compensation equal to three times the drop in remuneration, payable over 36 months. This will provide transitional relief to staff if they work in an authority directly affected by reorganisation and suffer a drop in salary during the prescribed period. By avoiding the need for redundancy payments and encouraging councils to retain existing employees in new jobs, the scheme should benefit staff, employers and the taxpayer.

Pan-European Environment Conference

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the outcome of the Pan-European conference of Environment Ministers held in Sofia on 23 to 25 October; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The Sofia conference reaffirmed the political framework and programme of action agreed in Lucerne in 1993 for pan-European co-operation to improve the environment, with particular reference to central and eastern Europe. Steps will be taken to strengthen the links between this process and the Helsinki environment and health process. The decisive role of domestic finance and policy reforms in achieving greater environmental investment in central and eastern Europe and the role of external finance as a catalyst to help bring this about were stressed. The importance of an effective dialogue between business on environmental matters was also strongly emphasised. The conference endorsed the strategy prepared by the Council of Europe as a framework for the conservation of pan-European biological and landscape diversity. It also endorsed the environmental programme for Europe which makes recommendations for long-term action on some of the findings of the pan-European state of the environment report published in September 1995. The conference reaffirmed the importance of public participation including the role of non-governmental organisations. It called for the development of a regional convention on public participation to be considered. The next "Environment for Europe" conference will be held in Denmark in 1998.

Audit Commission

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what arrangements he has made for appointing a chairman of the Audit Commission. [42248]

Mr. Curry: I am minded to appoint Roger Brooke as a member and chairman of the Audit Commission for three years from 1 December 1995. This appointment is still subject to consultation, as required by section 11(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1982.

Cash Limits

Mr. Faber: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes any further changes to his Department's cash limits for 1995–96. [42244]

Mr. Gummer: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the following changes will be made:

The cash limit for class VII, vote 2—regeneration and countryside and wildlife—will be increased by £20,466,000 from £1,500,333,000 to £1,520,799,000. The increase is the net effect of the payment of £20,716,000 on capital projects which slipped from previous years for the city challenge programme within the single regeneration budget, the docklands light railway, Central Manchester development corporation, Trafford Park development corporation, coalfield areas fund, the Victoria arena Manchester and European Community regeneration projects, a transfer of £250,000 from the Department of Health in respect of urban programme payments following an excess transfer in the main estimates and a reduction of £500,000 to allow supplementary credit approvals to be issued in respect of the urban programme from the DoE/RCW non-voted cash limit.

The non-voted cash limit for regeneration and countryside and Wildlife, DoE/RCW, will be increased by £21,283,000 from £1,482,233,000 to £1,503,515,000. The increase is the net effect of the payment of £21,033,000 on capital projects which slipped from previous years for the same programmes on the cash limit for class VII, vote 2 including £817,000 for the issue of supplementary credit approvals for the Victoria arena Manchester and the transfer of £250,000 from the Department of Health in respect of urban programme payments following an excess transfer in the main estimates.

There will be associated increases to external financing limits for urban development corporations, by £15,775,000 from £243,739,000 to £259,514,000; and by £12,000,000 from £143,898,000 to £155,898,000 for the Urban Regeneration Agency—English Partnerships.

The DoE/European regional development fund cash limit remains unchanged at £184,219,000.

The increases are covered in full by take-up of the entitlement to capital end of year flexibility announced by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995, *Official Report*, columns *776–82*, and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Local Government Reorganisation

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the last date by which the orders for structural change must be laid before the House in order for elections to take place for the successor unitary authorities in May 1996; and what is the anticipated date that the Government expect to lay the order for structural change before the House in respect of (i) Leicester city, (ii) Rutland district council, (iii) Nottingham city, (iv) Plymouth city, (v) Torbay borough council, (vi) Wokingham district council, (vii) Newbury district council, (viii) Reading city, (ix) Windsor and Maidenhead district council, (x) Slough borough council, (xi) Bracknell Forest district council, (xii) Southend on Sea borough council, (xiii) Herefordshire, (xiv) The Wrekin district council, (xv) Thurrock borough council, (xvi) Northampton borough council, (xvii) Halton borough council, (xviii) Warrington borough council, (xix) Peterborough city, (xx) Dartford and Gravesham borough councils, (xxi) Gillingham borough council and Rochester/Medway city, (xxii) Blackburn borough council and (xxiii) Blackpool borough council. [41950]

Mr. Curry: There is no statutory requirement to lay structural change orders by a particular date. However, given the requirements governing the publication of the notice of election in the Local Elections (Principal Areas) Rules 1986 along with the administrative needs of the returning officer, we consider that an order should be made not less than two months before the date of the election to which it relates.

For all those districts which are the subject of fresh reviews by the Local Government Commission—xiv–xxviii—whether or not there will be an order to be laid will of course depend on the commission's final recommendations and the Government's response to them. For the others, there are outstanding issues such as judicial review in the case of Berkshire or the fact that the commission is examining the further case for unitary structures in certain counties. We aim to lay these orders before Parliament during the new Session once these various matters are resolved.

TRANSPORT

"Sally Star"

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department received the first draft of the Marine Accident and Investigation Branch report into the fire aboard the ro-ro passenger vessel "Sally Star" on 25th October 1994. [41680]

Mr. Norris: The incident referred to occurred on 25 August 1994. The Secretary of State did not receive a copy of any drafts of the report. A copy of the final version was sent to him on 19 October 1995.

Marine Safety Agency

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what considerations led him to advise the Marine Safety Agency to cancel its appointment with the hon. Member for Nottingham, North scheduled for 6 November at 11 am. [41779]

Sir George Young: The meeting was cancelled because it would not be appropriate for an official to brief an opposition spokesman in the absence of a Minister.

Aircraft Noise

Sir John Cope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he has taken to encourage aerodromes to introduce noise amelioration schemes in accordance with his announcement of March 1993 in respect of the conclusions of the review of aircraft noise legislation; and what assessment he has made of their impact. [41437]

Mr. Norris: It has been the Government's policy for many years that measures to minimise noise nuisance from aerodromes are best developed and monitored locally. The Government continue to encourage aerodromes to consult their local communities. Many aerodromes have established voluntary arrangements and at most of the larger airports consultation is required. The manner in which consultation is conducted is a purely local issue, in which the Government have no role.

Sir John Cope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to issue the national guidance on aircraft noise amelioration, in accordance with his announcement of March 1993 in respect of the review of aircraft noise legislation. [41438]

Mr. Norris: In due course.

Sir John Cope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what considerations will determine whether the use of non-military aircraft at military airfields will be subject to the new legislation on aircraft noise amelioration, set out in his announcement of March 1993 in respect of the conclusions of the review of aircraft noise legislation. [41436]

Mr. Norris: The use of military aerodromes by civil aircraft is governed by military regulations, which are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

West Coast Main Line

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 25 October, *Official Report*, columns *578–79*, if he will provide a breakdown of the £7 million European funding awarded indicating the amount allocated to each project, the terms of reference and the timetable for the project. [41258]

Mr. Watts: The funds were awarded to project costs incurred in 1995 as a whole, and not to any particular phase of the west coast main line scheme. Most of the relevant work in 1995 will be on feasibility studies, including the examination of the use of an in-cab control system and running high-speed trains and physical works to allow the running of European passenger services as far as Glasgow.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41556]

Mr. Watts: We are developing a number of proposals for repeal or deregulatory amendment which we hope to bring forward this year. These include: abolition of the requirement for local authorities to use type approved parking equipment; liberalising signing for tourist attractions; amendments to regulations concerning cycle racing on the highways; the updating and consolidation of navigation and collision regulations for merchant shipping.

The requirement to carry out a compliance cost assessment applies to regulations which impose additional burdens on business while the programme of repeals and amendments is concerned with reducing the burden.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated savings to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and in how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41536]

Mr. Watts: My Department has not yet laid any draft orders before the committee.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement. [41535]

Mr. Watts: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given yesterday by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster at column *593*.

Gateshead Bypass

Ms Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to improve the A1 western bypass around Gateshead. [41821]

Mr. Watts: We are working closely with Gateshead metropolitan borough council on options for the improvement of the A1 around Gateshead.

Transport Projects (Moratorium)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the savings resulting from a moratorium on transport construction projects which have not yet begun construction in *(a)* the current year and *(b)* 1996–97. [41781]

Mr. Watts: None.

Car Phones

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what information he has recently received about the installation and use of mobile telephones in cars; and if he will make a statement about their safety; [41480]

(2) if he will introduce safety standards for the installation of mobile phones in cars.

Mr. Norris: The Department has no evidence of accidents occurring as a result of mobile phones in cars interfering with vehicle electronic systems.

A forthcoming EC directive will require new types of vehicle to have a minimum level of resistance to electromagnetic interference. In addition, the Department is discussing with the Radiocommunications Agency, an executive agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, how best to ensure that devices such as in-car phones do not produce excessive interference which might affect vehicle electronic systems.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to curb the use of hand-held mobile telephones by car drivers while driving; and if he will make a statement. [40935]

Mr. Norris: The Highway Code makes it clear that drivers must exercise proper control of their vehicles at all times and should not use a hand-held telephone while driving.

Transport Council

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Scarborough (Mr. Sykes) of 26 October, *Official Report*, columns *731–32*, what was the voting record of each member state on items agreed at the meeting of the European Community's Transport Council held on 28 September; and if he will make it his practice to list all votes, including where there have been no votes, in the future. [41088]

Sir George Young: There were no formal votes at the 28 September Transport Council, but, as reported in my answer of 26 October to the hon. Member for Scarborough (Mr. Sykes), the UK and Germany opposed a scrapping scheme to reduce capacity in the inland waterways industry: other member states supported the measure.

I shall continue to list all formal votes, or the fact that no votes were taken, when reporting on future Transport Councils.

A36 (South Newton)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 19 July, *Official Report*, column *1327*, when he plans to install experimental electronic speed limit warning signs on the A36 at either end of South Newton village. [41259]

Mr. Norris: The experimental electronic speed limit warning signs on the A36 are due to be installed at either end of South Newton village before Christmas.

Road Building

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what spending has been provisionally allocated to road building for the current year and for 1996–97 for projects which have yet to begin construction. [41780]

Mr. Watts: We have allocated £683 million to national schemes (schemes over £3 million in value) for the current year together with £108 million for network improvement schemes (schemes less than £3 million in value). These allocations are contained in the Highways Agency business plan. No decision has yet been taken on allocations for 1996–97.

European Aviation Centre

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy towards a European aviation centre. [41594]

Mr. Norris: The term "European aviation centre" is not one that the Department recognises. If the hon. Member would provide further details, my noble friend the Minister of Aviation and Shipping will write to him.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work force; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41115]

Mr. Norris: Breakdowns by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—normally those engaged for a period of up to 12 months, but, exceptionally, up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library of the House.

M1

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the proposed completion dates for current construction work on the M1; and what is his latest information on whether the dates will be met. [40980]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Sir Irvine Patnick, dated 6 November 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr. John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport, what are the proposed completion dates for current construction work on the M1; and what is his latest information on whether the dates will be met.

The contract for the widening M1 between junctions 21 and 21A is due to end in February 1996 but we are currently considering an extension to late March because of unforseen ground conditions. If that extension is granted, we have no reason to think that the revised date will not be met.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has to widen the M1 from junctions 23 to 28. [41001]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 6 November 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question, asking the Secretary of State for Transport, what proposals he has to widen the M1 between Junctions 23 and 28.

The road programme contains two schemes covering this section of the M1. A preferred option for widening between Junctions 23A and 25 to dual 4 lanes was announced in March 1995.

Proposals for widening the motorway to dual 4 lanes between Junctions 25 and 28 were put to the public in July 1994. We are considering the responses received.

National Transport Debate

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to publish a Green Paper following the national transport debate. [40992]

Sir George Young: Once my colleagues and I have considered responses to "Transport: The Way Ahead" we will publish a further report drawing together the threads of the debate.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the organisations who contributed to the national transport debate and place copies of their responses in the Library. [40993]

Sir George Young: Individual responses, and the list of respondents, will not be made available for public inspection since we did not indicate in "Transport: The Way Ahead" that we would be doing so.

Bus Companies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has to re-regulate in any material way the operations of bus companies. [41273]

Mr. Norris: I have no such proposals. I am considering, with the help of the bus working group, which I am chairing with the bus industry, local authority associations and the users, what sensible measures might be introduced to assist buses within the deregulated framework.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which five cities have the largest municipally owned or controlled bus companies in the United Kingdom. [41329]

Mr. Norris: In terms of vehicle numbers including tramcars, the five largest local authority-owned bus companies, in descending order, are: Lothian RT, Nottingham, Blackpool, Cardiff and Reading.

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the proposed sales of municipal bus companies to which he withheld his consent; and if he will give reasons in each case. [41270]

Mr. Norris: Consent for the proposed sale of a municipal bus company has in some cases been withheld because the method of sale did not meet the requirement that public assets must be sold by means of a competitive tender. It would not be appropriate to provide details of these cases as they are commercially sensitive.

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 24 October, *Official Report*, column *579*, if he will make it his policy to monitor changes of ownership within the bus industry where this involves the onward sale of a company after a management–employee buy out for a local authority. [41307]

Mr. Norris: No.

Probationary Drivers

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of car accidents for the latest year for which figures are available, involve drivers who passed their driving test in the preceding 12 months. [41277]

Mr. Norris: The information is not available in this form but drivers aged 17 and 18 were involved in some 5 per cent. of all injury accidents during the period 1992–94.

Mr. Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent consideration he has given to the introduction of probationary driver plates to be displayed for a period on cars driven by newly qualified drivers. [41276]

Mr. Norris: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) on 22 February, *Official Report*, column *188*. We are keeping this issue under review but I have yet to see any conclusive evidence that P-plates are effective in reducing road accidents.

North Bridge, Doncaster

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the life expectancy of the North bridge, Doncaster. [41580]

Mr. Watts: The existing North bridge in Doncaster is the responsibility of the local highway authority, Doncaster metropolitan borough council.

Roadside Vehicle Inspections

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list for each of the last five years the number of inspections undertaken by the Vehicle Inspectorate at roadside checks and the percentage of vehicles found to be defective. [40996]

Mr. Norris: This is an operational matter for the Vehicle Inspectorate. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Ron Oliver to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 6 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the number of inspections undertaken at roadside checks and the percentage of vehicles found to be defective for the last 5 years.

The attached table shows the number of roadworthiness inspections carried out by vehicle type and the number that were prohibited as a result of a mechanical defect being found. The prohibition figure includes both immediate and delayed prohibitions.

Number of heavy goods vehicles, public service vehicles, private and light goods vehicles inspected and the number of vehicles prohibited at roadside 'spot' checks over the past five years

Vehicle type	*Number of vehicles inspected*	*Number of vehicles prohibited*	*Percentage*
1990–91			
Heavy goods vehicles	108,204	17,014	15.7
Public service vehicles	20,713	1,125	10.5

Number of heavy goods vehicles, public service vehicles, private and light goods vehicles inspected and the number of vehicles prohibited at roadside 'spot' checks over the past five years

Vehicle type	*Number of vehicles inspected*	*Number of vehicles prohibited*	*Percentage*
Private and light goods vehicles	12,405	2,779	22.4
Private and light goods vehicles special checks[1]	—	—	—
1991–92			
Heavy goods vehicles	110,753	17,632	15.9
Public service vehicles	20,859	2,547	12.2
Private and light goods vehicles	35,231	5,461	15.5
Private and light goods vehicles special checks[1]	—	—	—
1992–93			
Heavy goods vehicles	134,382	18,786	14.0
Public service vehicles	29,542	2,366	8.0
Private and light goods vehicles	31,781	4,799	15.1
Private and light goods vehicles special checks[1]	44,720	1,236	2.8
1993–94			
Heavy goods vehicles	134,266	19,019	14.2
Public service vehicles	29,686	2,594	8.7
Private and light goods vehicles	21,270	3,339	15.7
Private and light goods vehicles special checks[1]	33,103	223	0.7
1994–95			
Heavy goods vehicles	130,035	20,075	15.4
Public service vehicles	32,826	3,315	10.1
Private and light goods vehicles	21,360	3,259	15.3
Private and light goods vehicles special checks	70,899	2,580	3.6

[1] Special checks cover emissions, tyres and lights.

Briefings (Civil Servants)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy towards civil servants in his Department at grade 2 or above arranging briefings for the opposition spokesmen on their responsibility. [40711]

Sir George Young: Prior ministerial approval is required for briefings with officials at any grade and requests should be made to the Private Office of the relevant Minister. A Minister may wish to be present at any briefings which is arranged.

Midland Main Line

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what cost-benefit analysis his Department has received on electrifying the midland main line; and if he will make a statement on its future. [41000]

Mr. Watts: The Department has not received any cost-benefit analysis on the electrification of the midland main line during the last five years. Railtrack informs me that it will continue to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the line.

Nottingham Station

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list all those organisations that currently operate in and from Nottingham railway station, specifying in each case whether they own or lease assets and services once wholly delivered by BR with particular reference to catering, parking, track, signals, rolling stock and platforms. [40988]

Mr. Watts: Nottingham station is owned by Railtrack and operated under a lease by Regional Railways Central, which is the main passenger service operator. Midland Main Line also operates services to and from Nottingham and manages the travel centre at the station. Regional Railways Central leases all its rolling stock from the three rolling stock leasing companies, Eversholt, Porterbrook and Angel Train Contracts. Midland Main Line leases its rolling stock from the Porterbrook leasing company. Station catering is provided by Travellers' Fare under contract from Regional Railways Central. The platforms and the car park are managed by Regional Railways Central. The track and signals are owned by Railtrack.

Heathrow Airport

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff are directly employed at Heathrow Airport; what estimate he has made of how many staff would be employed at the new terminal 5; and what is his Department's estimate of the number of employees in west London who are employed on work dependent on Heathrow. [41281]

Mr. Norris: These are matters for the British Airports Authority.

Plane Crashes

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list all plane crashes in United Kingdom airspace since 1980 giving the date and location of each crash and the types of aircraft involved. [41442]

Mr. Norris: It is estimated that over 3,000 accidents involving civil aircraft have occurred in the United Kingdom since 1980. The vast majority of these were minor accidents involving light aircraft. A record of all reportable civil aviation accidents and incidents is held on a computer database by the Civil Aviation Authority. I have asked the chairman of the authority to write to the hon. Gentleman to establish his exact data requirement.

Carriage of Bicycles (Trains)

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will summarise the minimum conditions to which cyclists will be entitled in respect of the carriage of bicycles on trains, as a result of the passenger service requirements issues so far. [41255]

Mr. Watts *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The franchising director intends to specify requirements in respects of the carriage of bicycles on passenger rail services in the franchise agreements that he makes with franchises. He intends to include in franchise agreements the requirement that franchise operators shall, so far as is reasonably practicable and subject to the availability of appropriate space on their rolling stock, ensure that facilities for the carriage of bicycles on trains are made available at reasonable, if any, charges. There will be no provisions relating to the carriage of bicycles in the passenger service requirements, which are concerned with the protection of an overall level and pattern of service base on the BR timetable in operation immediately prior to franchising.

European Passenger Services

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the costs to public funds of creating those assets of European Passenger Services which it is now intended to privatise. [41256]

Mr. Watts *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The value of EPS's fixed assets covering land and buildings, plant and equipment and rolling stock, as stated in the company's annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 1995 is £1,149.4 million. This figure includes assets to a value of £357.6 million which have been leased. The value of any assets acquired since 1 April 1995 will be included in the next annual report for the company.

Rail Services

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the 1995–96 turnover and subsidy requirement under the section 52 agreement with the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising for *(a)* Great Western Trains, *(b)* LTS Rail and *(c)* South West Trains companies. [41257]

Mr. Watts *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish), *Official Report*, 13 July, column *706*. Negotiations between the franchising director and the British Railways Board on the support appropriate to each individual train operating company are yet to be completed. I will write to the hon. Member when the level of support has been agreed and will place a copy of the letter in the Library of the House.

Cones Hotline

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) on what date the cones hotline was established; and if he will make a statement as to its current status and past effectiveness; [40805]

(2) how many phone calls there have been to the cones hotline and its successor service since the establishment of these services; and if he will give a breakdown of the number for each full year of the service; [40833]

(3) how many traffic cones have been removed in response to communication via the cones hotline and its successor service; if he will list *(a)* the number of occasions when this has occurred and *(b)* the total length of cones in metres removed; and if he will make a statement; [40804]

(4) what has been the total cost to date of establishing and running the cones hotline and its successor service; [40806]

(5) what is his estimate of the total mileage of traffic cones in place on the United Kingdom roads network; and what was the equivalent figure for October 1992. [40807]

Mr. Watts *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* These are operational matters for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Laurie Haynes to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 6 November 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr. John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Questions asking the Secretary of State for Transport for information on the cones hotline and its successor service.

The cones hotline was introduced in June 1992 and was incorporated into the new, more general Highways Agency information line in September 1995. Information on the cones hotline service was given in Hansard on 10 July 1995, vol 263, cols 403 to 404. Highways Agency regularly reviews the needs of road users and we decided to expand the service into a broader information service which will be abe to tell people where roadworks are in place, when they are due to be completed and what delays can be expected as well as giving more general information about the Highways Agency.

Between June 1992 and September 1995 there was a total of 19,500 calls to the hotline and information line. There were 6,000 calls between June 1992 and February 1994, a further 8,000 calls between March 1994 and February 1995 and 5,500 calls between March 1995 and September 1995.

The cost of establishing and running the cones hotline prior to March 1994 is not available as, until then, calls were routed through the Department of Transport's general enquiry number. The estimated average cost of handling each call during the financial year 1994–95 is £2.22. The only additional cost of setting up the new service will be change to roadwork signing. Costs for these will be negligible because new signs are generally being phased in as new roadwork sites are started.

The traffic management arrangements for the roadwork at M3 junction 2 (M25 interchange) were changed at the beginning of this month following calls from motorists and discussions with the local police and our agents. Information is not held centrally on the length of roadwork altered or removed following calls.

The Highways Agency is responsible for trunk roads including motorways in England. Our target is to keep 93% of lanes available on each individual route, and 95% of lanes on the whole trunk road network available at all times. Over the first six months of this financial year, we exceeded this target with over 99 per cent. of lanes on the trunk road network available. Information is not available on the equivalent figure for October 1992, or on the extent of roadworks on local authority roads in England. Roads in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the respective Secretaries of State.

I hope this information is helpful.

Ports (Privatisation)

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has reached a decision on the privatisation of the ports of Dover, Ipswich and Tyne. [42100]

Sir George Young: Following consultation with the trust port authorities concerned, I have decided to use my powers under the Ports Act 1991 to require the port authorities of Ipswich and Tyne to submit schemes for privatisation. As regards Dover, I accept the harbour board's advice that it would be better for privatisation to be deferred for two years until the effect of the channel tunnel on the port's business is clearer. The board has assured me that it is its aim to submit a scheme for privatisation by September 1997.

Newbury Bypass

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what contracts have been let to carry out preliminary works for the construction of the A34 Newbury bypass. [40555]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. Cynog Dafis, dated 7 November 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr. John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport, what contracts have been let to carry out preliminary works for the construction of the A34 Newbury Bypass.

We have let a contract which has been completed for the demolition of the properties needed for the scheme and plan to let a contract in the next few weeks for advance site clearance. This work will take place before the main works begin next year.

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what examination he has made of the Highways Agency's detailed cost-benefit analysis of the Newbury bypass; and if he will make a statement on the estimated economic benefit of this road. [40554]

Mr. Watts: The cost-benefit analysis prepared for the schemes progress through the statutory procedures was considered by the then Secretary of State for Transport, my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West, (Mr. Channon) when he considered the public inquiry inspector's report in February 1989. He accepted the inspectors' recommendation that the scheme should proceed. The Highways Agency study looked again at the economic evaluation and this was considered as part of the whole report by the then Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney) when he decided that the scheme should proceed. This decision is supported fully by my right hon. Friend the current Secretary of State. The net present value of the benefits of the scheme, at current prices, range between £124.8 million on low traffic growth assumptions and £285.6 million assuming high growth.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) on what date he expects the tender documents for the Newbury bypass to be sent out to contractors; [41954]

(2) what has caused the delay in the issue of Newbury bypass tender documents to contractors beyond the end date expected in August; [41958]

(3) on what date he now expects the construction of the Newbury bypass to commence; [41956]

(4) by what date he now expects the Newbury bypass to be completed; [41957]

(5) by what date he now expects the tendering process for the Newbury bypass to be completed. [41955]

Mr. Watts: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State confirmed on 11 October that the Newbury bypass will go ahead.

We are aiming to complete the tendering process in order to meet that commitment. Work will start as soon as possible in 1996 and we would anticipate that construction would be completed some two or so years after award of contract.

Following upon the previous Secretary of State's decision to go ahead with the bypass, work has continued to complete EC procedures for competition and bring the tender documents up to date. There has been no undue delay. The Highways Agency has moved as quickly as possible. We currently expect tenders to be invited within a few weeks.

Oil Tankers (Movements)

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he proposes to review safety procedures and pollution control regarding movements of oil tankers. [41459]

Mr. Norris: This is an operational matter for the Marine Safety Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from R. M. Bradley to Mr. Cynog Dafis, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your Question about oil tanker movements.

A number of internationally-agreed routeing measures are in place around the United Kingdom (UK) to enhance safe navigation and protect the marine environment. Measures include Areas to be Avoided, Precautionary Areas, Recommended Routes, Traffic Separation Schemes and a Deep-Water Route west of the Hebrides, specifically for large tankers.

This Agency reviews the effectiveness of the routeing measures around the UK and takes rigorous action to follow up reported infringements. In particular, the Agency considers carefully any recommendations on routeing matters made by the Department of Transport's Marine Accident Investigation Branch as a result of its investigations into collisions and groundings.

Recent amendments to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention will allow for the introduction of compulsory ship-reporting systems from 1 January 1996 and compulsory ship-routeing systems from 1 January 1997, subject to their acceptance at the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The UK is at the forefront of efforts to develop a workable system of automatic ship-identification transponders and is pressing at the IMO for the early introduction of this equipment on oil tankers. Transponders will increase the ability of coastal states to monitor the movement of shipping.

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what new plans he has to tighten regulations regarding movements of bulk oil tankers. [41490]

Mr. Norris: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him today.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required, both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41748]

Mr. Watts: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Transport and Road Safety to the hon. Member for Nottinhgam, North (Mr. Allen) and 6 November. As to public sector contributions for approved projects, the position is as follows:

Project	*Public funding*
Northern Line trains	Payments to GEC over the period of the contract are confidential.
Midland Metro Line 1	In total, some £130 million is being contributed by the public sector towards the capital cost of the scheme. There is no public sector revenue support.

Emergency Tugs

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the cost in the financial year of stationing emergency tugs at *(a)* Stornoway and *(b)* Dover; and what is the estimated cost for the stationing emergency tugs at the same ports during the forthcoming winter for six months from 1 November. [41730]

Mr. Norris: This is an operational matter for the Coastguard Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from C. J. Harris to Mr. James Wallace, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question as the question deals with operational matters, for which I have responsibility as Chief Executive.

The cost for the emergency tugs for winter 1994–95 (4 months) was as follows:

(a) Stornoway: £425,500

(b) Dover Strait: £418,400

The estimated cost of the vessels for winter 1995–96 (6 months) is as follows:

(a) Stornoway: £1,000,000

(b) Dover Strait: £1,100,000

Red Routes

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the new priority routes, red routes, to be introduced in Islington; on which roads; at what costs; and if he will make a statement. [42043]

Mr. Norris: The programme of implementation of red routes is a matter for the traffic director for London. In Islington, he is currently introducing red route measures on the A501 Pentonville road, at a cost of around £500,000, and measures on the A503 Seven Sisters road are planned for 1997, subject to finance, at a cost of around £1 million.

Car-free Areas (London)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to authorise car-free areas in inner London; and if he will make a statement. [42041]

Mr. Norris: It is for local highway authorities to consider whether to introduce such schemes.

Traffic-Free Zones (London)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies have been undertaken by the Government office for London into the possibility of creating traffic-free zones in inner London; and if he will make a statement. [42040]

Mr. Norris: None.

Car Commuting Estimates

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are his latest estimates for the level of daily car commuting into central London for 1996 to the year 2000; and if he will make a statement. [42042]

Mr. Norris: The Department's most recent cordon survey recorded 114,000 cars entering central London between 7 am and 10 am on a typical weekday in 1993. Projections are not made for short spans of years but on present assumptions, growth is expected to average about 0.5 per cent. per year between 1991 and 2011.

Burnley and Pendle Bus Co.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what indication he has given to Pendle council or any of its councillors regarding his consent to the sale of Burnley and Pendle Bus Co. [41920]

Mr. Norris: For reasons of commercial confidentiality, it is not my practice to disclose the details of any correspondence with a local authority on such an issue.

Vehicle Emission Checks

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what budget is allocated for enforcing emission standards; how many vehicle owners are fined for failing emission standards every year; and how many light vehicles fail emission standards at road tests every year. [42117]

Mr. Norris: The total budget for vehicle emissions checks in 1995–96 is £621,900, which includes £400,000 for the special emission blitzes we have been running over the past year. Latest figures show that around 16 per cent. of taxis, 4 per cent. of cars, and 8 per cent. of light goods vehicles exceed prescribed emission limits. Offenders are normally given 14 days to obtain a new MOT certificate in order to demonstrate that any roadworthiness defects have been corrected. Most comply and so there is only a very small number of prosecutions.

Bus and Coach Industry

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of the EC bus and coach directive on the United Kingdom industry. [42115]

Mr. Norris: We are currently awaiting a formal proposal for a bus and coach construction directive from the Commission. We have had full discussions with the manufacturing and operating industry and will do everything possible to ensure that any directive protects both the interests of industry and the future of existing UK vehicle types.

Transport Policy

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what were the main findings of the interactive survey to examine public attitudes to transport policy and the environment. [42116]

Mr. Norris: Results from the first stage of this research are not expected until the new year.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to publish a response to the 18th report of the Royal Commission on environmental pollution, transport and the environment. [41755]

Mr. Norris: Decisions on the Government's response will be taken in the light of the national debate on transport policy.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he is proposing *(a)* to promote (i) cycling, (ii) walking and (iii) use of public transport and *(b)* to reduce the amount of road traffic. [41756]

Mr. Norris: A range of measures is already in place. Views on further measures were invited as part of the national debate on transport policy.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he intends to take to reduce the proportion of urban journeys undertaken by car *(a)* in London from 50 per cent. in the London area to (i) 45 per cent. by 2000 and (ii) to 35 per cent. by 2020 and *(b)* in other urban areas from 65 per cent. (i) to 60 per cent. by 2000 and (ii) 50 per cent. by 2020. [41762]

Mr. Norris: Views on the desirability of such targets, and the measures required to meet them, were invited as part of the national debate on transport policy.

Ship-identification Transponders

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has currently been made through the International Maritime Organisation for the early introduction of ship-identification transponders on oil tankers. [41864]

Mr. Norris: This is an operational matter for the Marine Safety Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from R.M. Bradley to Mr. Elliot Morley, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your Question about transponders.

There appears to be broad international acceptance of the principle of transponders and it is encouraging that the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has now developed a performance standard for a system based on VHF radio, which is particularly suitable for monitoring coastal shipping.

The United Kingdom is continuing its efforts at the IMO to secure the compulsory carriage of transponders on larger ships as soon as possible. As part of that drive, this Agency is conducting a trial using automatic ship-identification transponders on a number of ships in the Dover Strait.

Official Hospitality (Expenditure)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list *(a)* the total amount spent by his Department on hospitality and *(b)* each item of expenditure over £1,000 spent on hospitality by his Department in each of the last five years. [40995]

Mr. Norris: The Department of Transport—excluding its agencies—has spent the following amounts on official hospitality over the past five years.

1990–91: £204,040
1991–92: £170,015
1992–93: £233,762
1993–94: £234,986
1994–95: £127,247

These figures have been obtained from the Department's computerised accounts system. The categories of expenditure used to obtain the figures are:

C1300: Entertainment UK (superseded in 1993–94 by C1305 and C1306)
C1301: Official teas/working lunches
C1305: Entertainment UK (ministers)
C1306: Entertainment UK (others)
C1310: Entertainment overseas (ministers)
C1311: Entertainment overseas (others)
C1320: Road opening ceremonies
C1321: Medal ceremony costs.

The number of items of expenditure over £1,000 in each of the above categories over the past five years is as follows:

	C1300	*C1301*	*C1306*	*C1311*	*C1320*	*C1321*	*Total*
1990–91	13	11	—	3	1	1	29
1991–92	1	1	—	3	8	3	16
1992–93	4	2	—	2	3	1	12
1993–94	—	2	1	1	2	—	6
1994–95	—	—	3	2	—	—	5

Freight Transport

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the percentage of freight sent by *(a)* road and *(b)* rail in each year since 1979. [41811]

Mr. Watts: The percentage of total freight sent by *(a)* road and *(b)* rail in each year since 1979 is as follows:

Year	*Rail percentage of billion tonne KMs*	*Road percentage of billion tonne KMs*
1979	11	55
1980	10	53
1981	10	54

Year	Rail percentage of billion tonne KMs	Road percentage of billion tonne KMs
1982	9	53
1983	9	52
1984	7	55
1985	8	55
1986	9	56
1987	9	58
1988	8	60
1989	8	62
1990	7	62
1991	7	61
1992	7	61
1993	7	64
1994	6	65

Source:
TSGB, 1995.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has to increase the proportion of freight carried by rail and decrease the proportion of freight carried by road. [41758]

Mr. Watts: Rail must improve its performance if it is to attract new traffic and retain existing freight customers. The key to this is liberalisation and privatisation. We have already opened up the rail network to competition. Privatisation of British Rail's freight businesses will follow as soon as possible.

Rail freight is being further encouraged by a considerably enhanced grants regime. Some 145 grants have been awarded since 1979, with a total value of £100 million at today's prices, securing traffic to rail equivalent to over 2.5 million lorry journeys per year.

Channel Tunnel Rail Link

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the total amount of EU funds that have been made available to the channel tunnel rail link; for what purposes and to which organisations; and if he will make a statement. [41761]

Mr. Watts: Grant has been provided from the transport infrastructure programme since 1991 to support Union Railway's expenditure on feasibility studies for the channel tunnel rail link project. The payments made are as follows:

Year	£ million
1991	4.0
1992	9.6
1993	8.0
1994	14.7
Total	36.3

Note:
£1 = 1.25 ECU.

The Commission has recently awarded £13.6 million feasibility studies grant to Union Railways from the 1995 trans-European networks programme. This programme has replaced the transport infrastructure programme.

Union Railways, a Government-owned company, is responsible for CTRL project development. Its feasibility studies work includes environmental and consultation work, geotechnical surveys, business planning and engineering design.

Drivers' and Pilots' Working Hours

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what transport issues relating to *(a)* drivers' hours and *(b)* pilots' hours are currently before the EC's Social Committee and what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on each of them. [41766]

Mr. Norris: The European Commission's Joint Transport Committee on Road Transport is carrying out a survey of drivers' working hours in member states and has been asked to produce conclusions on the adoption of working time into the EU regulation on drivers' hours rules. The committee comprises representatives from employer organisations and unions. The Government are not party to these discussions but will consider the report when produced.

We are not aware of any issues relating to pilots' hours before European Commission committees at present. However, flight and duty time for aircrew are being considered by the joint aviation authorities and we will consider any recommendation they propose.

European Directives

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *136*, if he will list the 12 directives under consideration indicating the action required or being taken in each case and the timetable for parliamentary consideration in each case. [41598]

Mr. Watts: My answer of 31 October should have said that only 11 directives require secondary legislation. These directives are listed, along with the action required or being taken in each case:

Directive number	Title	Outstanding action
95/21/EC	On the enforcement, in respect of shipping using Community ports and sailing in the waters under the jurisdiction of the member states, of international standards for ship safety, pollution prevention and shipboard living and working conditions (port state control). The Regulations are being redrafted and it is intended to have domestic legislation in place at the beginning of 1996.	
94/57/EC	Concerning common rules and standards for ship inspection and survey organisations and for the relevant activities of maritime administrations.	Draft regulations are being prepared and will be the subject of public consultation. No Parliamentary timetable has yet been set.

Directive number	*Title*	*Outstanding action*
94/58/EC	Concerning the minimum level of training for seafarers.	The vast majority of the IMO Standards for Training, Certification and Watchkeeping regulations have already been implemented. New legislation is required only for that part dealing with communication by the crew.
Number not yet assigned	On the allocation of railway infrastructure capacity and the charging of infrastructure fees.	Discussions are underway with industry partners in advance of preparation of secondary legislation.
Number not yet assigned	On the licensing of railway undertakings.	Discussions are underway with industry partners in advace of preparation of secondary legislation.
87/540	Access to the occupation of carrier of goods by waterway in national and international transport, and on the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications for this occupation.	The United Kingdom benefits from a derogation for United Kingdom domestic carriers. Secondary legislation is being drafted to provide for certification for United Kingdom carriers operating in other member states and for the recognition in the United Kingdom of certificates granted in other member states for non-United Kingdom carriers using United Kingdom inland waterways.
94/56	On the investigation of civil aviation accidents and incidents.	Implementation of this directive entails amendments to both primary and secondary legislation. It is anticipated that this will be completed before the obligatory date of 21 November.
92/97	Amends 70/157 in respect of the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of vehicles.	Regulations applying this directive to new vehicle types came into effect on 1 October 1995. Regulations applying it to all vehicles entering into service are in preparation and will come into effect on 1 October 1996. Subject to statutory consultation the latter will be made and laid in Parliament early in 1996.
93/75	Minimum requirements for vessels bound for or leaving Community ports and carrying dangerous or polluting goods.	This directive as implemented on 31 October 1995.
94/55	On the approximation of the laws of member states with regard to the transport of dangerous goods by road.	The Health and Safety Executive will soon publish draft regulations for consultation. The regulations are expected to be laid before Parliament in the summer of 1996.
91/439	On driving licences.	Draft regulations amending primary legislation are now with Parliamentary Counsel. The drafting of regulations to amend secondary legislation is in hand. It is not possible at present to indicate when either set of regulations will be submitted to Parliament.

Cycling

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures exist, or are proposed, to increase cycle use to 10 per cent. of all urban journeys by 2005. [41757]

Mr. Norris: We have taken a number of initiatives which are designed to encourage and increase the number of people cycling. I announced in June this year that we intended to identify national targets for more cycling use. The steering group that we have set up to generate a national strategy for cycling will consider what targets are most appropriate.

Railways (Expenditure)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list figures for total Government spending on the railways for the current year and in each of the last 10 years. [41809]

Mr. Watts: The table provides details of the railways' external finance requirement for each year since 1985–86.

	£ million cash
1985–86	910
1986–87	777
1987–88	545
1988–89	376
1989–90	711
1990–91	1,077
1991–92	1,464
1992–93	2,064
1993–94	1,461
1994–95	1,541
1995–96	[1]975

Notes:

[1] Planned figure.

1. From 1987–88, figures exclude movements in payroll creditors.

Ro-ro Ferries

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the decision by the Council of Ministers in respect of the European Parliament's proposal in respect of the safety management certificates of ro-ro ferries visiting EU ports. [41759]

Mr. Norris: This is an operational matter for the Marine Safety Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from R.M. Bradley to Mr. Graham Allen dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Transport has asked me to reply to your request that he make a statement on the decision by the Council of Ministers in respect of the European Parliament's proposal in respect of the Safety Management Certificates of ro-ro ferries visiting EU ports.

The UK fully supports this proposal which will require all such ro-ro passenger ferries to carry a Safety Management Certificate from the 1 July 1996 regardless of the flag of the vessel.

Council of Transport Ministers

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make available the minutes of the last EU Council of Transport Ministers meeting on 28 September. [41760]

Mr. Watts: Details of the voting at the Transport Council were set out in my right hon. Friend's reply of 6 November to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes). Minutes of the Council meetings prior to a Council decision of 2 October 1995 on the release of such minutes were not routinely made public. However, the Council Secretariat has issued a press release reporting on the outcome of the Transport Council. I shall send a copy to the hon. Member.

Rail Commuters

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which five cities have the lowest percentage of commuters using rail. [41331]

Mr. Watts: This information is not held by my Department.

Road Accident Statistics

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list for each police force area the number of children killed or injured while travelling on school transport for each of the last five years; [40998]

(2) if he will list for each police force area the number of fatalities resulting from accidents involving heavy goods vehicles for each of the last five years. [40997]

Mr. Norris: Available information is shown in the following tables.

School pupil casualties (travelling to or from school) on a minibus or PSV by police region, severity and year

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Metropolitan Police					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	18	10	9	7	1
Slight	35	40	80	43	34
Cumbria					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	1	0	3	1
Slight	9	0	5	3	3
Lancashire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	4	0
Slight	7	3	7	35	26
Merseyside					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	1	1	1
Slight	14	9	14	20	63
Greater Manchester					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	1	2	1	0	1
Slight	28	25	30	21	32
Cheshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	6	3	14	2	3
Northumbria					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	1	2	0	0	2
Slight	12	9	7	9	31
Durham					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	1	1	0
Slight	21	8	7	61	5
North Yorkshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	1	0	0
Slight	15	25	1	6	6
West Yorkshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	3	0	2
Slight	19	26	12	79	35
South Yorkshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	1	1	0
Slight	10	4	20	13	25
Humberside					
Fatal	0	0	0	1	0
Serious	1	0	0	19	2
Slight	5	7	7	54	2
Cleveland					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	1	3	2	1	0
West Midlands					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	1	2	0
Slight	0	12	7	23	12
Staffordshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	1	0	1
Slight	34	4	5	14	39

School pupil casualties (travelling to or from school) on a minibus or PSV by police region, severity and year

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
West Mercia					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	14	21	10	27	14
Warwickshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	1
Slight	3	2	6	0	6
Derbyshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	13	4	1	7	4
Nottinghamshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	1	1	0	0	1
Slight	11	11	9	12	18
Lincolnshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	1	0
Slight	7	17	5	43	10
Leicestershire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	3	0	0	0	0
Slight	25	18	28	0	1
Northamptonshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	3	0	0	0	0
Slight	1	4	2	0	4
Cambridgeshire					
Fatal	0	1	0	0	0
Serious	0	3	0	0	0
Slight	0	4	8	0	0
Norfolk					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	5	60	1	5	0
Suffolk					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	1
Slight	20	2	25	4	5
Bedfordshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	2	7	2	2	2
Hertfordshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	1	0	0	5	0
Slight	7	0	25	9	1
Essex					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	9	2	4	28	9
Thames Valley					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	2	0	2	1	0
Slight	7	26	70	35	22
Hampshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	2	0
Slight	11	3	16	0	22
Surry					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	2	0	0	0	0
Slight	19	3	1	39	1
Kent					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	1	0	0
Slight	11	2	3	10	6
Sussex					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	2	0	1	0	0
Slight	8	3	20	1	14
City of London[1]					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	0	0	0	0	0
Devon and Cornwall					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	1	0
Slight	46	5	3	5	7
Avon and Somerset					
Fatal	0	0	1	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	2	7	2	7	6
Gloucestershire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	1
Serious	3	0	0	0	0
Slight	18	0	0	13	22
Wiltshire					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	1	0
Slight	0	4	30	1	0
Dorset					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	1	0	0	0	0
Slight	20	0	10	1	10
North Wales					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	6
Slight	5	1	5	64	93
Gwent					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	3
Slight	15	30	1	3	17
South Wales					
Fatal	0	0	0	1	0
Serious	0	2	1	0	0
Slight	13	22	47	32	21
Dyfed-Powys					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	2	2	0	0	0
Slight	30	7	7	0	23

School pupil casualties (travelling to or from school) on a minibus or PSV by police region, severity and year

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Northern					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	2	2	1	2	8
Grampian					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	5	3	2	3	3
Tayside					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	1	1	0	0	0
Slight	16	2	1	2	1
Fife					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	2	0	1	1	1
Slight	30	1	12	1	4
Lothian and Borders					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	2	0	0	0	0
Slight	2	3	7	11	12
Central					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	2	0	0	0
Slight	14	20	4	10	4
Strathclyde					
Fatal	0	0	0	1	1
Serious	0	4	1	1	5
Slight	22	22	17	11	78
Dumfries and Galloway					
Fatal	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	0	0	0	0	0
Slight	1	2	0	6	0
Total Fatal	0	1	1	3	2
Serious	46	30	26	51	31
Slight	630	498	603	778	766

[1] Included in Metropolitan area.

Notes:

1. The Police do not record the purpose for which the vehicle is being used when involved in injury accidents. Consequently the table includes all minibuses and PSV's where a school pupil travelling to or from school was killed or injured.
2. Scchool pupils have been classified as those aged fifteen and under.

Fatalities from accidents involving HGVs by police area and year

Police Force Code	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Metropolitan Police	58	37	39	44	41
Cumbria	33	14	18	17	11
Lancashire	23	8	11	11	13
Merseyside	9	6	7	10	7
Greater Manchester	23	24	24	22	11
Cheshire	20	32	16	18	19
Northumbria	17	14	13	5	6
Durham	11	12	8	7	3
North Yorkshire	23	36	21	23	18
West Yorkshire	25	24	16	25	18
South Yorkshire	13	10	12	20	8
Humberside	11	11	19	15	15
Cleveland	1	8	2	0	1
West Midlands	35	14	23	12	14
Staffordshire	18	12	12	8	19
West Mercia	31	18	23	30	31
Warwickshire	3	7	16	22	8
Derbyshire	13	22	17	23	13
Nottinghamshire	22	21	12	9	15
Lincolnshire	39	16	20	18	18
Leicestershire	15	20	24	20	13
Northamptonshire	24	23	11	12	6
Cambridgeshire	30	18	15	10	18
Norfolk	17	15	22	18	22
Suffolk	9	6	9	10	9
Bedfordshire	12	8	20	15	7
Hertfordshire	17	11	8	11	8
Essex	28	28	21	17	6
Thames Valley	46	35	34	24	25
Hampshire	34	21	17	18	16
Surrey	13	11	4	5	5
Kent	17	21	27	22	14
Sussex	17	12	16	14	7
City of London[1]	0	0	0	0	0
Devon and Cornwall	11	11	13	17	8
Avon and Somerset	18	25	21	15	11
Gloucestershire	17	12	10	4	13
Wiltshire	14	15	18	14	16
Dorset	6	13	8	4	14
North Wales	10	18	4	12	10
Gwent	3	2	6	1	5
South Wales	9	5	9	7	11
Dyfed-Powys	17	13	11	9	14
Northern	7	8	5	7	7
Grampian	9	9	11	9	12
Tayside	7	13	11	9	7
Fife	5	2	2	4	5
Lothian and Borders	15	11	15	9	6
Central	5	3	3	3	3
Strathclyde	22	36	27	27	26
Dumfries and Galloway	3	11	11	13	7
Total	885	782	742	699	620

[1] Included in Metropolitan area.

Heathrow Airport (Emergency Calls)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the numbers and categories of Mayday emergency calls made to Heathrow airport in each of the last 10 years. [42114]

Mr. Norris: The Mayday call is used where there is a serious and/or imminent danger and immediate assistance is required.

Mayday calls are normally made to air traffic control centres rather than to airports. Mayday calls made by aircraft bound for Heathrow airport for the last 10 years are as follows:

Years	*Mayday calls*
1985 to 1989 inclusive	0
1990	2
1991	0
1992	0
1993	1
1994	1
1995	1

Hidden Report

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if the legal obligation on the British Railways

Board to implement the recent recommendation of the Hidden report, following the Clapham accident, is also binding on Railtrack. [42082]

Mr. Watts: Railtrack, like the British Railways Board, implements railway accident inquiry recommendations relating to its responsibilities according to the principles of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974. The Act is based on reducing risks as low as reasonably practicable, taking into account costs and safety benefits.

All the Hidden report recommendations addressed to British Rail and the British Transport police have either been implemented, or have alternative actions in hand, or are on-going. The position on outstanding recommendations is recorded in my reply to a question by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms Walley) on 16 October 1995, columns *86–87*.

A350

Mr. Faber: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate of future traffic flows has been made by his Department for the A350 between the M4 and Warminster in both directions. [41856]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lawrie Haynes to Mr. David Faber, dated 7 November 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr. John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate of future traffic flows has been made by his Department for the A350 between the M4 and Warminster in both directions.

The A350 is a principal road for which Wiltshire County Council is the highways authority. However, the Highways Agency have carried out limited traffic survey work on the A350 at West Aston to the east of Trowbridge, in connection with our trunk road proposals for the A36 East of Bath-Beckington Improvement scheme. The annual average two-way daily flow forecast for the year 2018 at West Aston is in the range 27,000–35,000 if there is no improvement to the A36, and in the 18,000–24,000 if the A36 East of Bath–Beckington Improvement scheme is built to dual carriageway standard on the preferred route.

International Marine Safety Corps

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy towards re-establishing an international marine safety corps to inspect vessels globally. [41595]

Mr. Norris: The original international marine safety corps was set up in 1978 primarily to provide expert advice to developing countries in the formulation of regulations and survey procedure.

International co-operation in maritime safety has now advanced to a point where re-establishment of such a corps would no longer be appropriate or necessary.

Roads Expenditure

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list total Government spending on roads in each year for the last 10 years. [41808]

Mr. Watts: The information requested regarding total Government spending on roads, in cash terms in each year for the last 10 years is set out below in £ million:

1985–86: 1,317.8
1986–87: 1,391.8
1987–88: 1,476.6
1988–89: 1,599.3
1989–90: 1,852.5
1990–91: 2,435.4
1991–92: 2,623.8
1992–93: 2,919.3
1993–94: 3,084.6
1994–95: 2,929.2

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the oral answer of the Attorney-General of 30 October, *Official Report*, column 12, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and what was the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41217]

Mr. Watts *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given today by my hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign Office.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 7 November. [40299]

Sir Peter Tapsell: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for Tuesday 7 November. [40300]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister is travelling to New Zealand to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting.

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to his oral answer of the 31 October 1995, *Official Report*, column 96, regarding membership of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, if he will make a further statement. [41994]

The Prime Minister: I understand that the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) was a member of Parliamentary Labour CND in the 1980s. I would be delighted if he has since recanted his views.

Council of Europe and Western European Union

Mr. Peter Atkinson: To ask the Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of the information bulletin on the activities of the United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of the Western European Union covering the period March to September 1995. [42215]

The Prime Minister: I have done so today.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Terrorist Offences

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were first prosecuted for terrorist type offences *(a)* in the year prior to the 1 September 1994 in respect of crimes occurring before 1 September 1993 and *(b)* in the year prior to 1 September 1995 in respect of crimes occurring over a year before that date. [38483]

Sir John Wheeler: I will write to the hon. and learned Gentleman as soon as possible.

Occupational Health and Safety

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what public funds have been made available to the Northern Ireland occupational health and safety group over the last three years. [40887]

Sir John Wheeler: Since 1 April 1992 the Health and Safety Agency for Northern Ireland has contributed £11,226 to initiatives involving the Northern Ireland occupational health and safety group. Details are provided in the table.

Financial year	*Purpose of payment*	*Amount £*
1992–93	Purchase of display stand space at Group conference	130
1993–94	Contribution towards costs of Group safety quiz and three Group safety awareness seminars	5,500
1994–95	Contribution towards costs of Group safety quiz, school leavers' seminars and school video project	4,450
1995–96[1]	Costs of advertising occupational safety awards scheme	1,146
Total		11,226

[1] To date.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration is given in the rules relating to the Child Support Agency to pre-existing debts owned by the absent parent; what assessment he has made as to whether the regulations are leading to bankruptcies; and what evidence he has as to the relationship between claims for incapacity benefit and the agency's financial demands. [40890]

Mr. Moss: At present no allowance is made for pre-existing debts in the child support maintenance formula. Such debts will, however, be considered under the proposed departure system, which it is anticipated will come into force towards the end of 1996.

While we have undertaken no formal evaluation, there is no indication that child support regulations have led to bankruptcies; nor is there any evidence of a relationship between claims for incapacity benefits and the requirements to pay child support maintenance.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total workforce; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41118]

Sir John Wheeler: The information requested is listed:

	Temporary/ casual employment	*Percentage of total workforce*	*Part-time employment*	*Percentage of total workforce*
1995	1,365	5.21	1,910	7.29
1990	1,137	4.18	754	2.77

The 1990 figures for civilian staff of the Prison Service are not included as the information is not held in the format requested.

Official Inquiries

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list all the official inquiries he and his Department have undertaken over the last five years indicating the dates they were initiated and the dates when findings were released to the public. [41449]

Sir John Wheeler: The information is as follows:

Official enquiries	*Date initiated*	*Date findings released to public*
The Stormont Fire and Fire Safety in Crown Buildings Inquiry	January 1995	April 1995
'An Abuse of Trust' an investigation by the Social Services Inspectorate	November 1992	January 1994
Review of the Operational Policy in Belfast Prison for the Management of Paramilitary Prisoners from opposing factions.	December 1991	March 192

Business Assistance

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people who have been helped to return to business in Northern Ireland by the local enterprise development unit, have also received assistance from *(a)* Industrial research and technology unit and *(b)* the Training and Employment Agency. [41896]

Sir John Wheeler: One company which was established following the original launch of LEDU's "Making it Back Home" campaign in 1991 has received assistance from both the Training and Employment Agency and the industrial research and technology unit.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many businesses in Northern Ireland have *(a)* applied for assistance from the export marketing research scheme and *(b)* been granted assistance by the export marketing research scheme in the past five years in Northern Ireland. [41904]

Sir John Wheeler: Since March 1990, 11 Northern Ireland companies have applied for assistance under the export marketing research scheme. Of these, eight applications were successful and three were rejected.

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what public funds were invested in the Rath Mor community business centre in Creggan, Londonderry; what assistance was given to the project by the International Fund for Ireland; what plans there are for the location of a Wellworths supermarket in the centre; and if he will make a statement about the availability of public funds for supermarket chains from *(a)* Great Britain; and *(b)* the Republic of Ireland locating in Northern Ireland. [41947]

Mr. Moss: The public sector contribution to the Rath Mor centre comprised a grant of £1.08 million and a loan of £0.27 million paid by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland together with an amount of £12,500 paid by the local enterprise development unit of the Department of Economic Development.

I understand that the International Fund for Ireland has assisted the development. The fund is administered by an independent board appointed jointly by the two Governments. All disbursements are a matter for that Board and questions regarding them should be directed to the fund's chairman, Mr. William T. McCarter, PO Box 2000, Belfast BT4 3SA.

Wellworths has occupied the supermarket unit in the Rath Mor centre since it opened.

There are no public funds available for supermarket chains from Great Britain or the Republic of Ireland wishing to locate in Northern Ireland.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money will be available in total every year for the "Making it Back Home" scheme. [41898]

Sir John Wheeler: The initial budget will be £2 million next year. Experience from that year will help set future budgets.

Jobskills Programme

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list the names of the Training and Employment Agency approved providers of the jobskills programme in Northern Ireland; [41900]

(2) how many people are currently participating in jobskills programmes in Northern Ireland *(a)* in the 16–24 year age group, *(b)* in the 25–60 year age group, *(c)* who have never been in employment and *(d)* who have been unemployed for more than one year; [41902]

(3) how many of the participants in the jobskills programme in Northern Ireland are currently on a jobskills access course. [41901]

Mr. Ancram: Responsibility for the subject in question has been delegated to the Training and Employment Agency under its chief executive, Mr. Ian Walters. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

A list of organisations approved by the Training and Employment Agency to provide training for the jobskills programme has been placed in the library.

Letter from Ian Walters to Ms Marjorie Mowlam, dated 6 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has asked me, as the Chief Executive of the Training and Employment Agency, to reply to your questions about Jobskills.

1. Question No 1683

Attached is a list of the organisations approved by the Training and Employment Agency to provide training for the Jobskills programme.

2. Question No 1696

The numbers of participants in Jobskills Access from the latest information available at 13 October 1995 is 1,496.

3. Question No 1691

From the latest information available the number of people participating in the Jobskills programme at 13 October 1995:

(a) in the 16–24 year age group is 9,104;

(b) in the 25–60 year age group is 1,477.

The eligibility conditions for entry to Jobskills do not require information from participants which would provide answers to questions (c) and (d).

I hope you find this helpful.

Investors (Visits)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many investors visited the *(a)* district of Down *(b)* borough of Castlereagh *(c)* borough of Ards at the request of the industrial development board in each of the past 10 years and if he will make a statement about the number of new jobs promoted by the IDB in each of these areas. [41908]

Sir John Wheeler: The information requested on the number of visits by investors is not available for all of the period specified and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The table shows the number of IDB sponsored visits by potential investors to the areas concerned between April 1993 and September 1995.

Visits by investors

District Council	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96 (to 30 September)*	*Total*
Newtownards	10	3	1	14
Castlereagh	5	3	5	13
Down	2	10	3	15

In the past 10 years IDB has promoted a total of 2,863 jobs in the areas concerned as follows:

District council area	*Down*	*Castlereagh*	*Ards*	*Total*
1985–86	10	141	155	306
1986–87	67	168	247	482
1987–88	108	124	298	530
1988–89	318	95	164	577
1989–90	24	404	67	495
1990–91	—	68	50	118
1991–92	—	84	149	233
1992–93	—	18	49	67
1993–94	—	—	41	41
1994–95	—	—	14	14
Total	527	1,102	1,234	2,863

European Regional Funds

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if private sector funding is admissible to match funding available under the European Union objective 1 funding programmes for Northern Ireland; [41889]

(2) if private sector funding is admissible to match funding available under European Union objective 2 funding programmes for Northern Ireland. [41890]

Sir John Wheeler: Northern Ireland is entirely an objective 1 region and as such the Government welcome private sector contributions to projects which the structural funds support. Where activities merit and are eligible for support under approved programmes in Northern Ireland private sector contributions are admissible as matching funding.

Radioactivity

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what systems are in place to monitor levels of radioactivity in the seas surrounding Northern Ireland and how often such monitoring is carried out. [41891]

Mr. Moss: In Northern Ireland the Department of the Environment's chief inspector, appointed under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, monitors levels of radioactivity in the Irish sea and the Northern Ireland coastal environment.

The inspectorate arranges for samples of seaweed, sediment, fish, nephrops and winkles to be collected and forwarded for analysis by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's fisheries research laboratory at Lowestoft. Samples are taken quarterly except in the case of sediments, where the frequency is six monthly. The Northern Ireland results are published annually in the MAFF report "Radioactivity in Surface and Coastal Waters of the British Isles" and in the Northern Ireland abstract of statistics.

In addition to this programme the inspectorate monitors the gamma dose rate in air over intertidal sediments in each district council in Northern Ireland with a coastline.

Peace and Reconciliation Programme

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what have been the administration costs to date to the Northern Ireland Office for the management and distribution of the European special support programme for peace and reconciliation. [41894]

Sir John Wheeler: To date, the administration of the European special support programme for peace and reconciliation has been undertaken by the Department of Finance and Personnel and other Northern Ireland Departments from within their existing resources. This activity is undertaken alongside other activities and has not been separately costed. As is the case with other structural fund programmes, the costs of this administration will not be scored against the programme.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if private sector funding is admissible to match funding available under the European Union programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. [41888]

Sir John Wheeler: The Government welcome private sector contributions to projects which the structural funds support. As is the case with all other European programmes, there is scope for the private sector and private finance to play their part in the special support programme for peace and reconciliation.

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much of the funding allocated under the European Union special support programme for peace and reconciliation has been distributed to organisations in Northern Ireland to date; and what percentage this is of the total planned spending for the first year of the programme. [41893]

Sir John Wheeler: To date, no funding from the special support programme for peace and reconciliation has been distributed to organisations outside central Government in Northern Ireland, though provisional allocations have been determined for all measures. It is hoped that payments under the technical assistance sub-programme and for some projects can be made in November 1995. This reflects the need to establish the novel delivery mechanisms envisaged in the programme, including the need to develop contracts between the European Commission, Northern Ireland departments and intermediary funding bodies. In addition, the Government recognise that small organisations, which would not usually apply for funding, must be given time to submit an application. Any funds unspent in the first year of the programme will be carried forward to future years.

Asbestos Pipes

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of *(a)* the presence and *(b)* the effects on health of asbestos fibres in water systems using asbestos cement pipes; what proposals exist to monitor the presence of asbestos fibres in the proposed Mourne to Belfast water supply pipelines; what is the estimated cost of monitoring the pipeline during its working lifetime; and if he will make a statement about the use of asbestos cement pipes for water supply systems. [41906]

Mr. Moss: The Department has commissioned a study by the water research centre to advise on the use of asbestos cement pipes for public water supply. The questions asked by the right hon. Gentleman are being considered as part of the study. I will let him know the outcome of the study in due course.

Community Work Programmes

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is *(a)* the target number of trainees set for the pilot projects under the community work programme in (i) Fermanagh, (ii) Strabane and (iii) west Belfast and *(b)* the target date for completion of the pilot projects; [41895]

(2) how many trainees have been placed to date under the community work programme pilot project in *(a)* Strabane, *(b)* Fermanagh and *(c)* west Belfast. [41905]

Mr. Ancram: Responsibility for the subject in question has been delegated to the Training and Employment Agency under its chief executive, Mr. Ian Walters. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Ian Walters to Ms Marjorie Mowlam, dated 6 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has asked me as Chief Executive of the Training and Employment Agency to reply to your questions on the Community Work Programme.

The target number of participants and current occupancy in each of the pilot areas is as follows:

	Target	*Occupancy*
Fermanagh	250	89
Strabane	250	38
West Belfast	500	69

A full evaluation of the Community Work Programme will be undertaken by March 1997 when decisions will be taken regarding the future of the Programme.

Deregulation

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration led to the decision not to replicate sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994 in the proposed Northern Ireland Order. [41866]

Mr. Ancram: This approach was not adopted because of concerns that subordinate orders, made under an Order in Council, would not be subject to formal scrutiny by Parliament— a situation substantially at odds with that in Great Britain.

Employment Schemes

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what structures are in place to monitor the success rates of people gaining full-time employment after finishing a placement with an action for community employment scheme in Northern Ireland. [41899]

Mr. Ancram: Responsibility for the subject in question has been delegated to the Training and Employment Agency under its chief executive, Mr. Ian Walters. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Ian Walters to Ms Marjorie Mowlam, dated 6 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has asked me, as Chief Executive of the Training and Employment Agency, to reply to your question about ACE.

The ACE Leavers Survey is a biannual survey which examines the destinations of leavers three months after leaving the programme. The first survey analyses the results of those who leave in May each year with a corresponding exercise being carried out for October leavers.

A Community Audit Return is undertaken on an annual basis. All ACE Projects are asked to provide information on a range of measures related to their performance including destinations of leavers.

In 1994–95, 19% of ACE leavers entered full-time employment.

I hope that you find this helpful.

Planning Permission (Black Mountain)

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consultations with the local community took place before the Department of the Environment gave planning permission to White Quarry Industries for quarrying to go ahead in the Black Mountain area of Belfast. [41903]

Mr. Moss: Prior to 1974, express planning permission was not required in Northern Ireland for the continuation of operations in respect of a quarry undertaking which had been in existence when planning control was first introduced in 1944. The Black Mountain quarry was such a quarry undertaking and enjoyed what were known as "existing use rights". Quarry operations were brought under control in 1974 subject to a compensation provision for loss of existing use rights. Since that date eight planning applications for planning permission for the continuation of quarrying at Black Mountain have been granted subject to conditions. Before the applications were determined, notices were placed in local newspapers, in accordance with normal statutory procedures, giving the opportunity for members of the public to make representations and objections which were taken into account before the applications were determined.

Export Marketing Research Scheme

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money is available to employers of up to 500 workers in Northern Ireland under the export marketing research scheme. [41911]

Sir John Wheeler: The maximum amount of financial assistance available to Northern Ireland employers under the export marketing research scheme is £20,000 per project. A maximum of two projects can be funded annually.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what private sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41744]

Sir John Wheeler: No schemes under the private finance initiative, announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in November 1992, have been approved in Northern Ireland to date. A number of areas, including two pilot projects covering sewage treatment plans in the water executive with an estimated value of £20–25 million are under consideration. It is too early, however, to put a total value on these schemes or estimate what the public sector contribution is likely to be.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons in his Department are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list their names; and how much each is paid. [42078]

Sir John Wheeler: None.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by his Department relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42079]

Sir John Wheeler: Ministers, former Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Guided Learning Hours

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his answer of 4 April, *Official Report*, column *1062*, what definition he intends to introduce to mirror the concept of guided learning hours appropriate to England and Wales. [41949]

Mr. Moss: The guided learning hours concept does not apply in Northern Ireland where the distinction between full-time and part-time courses remains clear in all sectors of education. The determining rules for Northern Ireland will continue to be that attendance at a full-time course will normally exclude a person from benefit. Attendance at a part-time course will not exclude that individual from benefit, so long as he or she remains available for and actively seeking work.

Abortions

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will commence recording as a separate statistic the number of medical terminations of pregnancy carried out in the Northern Ireland health service; and for what reasons they are not so recorded. [42083]

Mr. Moss: The number of medical terminations of pregnancy carried out in the Northern Ireland health service is not collected as a separate statistic. The Abortion Act 1967 does not apply in Northern Ireland and thus there is at present no legal obligation for doing so.

Regimental Pension Provision

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those sections of the RUC, Royal Ulster Constabulary reserve, Ulster Defence Regiment and Royal Irish Regiment that were since 1969 ineligible to join their appropriate public sector pension scheme and if he will list *(a)* the dates on which they became eligible, *(b)* what backdating was applied and *(c)* in each case which sections were (i) part-time and (ii) full-time; and what plans he has to review the position of those whose service has not been pensionable. [42084]

Sir John Wheeler: Pension provision for the UDR and the RIR is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Defence Secretary.

The RUC full-time reserve was given access to the RUC pension scheme on 1 July 1994 and awarded full credit for service from 6 April 1988.

The RUC part-time reserve does not have access to the RUC pension scheme. However, in the light of a recent European Union directive, a review of the terms and conditions, including pensions, of part-time employees generally will be undertaken by the Northern Ireland Office.

Former members of the Ulster Special Constabulary who on 1 March 1969 had less than 10 years' continuous mobilised service or who had 10 or more years of such service but elected to retain their mobilised status, and who were subsequently embodied in the RUC on 1 May 1970 as full-time "auxiliary constables", are entitled under the terms of the RUC Pensions Regulations 1988 to a gratuity rather than a pension. Their entitlement is under review at present.

Civil Service Transfers

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to add to the categories of compassionate grounds for facilitating inter-service transfers between the Northern Ireland and home civil service of those civil servants who marry a person resident in Great Britain and vice versa. [42085]

Sir John Wheeler: I have no plans to add to the categories of compassionate grounds for facilitating inter-service transfers. As I said in my reply to the hon. and learned Gentleman on 16 October 1995, *Official Report*, column *177*, the criteria for compassionate transfers between the Northern Ireland civil service and the home civil service include those who need to move to be with their spouse. A civil servant seeking a transfer because of marriage to a person resident in Great Britain or vice versa would be eligible for consideration.

However, movement is dependent on suitable vacancies being available and the recent contraction of both services has reduced opportunities for transfers.

Ulster Scots Language

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Arts Council's policy in respect of initiatives to support the Ulster Scots language. [42087]

Mr. Ancram: I shall write to the hon. and learned Gentleman as soon as possible.

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will propose to the Arts Council that it *(a)* takes steps to give symbolic recognition to the Ulster Scots language and *(b)* produces part of its annual report in that language. [42088]

Mr. Ancram: I shall write to the hon. and Learned Gentleman as soon as possible.

Annual Remuneration

Mr. Malcom Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in *(a)* his Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies received annual remuneration including benefits in kind exceeding (i) £100,000, (ii) £200,000 and (iii) £300,000 in each year since 1985–86. [40858]

Sir John Wheeler *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Other than pension contributions, benefits in kind are not normally paid to staff in the Northern Ireland Office and NI Departments, agencies and NDPBs. As members of the principal civil service pensions scheme, staff receive benefits in accordance with the scheme rules which have been deposited in the Library of the House. The numbers receiving annual remuneration above the sums specified, excluding pension benefits, in the years in question, is not available in some Departments prior to 1992–93. In 1992–

93, one individual received annual remuneration exceeding £100,000.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Ministerial Information Systems

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he has established a MINIS system for his office. [41468]

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41736]

Mr. Horam: The Cabinet Office, including the Office of Public Service, HMSO and the Central Office of Information have not approved any schemes to date under the private finance initiative.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41735]

The Deputy Prime Minister: In respect of the Cabinet Office (Office of Public Service), HMSO, and COI, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today by the Parliamentary Secretary, Office of Public Service.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many persons in *(a)* his Office and *(b)* the Central Office of Information are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list them; and how much each is paid. [42070]

Mr. Freeman: There are no staff within my private office or within the Central Office of Information wholly employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry. It is not possible to identify the number of people involved on a part-time or occasional basis within my private office or the Central Office of Information or as external consultants or advisers. It is not the practice to name staff or external advisers.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by *(a)* his Office and *(b)* the Central Office of Information relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42071]

Mr. Freeman: Ministers, former Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and the Office of Public Service relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42056]

The Deputy Prime Minister: Ministers, former Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

WALES

Local Education Authorities (Administrative Costs)

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by local eduation authority the number of administrative staff employed and the administrative costs in cash and constant terms, indicating the percentage of total education spending in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [41159]

Mr. Richards: The latest available outturn information is given in the tables. Administration expenditure includes service strategy and regulation and management and administration within the education management and support services sector. Administration expenditure was charged directly to the relevant parts of the education service in 1990–91 for Gwent, 1990–91 and 1991–92 for Gwynedd and 1993–94 for Powys, and is not available separately. Outturn information is not available on a consistent basis for 1989–90.

The number of administrative staff employed by education authorities cannot be identified from the information held centrally. The estimated number of full-time and part-time non-manual staff employed in the education service, other than lecturers and teachers, in June 1994 was 11,050—8,870 full-time equivalents.

This comprises all non-manual support staff identified as employed within the education service and includes administrative, secretarial and clerical staff, youth and community workers, nursery and other non-teaching classroom assistants, library staff serving educational establishments, educational psychologists and careers guidance staff. Figures for individual education authorities are not published by the Local Government Management Board because estimates at this level of disaggregation are not sufficiently reliable.

Local Education Authority net current expenditure on education administration

Cash prices	*1990–91*		*1991–92*		*1992–93*		*1993–94*	
	£000	*Percentage of total education[1] spending*	*£000*	*Percentage of total education[1] spending*	*£000*	*Percentage of total education[1] spending*	*£000*	*Percentage of total education[1] spending*
Clywd	5,992	3.9	7,903	4.4	8,057	4.1	7,585	4.7
Dyfed	5,847	4.3	5,370	3.5	8,262	4.8	6,865	4.3
Gwent	n/a	n/a	6,821	3.5	7,184	3.5	6,707	3.5

Local Education Authority net current expenditure on education administration

Cash prices	*1990–91*		*1991–92*		*1992–93*		*1993–94*	
	£000	*Percentage of total education[1] spending*	*£000*	*Percentage of total education[1] spending*	*£000*	*Percentage of total education[1] spending*	*£000*	*Percentage of total education[1] spending*
Gwynedd	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4,553	4.2	4,0[illegible]1	4.1
Mid Glamorgan	9,347	4.3	9,459	3.8	11,221	4.4	10,501	4.2
Powys	2,290	4.8	2,254	4.1	3,283	5.4	n/a	n/a
South Glamorgan	4,519	3.1	5,406	3.2	3,920	2.3	2,696	1.7
West Glamorgan	5,245	3.6	5,131	3.2	6,293	3.7	4,586	3.0
Constant 1994–95 prices								
Clywd	6,948	3.9	8,625	4.4	8,449	4.1	7,722	4.7
Dyfed	6,779	4.3	5,861	3.5	8,664	4.8	6,989	4.3
Gwent	n/a	n/a	7,444	3.5	7,534	3.5	6,828	3.5
Gwynedd	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4,775	4.2	4,155	4.1
Mid Glamorgan	10,838	4.3	10,323	3.8	11,767	4.4	10,691	4.2
Powys	2,655	4.8	2,460	4.1	3,443	5.4	n/a	n/a
South Glamorgan	5,240	3.1	5,900	3.2	4,111	2.3	2,745	1.7
West Glamorgan	6,081	3.6	5,600	3.2	6,599	3.7	4,669	3.0

[1] Excluding school catering.

Teacher Training

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many students taking places in teacher training for *(a)* primary and early years and *(b)* secondary in each of the last three years were able to teach through the medium of Welsh; and if he will make a statement about the extent to which all schools will have sufficient staff to meet the Welsh language requirements of the national curriculum. [41156]

Mr. Richards: The number of student teachers enrolled on to Welsh medium primary and secondary initial teacher training courses in the period 1992 to 1994 is shown in the table. Enrolment figures for 1995 are not yet available.

	Primary	*Secondary*	*Total*
1992	229	95	324
1993	197	103	300
1994	203	121	324

In addition, students on English medium courses of training, but who are Welsh speaking, may also be available to teach in Welsh medium schools if prospective employers judge that the individual teachers can meet the needs of their school.

As from September 1996, all ITT primary courses are required to have, as an integral part of their courses, training in Welsh as a second language. This should increase substantially the number of teachers capable of teaching Welsh in primary schools.

The enrolment target given to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales for secondary courses with Welsh as the main subject takes into account the Department's published projections of demand for teachers of Welsh. In 1994, the number of students enrolled on secondary Welsh courses increased, for the fifth consecutive year, and was in line with the target set. A substantial investment is also being made in in-service training for teachers, particularly to support the teaching of Welsh as a second language and to enable schools to meet the requirements of the national curriculum.

Grant-maintained Schools

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of state for Wales what is the average class size in *(a)* grant-maintained secondary schools and *(b)* grant-maintained primary schools; and what changes in average class size have taken place in each of the last three years. [41169]

Mr. Richards: Average class sizes in grant-maintained primary and secondary schools are shown as follows:

	Average Class Size[1]	
Year	*Primary Schools*	*Secondary Schools*
September 1991	—	20.9
September 1992	—	22.5
January 1994[2]	25.9	21.1
January 1995[3]	25.2	20.8

[1] Average class size is calculated as the number of pupils divided by the number of classes. In the case of primary schools, the number of classes used is the number of registered classes whereas for secondary schools it is the number in which the pupils were taught in a specified period on the day of the school census.

[2] From 1993–94 onwards class size information has been collected in January not September.

[3] Provisional data.

Source:

School Census.

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many pupils at *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary level currently attend grant-maintained schools; and what was the percentage attended at each level listed by local education authority. [41155]

Mr. Richards: The number of pupils in grant-maintained schools in each local authority as at January 1995 is as follows:

Local Education Authority	*[1]Number of pupils*	*[2]Per cent.*
Primary schools		
Clwyd	489	1.2
Dyfed	—	—
Gwent	223	0.5
Gwynedd	270	1.3
Mid Glamorgan	—	—

Local Education Authority	[1]Number of pupils	[2]Per cent.
Powys	26	0.2
South Glamorgan	—	—
West Glamorgan	—	—
Wales	1,008	0.3
Secondary schools		
Clwyd	3,739	13.8
Dyfed	—	—
Gwent	1,573	5.2
Gwynedd	—	—
Mid Glamorgan	—	—
Powys	—	—
South Glamorgan	3,144	11.2
West Glamorgan	975	4.0
Wales	9,431	4.8

Notes:

[1] The total number of full-time pupils in secondary schools and for primary schools the total number of full-time and part-time pupils. Provisional data.

[2] The total number of pupils in grant-maintained schools as a percentage of the total number of pupils in the local education authority. Provisional data.

Source:

Schools Census.

Full-time Education

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was *(a)* the number and *(b)* the percentage of 16-year-olds in full-time education in (i) school sixth forms, (ii) sixth form colleges and (iii) colleges of further education in each local education authority in each of the last three years. [41148]

Mr. Richards: The information requested is in the following tables.

16-year-olds in full-time education for each local education authority area in Wales[1]

1992–93

	Clwyd		Dyfed		Gwent		Gwynedd		Mid Glamorgan	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
Population[2]	5,100	100	4,100	100	5,200	100	2,900	100	6,600	100
In schools[3] [4]	1,938	38	2,310	57	1,977	38	1,166	40	2,898	44
In sixth Form colleges[5]	510	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
In FE institutions[5]	833	16	764	19	1,688	32	713	24	1,379	21
Total	3,281	64	3,074	75	3,665	70	1,879	64	4,277	65

	Powys		South Glamorgan		West Glamorgan		Wales	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
Population[2]	1,400	100	4,600	100	4,400	100	34,400	100
In Schools[3] [4]	632	44	1,921	42	882	20	13,724	40
In Sixth Form Colleges[5]	—	—	347	7	—	—	857	2
In FE Institutions[5]	388	27	1,045	23	2,268	52	9,078	26
Total	1,020	70	3,313	72	3,150	72	23,659	69

1993–94

	Clwyd		Dyfed		Gwent		Gwynedd		Mid Glamorgan	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
Population[2]	4,900	100	4,000	100	5,100	100	2,600	100	6,200	100
In Schools[3] [4]	1,829	38	1,965	49	2,031	40	847	33	2,868	47
In Sixth Form Colleges[5]	556	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
In FE Institutions[5]	865	18	996	25	1,733	34	995	38	1,316	21
Total	3,250	67	2,961	75	3,764	73	1,842	71	4,184	68

	Powys		South Glamorgan		West Glamorgan		Wales	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
Population[2]	1,400	100	4,500	100	4,100	100	32,700	100
In Schools[3] [4]	588	42	1,883	42	869	21	12,880	39
In Sixth Form Colleges[5]	—	—	383	8	—	—	939	3
In FE Institutions[5]	370	27	1,000	22	2,129	52	9,404	29
Total	958	69	3,266	72	2,998	73	23,223	71

[6]1994–95

	Clwyd		Dyfed		Gwent		Gwynedd		Mid Glamorgan	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
Population[2]	4,800	100	4,100	100	5,000	100	2,700	100	6,300	100
In schools[3] [4]	1,793	37	1,986	48	1,928	38	979	36	2,876	46

[6]1994–95

	Clwyd		*Dyfed*		*Gwent*		*Gwynedd*		*Mid Glamorgan*	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
In sixth form colleges[5]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
In FE institutions[5]	1,712	36	1,116	27	1,178	23	942	35	1,342	21
Total	3,505	73	3,102	75	3,106	62	1,921	70	4,218	67

	Powys		*South Glamorgan*		*West Glamorgan*		*Wales*	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
Population[2]	1,500	100	4,500	100	4,200	100	33,200	100
In schools[3] [4]	691	47	1,967	43	854	20	13,074	39
In sixth form colleges[5]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
In FE institutions[5]	317	21	1,394	31	2,251	53	10,252	31
	1,008	68	3,361	74	3,105	73	23,326	70

Notes:

[1] Information based on providing LEA and not student domicile. Ages as at 31 August prior to academic year. Sixth Form Colleges transferred from LEA control on 1 April 1993 and are now funded by the FEFCW. From 1994–95 no distinction is made between Sixth Form Colleges and any other type of Further Education Institution.

[2] Population based on mid year estimates and rounded to nearest hundred.

[3] Includes all 16 year olds at Maintained, Grant Maintained, Independent and Special Schools.

[4] At January each year.

[5] At November each year.

[6] Provisional.

Source:

FESR and STATS1.

Further Education Colleges

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by local education authority or local authority area the capital expenditure on colleges of further eduction in both cash and constant prices since 1978–79. [41163]

Mr. Richards: The figures for 1978–79 to 1992–93 are not available. Capital expenditure made available by the Further Education Funding Council for Wales since it became responsible for funding the FE sector in April 1993 is shown in the table by local education authority area.

LEA Area	*1993–94* *£*	*1994–95* *£*	*1995–96* *£*
Clwyd	2,307,260	5,584,663	2,900,083
Dyfed	4,613,090	4,599,179	2,588,230
Gwent	2,153,694	3,484,716	1,058,175
Gwynedd	4,219,279	4,962,548	1,613,573
Mid Glamorgan	1,619,187	4,279,814	1,529,900
Powys	488,784	1,536,977	923,045
South Glamorgan	1,550,465	2,517,561	835,627
West Glamorgan	1,680,790	3,627,462	1,213,878
Non-County Based[1]	34,656	75,137	14,043
Total	18,667,206	30,668,057	12,676,554

Grand total £62,011,817

[1] In respect of Workers Educational Association and YMCA.

School Catering

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total net expenditure on the school catering service in each local education authority in each of the last five years. [41154]

Mr. Richards: The latest available outturn information is given in the following table. Figures for 1989–90 have been reworked to match, as closely as possible, the definition of current expenditure used from 1990–91 onwards.

Current Expenditure on School Catering

£ thousands

	1989–90	*1990–91*	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*
Clywd	3,241	3,280	3,801	4,039	2,297
Dyfed	3,430	4,518	6,300	6,113	5,177
Gwent	4,920	5,254	5,124	5,458	5,828
Gwynedd	2,259	2,976	3,629	3,907	3,403
Mid Glamorgan	7,454	8,296	9,164	10,051	9,760
Powys	1,066	1,253	1,465	1,441	1,261
South Glamorgan	1,840	2,244	2,904	4,846	3,873
West Glamorgan	2,903	2,716	3,183	3,505	3,370
Total Wales	27,113	30,537	35,570	39,360	34,969

Class Sizes

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average class size in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools; and what were the comparable figures in 1989 to 1994. [41171]

Mr. Richards: The table shows the average class size in Wales for both primary and secondary schools.

Average class size[1] as at:	*Primary Schools*	*Secondary Schools*
September 1989	24.8	20.5
September 1990	24.8	21.0
September 1991	25.0	21.5
September 1992	25.0	21.4

Average class size[1] as at:	*Primary Schools*	*Secondary Schools*
January 1994[2]	25.6	20.1
January 1995[3]	25.8	21.1

[1] Average class size is calculated as the number of pupils divided by the number of classes. In the case of primary schools, the number of classes used is the number of registered classes, whereas for secondary schools it is the number in which the pupils were taught in a specified period on the day of the school census.

[2] From 1993–94 onwards, class size information has been collected in January not September.

[3] Provisional data.

Source: Schools Census

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the number of primary school pupils in Wales taught in classes of over 40 pupils in *(a)* January 1994 and *(b)* January 1995, per local authority and if he will make a statement. [41631]

Mr. Hague: The annual schools census collects information about class sizes only in respect of the number of classes, not the precise number of pupils in the classes. The information can, however, be used to make broad estimates of the numbers of pupils in classes of a particular size. On the basis of these estimates, there were approximately 500 pupils in ordinary classes of more than 40 pupils in January 1994 and approximately 700 in January 1995. These pupils represented 0.2 per cent. of all pupils in ordinary classes in January 1994 and 0.3 per cent. in January 1995.

No estimates are available for individual local authorities.

New Homes

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total number of new homes started by *(a)* local authorities and new towns and *(b)* housing associations in each year since 1974. [41150]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr. Raynsford) on 19 October 1995, *Official Report*, column *340*.

Dunlop Semtex Factory

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action his Department has taken to date to preserve the Brynmawr rubber factory; and if he will make a statement. [40947]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: In 1986, the former Dunlop Semtex factory at Brynmawr was listed grade II* as a building of special architectural or historic interest. The associated boiler house was listed grade II. As listed buildings, listed building consent—from the local planning authority—is required before either structure can be altered or demolished. In 1986, an application to demolish the factory was called-in for determination by the then Secretary of State and consent refused. Subsequently, a working party was convened by the local planning authority under the chairmanship of Dame Margaret Weston to seek uses for the buildings. The Welsh Office has given financial assistance towards the costs of a project to re-use the boiler house as a theatre. The future of the former factory building continues to be considered through the planning system.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to make a statement on local government finance, and if he will include additional information in respect of Welsh Office expenditure. [41049]

Mr. Hague: In accordance with usual practice, I plan to announce my proposals for 1996–97 local government total standard spending and aggregated external finance in a written parliamentary answer on Budget day, 28 November.

I hope to make an oral statement to the House some time in December on public expenditure in Wales. My statement will include expenditure on Welsh Office services; provisional standard spending assessments for local authorities; details of a damping scheme to limit increases in council tax levels in 1996–97; my capping proposals and relevant notional amounts; and local government capital settlements for 1996–97.

Pupil-teacher Ratios

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by local education authority the number of *(a)* primary pupils and *(b)* secondary pupils and the number of teachers with the pupil-teacher ratio in both categories since 1989. [41157]

Mr. Richards: Information on pupils, teachers and pupil teacher ratios in maintained primary and secondary schools in each local education authority area since 1989 is as follows:

Number of pupils (full time equivalent)[1]

	1988–89		*1989–90*		*1990–91*		*1991–92*	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
Clwyd	36,538	27,367	37,208	26,487	37,512	26,303	37,683	26,774
Dyfed	31,339	23,682	31,853	23,182	31,846	23,310	31,839	24,014
Gwent	40,055	29,227	41,499	28,222	42,070	28,129	42,441	28,810
Gwynedd	19,742	16,357	19,868	15,549	19,258	15,285	19,179	15,340
Mid Glamorgan	53,417	37,539	54,892	36,161	55,374	35,899	55,410	36,792
Powys	10,188	7,986	10,361	7,814	10,392	7,739	10,471	7,800
South Glamorgan	34,794	26,627	35,599	25,743	36,541	25,857	37,333	26,544
West Glamorgan	33,804	23,214	34,463	22,565	34,731	22,671	34,778	22,928
Wales	259,877	191,999	265,743	185,723	267,724	185,193	269,134	189,002

	1992–93		*1993–94*		*1994–95*[2]	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
Clwyd	37,882	27,269	38,407	26,753	38,978	27,172
Dyfed	31,645	24,289	31,567	24,571	31,816	24,861
Gwent	43,025	29,440	43,792	30,002	44,662	30,536
Gwynedd	19,544	15,445	19,680	15,318	20,220	15,303
Mid Glamorgan	56,976	37,743	56,814	38,590	56,881	39,479
Powys	10,588	7,885	10,688	7,927	10,941	8,071
South Glamorgan	38,234	27,229	39,472	27,364	39,840	28,150
West Glamorgan	35,115	23,263	35,242	23,876	35,282	24,325
Wales	272,009	192,563	275,662	194,401	278,620	197,897

[1] Includes both GM and LEA schools. Secondary includes sixth form colleges prior to 1993–94.

Full-time equivalent of pupils: each part-time pupil is treated as half of a pupil.

[2] Provisional.

Number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)[1]

	1988–89		*1989–90*		*1990–91*		*1991–92*	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
Clwyd	1,482	1,718	1,510	1,679	1,550	1,676	1,563	1,711
Dyfed	1,554	1,495	1,597	1,469	1,599	1,472	1,614	1,480
Gwent	1,756	1,966	1,798	1,889	1,801	1,857	1,801	1,841
Gwynedd	951	1,142	945	1,110	926	1,082	907	1,074
Mid Glamorgan	2,308	2,380	2,347	2,297	2,311	2,271	2,355	2,328
Powys	518	555	519	544	508	529	510	537
South Glamorgan	1,536	1,606	1,607	1,651	1,691	1,641	1,716	1,656
West Glamorgan	1,566	1,592	1,609	1,531	1,615	1,498	1,617	1,477
Wales	11,671	12,454	11,932	12,170	12,001	12,026	12,083	12,104

	1992–93		*1993–94*		*1994–95*[2]	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
Clwyd	1,610	1,746	1,588	1,641	1,565	1,599
Dyfed	1,625	1,517	1,636	1,535	1,599	1,528
Gwent	1,843	1,886	1,864	1,859	1,870	1,861
Gwynedd	926	1,074	915	1,035	953	1,019
Mid Glamorgan	2,386	2,378	2,416	2,452	2,409	2,500
Powys	513	535	524	544	533	553
South Glamorgan	1,737	1,675	1,747	1,652	1,798	1,698
West Glamorgan	1,646	1,486	1,673	1,516	1,668	1,531
Wales	12,286	12,297	12,363	12,234	12,395	12,289

[1] Includes both GM and LEA schools. Secondary includes sixth form colleges prior to 1993–94.

Full-time equivalent of teachers: the full-time equivalent of part-time teachers express the teachers' service in hours as a proportion of school week, normally 32.6.

[2] Provisional.

Pupil teacher ratio[1]

	1988–89		*1989–90*		*1990–91*		*1991–92*	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
Clwyd	24.7	15.9	24.6	15.8	24.2	15.7	24.1	15.7
Dyfed	20.2	15.8	19.9	15.8	19.9	15.8	19.7	16.2
Gwent	22.8	14.9	23.1	14.9	23.4	15.2	23.6	15.7
Gwynedd	20.8	14.3	21.0	14.0	20.8	14.1	21.2	14.3
Mid Glamorgan	23.2	15.8	23.4	15.7	24.0	15.8	23.5	15.8
Powys	19.7	14.4	20.0	14.4	20.5	14.6	20.5	14.5
South Glamorgan	22.7	16.6	22.2	15.6	21.6	15.8	21.8	16.0
West Glamorgan	21.6	14.6	21.4	14.7	21.5	15.1	21.5	15.5
Wales	22.3	15.4	22.3	15.3	22.3	15.4	22.3	15.6

	1992–93		1993–94		1994–95	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Clwyd	23.5	15.6	24.2	16.3	24.9	17.0
Dyfed	19.5	16.0	19.3	16.0	19.9	16.3
Gwent	23.4	15.6	23.5	16.1	23.9	16.4
Gwynedd	21.1	14.4	21.5	14.8	21.2	15.0
Mid Glamorgan	23.5	15.9	23.5	15.7	23.6	15.8
Powys	20.6	14.7	20.4	14.6	20.5	14.6
South Glamorgan	22.0	16.3	22.6	16.6	22.2	16.6
West Glamorgan	21.3	15.7	21.1	15.7	21.2	15.9
Wales	22.1	15.7	22.3	15.9	22.5	16.1

[1] Includes both GM and LEA schools. Secondary includes sixth form colleges prior to 1993–94.

Pupil teacher ratio is calculated as the ratio of full-time equivalent pupils t full-time equivalent teachers.

[2] Provisional.

Improvement Grants

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people in each housing authority area are waiting for *(a)* improvements and *(b)* disabled improvement grants; and what percentage of the population this is for each area. [41170]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Pupil Statistics

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by local education authority in cash and constant prices the spending per child in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools since 1989 and the average cost per pupil in cash and constant prices of an assisted place since 1989. [41161]

Mr. Richards: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library of the House.

Historic Houses

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what support is given to help private owners of homes that have a historic and architectural interest to retain and maintain their homes; and if he will list those private historic homes which have received grants over the past three years, giving the amount of grant in each case and the specific purpose of each grant. [41149]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The Welsh Office may offer grants for the repair of buildings judged to be of outstanding historical or architectural interest or for works that make a significant contribution towards the preservation or enhancement of a conservation area. The Historic Buildings Council for Wales must be consulted before a grant is made and details of grants and their purpose are set out in the council's annual reports, which have been laid before the House.

Homelessness

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are estimated to be homeless in each local housing authority area, and what were the comparable figures in 1986 and 1990. [41147]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: Information on people accepted as homeless under part III of the Housing Act 1985 is shown in the table.

People accepted as homeless in Wales

Number

	Between 1 April and 30 June		
	1986[1]	1990[1]	[1]1995
Aberconwy	43	20	42
Alyn and Deeside	84	80	118
Arfon	9	22	24
Blaenau Gwent	114	221	159
Brecknock	34	50	84
Cardiff	456	650	489
Carmarthen	34	45	49
Ceredigion	24	87	67
Colwyn	13	27	62
Cynon Valley	229	116	37
Delyn	80	241	51
Dinefwr	51	31	99
Dwyfor	53	38	31
Glyndwr	13	17	9
Islwyn	34	101	83
Llanelli	76	66	41
Lliw Valley	55	104	13
Meirionnydd	38	63	39
Merthyr Tydfil	46	141	123
Monmouth	211	69	26
Montgomery	27	44	87
Neath	212	151	137
Newport	295	665	295
Ogwr	421	304	600
Port Talbot	33	94	84
Preseli Pembrokeshire	44	70	98
Radnor	12	14	29
Rhondda	61	36	52
Rhuddlan	51	38	22
Rhymney Valley	172	148	52
South Pembrokeshire	25	88	69
Swansea	161	98	646
Taff-Ely	75	145	111
Torfaen	212	194	107
Vale of Glamorgan	100	316	142
Wrexham Maelor	169	212	148
Ynys Mon	14	9	57

[1] Figures relate to people accepted as homeless through the quarter to 30 June.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list for each civil service grade dealing with education at all levels the number of *(a)* male and *(b)* female and (i) full-time and (ii) part-time employees and the comparable figures for 1990 and 1985. [41151]

Mr. Hague: The following tables show the numbers of staff in my Department by grade dealing with education as at 1 November 1995 and 1 October 1990.

The staff figures shown for 1 November 1995 exclude staff working in the office of Her Majesty's chief inspector of schools in Wales, which was established as a separate department in 1992.

Comparable figures for 1985 are not available.

Count of Staff Working in the Education Department by Grade by Sex as at 1 November 1995

	Males		Females		
Grade	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Grade 3	1	—	—	—	1
Grade 5	4	—	—	—	4
Grade 7	6	—	2	—	8
SEO	4	—	—	1	5
HEO	10	—	4	1	15
HEOD	1	—	—	—	1
AT	—	—	1	—	1
EO	11	—	12	1	24
AO	3	—	7	5	15
PS	—	—	4	—	4
AA	3	—	5	2	10
TYP	—	—	1	—	1
	43	—	36	10	89

Count of staff working in the Education Department by grade by sex as at 1 October 1990 (including OHMCI)

	Males		Females		Total
Grade	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Grade 3	1	—	—	—	1
Grade 4	1	—	—	—	1
Grade 5	9	—	—	—	9
Grade 6	35	—	11	—	46
Grade 7	8	—	4	—	12
SEO	3	—	1	—	4
HEO	11	—	2	1	14
EO	6	—	11	—	17
AO	5	—	6	—	11
PS	—	—	13	—	13
AA	2	—	3	—	5
TYP	—	—	2	—	2
Casual AA	2	—	—	—	2
Casual TYP	—	—	1	—	1
	83	—	54	1	138

Nursery Classes

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish for each local education authority and for Wales as a whole the number of statutory proposals made for the introduction of new nursery classes into a school during each of the last three years, indicating how many of these were in respect of Welsh medium schools. [41440]

Mr. Richards: The number of statutory proposals made by local authorities or governing bodies of voluntary schools to make a significant change in the character of a school by introducing a nursery class is given as follows. None was in respect of a Welsh medium school.

Number of statutory proposals published to establish nursery classes/units at infant/primary schools by relevant county and all Wales within the last three academic years:

County	1992–93	1993–94	1994–95
Clwyd	2	0	2
Gwent	2	1	2
South Glamorgan	0	1	7
West Glamorgan	2	1	1
All Wales	6	3	12

Permanent Exclusions

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list by local education authority for each of the last five years the number of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary pupils who have been permanently excluded from school to attend pupil referral units; [41317]

(2) if he will list by local education authority for each of the last five years the number of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary pupils who are receiving home tuition after being permanently excluded from school and (i) the average, (ii) the most and (iii) the least tuition hours provided [41319]

Mr. Richards: This information is not collected centrally at present. Consideration is, however, being given to the introduction of monitoring arrangements for the collection of such data.

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by local education authority the number of pupils in each of the last five years who have been permanently excluded from *(a)* LEA-maintained schools and *(b)* grant-maintained schools; and what percentage of the school population this represents in each case. [41308]

Mr. Richards: I refer the hon. member to my reply of 19 July 1995 to the hon. Member for Darlington, (Mr. Milburn) *Official Report*, columns *1403–4*.

Cheese Production

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a list showing which varieties of cheese are produced in Wales together with the location of these production centres and his estimate of the total volume of production in tonnes for each of the last three years. [41463]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The following varieties of cheese are produced in Wales:

Caerphilly
Cheddar and other rigid hard pressed cheeses
Brie

Specially blended cheeses such as:

Y Fenni, St Illtyd, Harlech, Tintern Cambrian
Goats cheeses
Sheep cheeses
Mozzarella
Stilton

This list may not be exhaustive.

There are 29 cheese producers in Wales, nine of whom are major producers.

Location of cheese producers

Area	Number
Clwyd	3
Dyfed	19
Glamorgan-Mid	1
Glamorgan-West	1
Gwent	1
Gwynedd	3
Powys	1

Information on the volume of production is not available.

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish the total volume of cheese production in Wales in tonnes and in pounds sterling at constant 1995 prices for each of the last three years, expressing each set of figures as a proportion of the corresponding totals for the United Kingdom. [41462]

Mr. Jones: This information is not available for Wales.

NHS Finance

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of the NHS budget in Wales was spent on management, administrative and clerical staff in *(a)* 1989 and *(b)* the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [41245]

Mr. Richards: The proportion of the NHS budget in Wales spent on management, administrative and clerical staff in 1988–89 and 1994–95 was about 6 per cent. and 7 per cent. respectively.

Nurse Regrading

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about regrading in the nursing profession. [41246]

Mr. Richards: The management and staff side secretaries of the Nursing and Midwifery Negotiation Council are working together to formulate arrangements to complete all the clinical grading appeals as soon as possible.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by local education authority the amount *(a)* not included and *(b)* included in schools' budgets to cater for special educational needs; and what were the comparable figures for 1990. [41315]

Mr. Richards: According to the section 42 budget statements submitted earlier this year by local education authorities in Wales, the following amounts have been retained by LEAs in 1995–96 for special needs support services including special units:

	£
Clwyd	3,412,000
Dyfed	8,005,000
Gwent	1,606,000
Gwynedd	1,747,000
Mid Glamorgan	4,377,000
Powys	1,447,000
South Glamorgan	4,520,000
West Glamorgan	991,000

Comparable figures for 1990 are not available because the content of the section 42 statement was changed in 1992.

Details of the amounts delegated to schools through their LEA's local management of schools budget formulae for special educational needs are not collected centrally.

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by local education authority the numbers of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school children who have received statements because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties in each of the last five years. [41318]

Mr. Richards: Information for 1994 and 1995 on the number of pupils in primary and secondary schools with statements of special need linked to emotional and behavioural difficulties is shown in the table. The information relates to the major need of the pupil identified on the individual statements of special educational need. Comparable figures for earlier years are not available.

Pupils with a statement of special educational needs linked to emotional and behavioural difficulties [1]

Local Education Authority	Primary schools		Secondary schools	
	January 1994	January 1995[2]	January 1994	January 1995[2]
Local Education Authority				
Clwyd	50	57	48	89
Dyfed	99	96	36	42
Gwent	125	154	124	116
Gwynedd	16	24	9	13
Mid Glamorgan	23	18	11	15
Powys	10	22	9	13
South Glamorgan	45	62	14	35
West Glamorgan	19	9	4	5
Wales	387	442	255	328

[1] Includes children in both mainstream classes/units and special classes/units within the school.

[2] Provisional.

Unitary Authorities

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales which of the unitary councils have formally selected the name of their council; if he will indicate, in each case, the name chosen; if there are separate English and Welsh versions; and if he will make a statement. [41380]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The 22 unitary councils bear the names of their authority area as approved by Parliament in the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994.

All authorities have Welsh and English names as listed in schedule 1 to the Act and are identified as either counties or county boroughs. The authority names were chosen after an extensive consultation exercise held in the spring of 1993. The new section 21 of the Local Government Act 1972—inserted by section 2 of the 1994 Act—requires all councils to have Welsh and English titles. Section 74 of the 1972 Act provides for local authorities to change the name of their area. Until 1 October 1996, a name change requires the consent of the Secretary of State for Wales. His consent is not required after that date. If a name is changed under section 74 and there are generally accepted alternative Welsh and English forms of the name, or alternative names, both names should be used.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the name of each community or town council within each of the new unitary council areas. [41381]

Mr. Jones: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Traffic Calming

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list for each county and for Wales as a whole for 1992, 1993 and 1994 *(a)* the number of applications received to implement traffic-calming measures *(b)* the number for which permission was granted *(c)* the total actual expenditure for each category and *(d)* the total actual expenditure paid for by the Welsh Office, together with this amount expressed as a proportion of *(c)*, and if he will make a statement. [41441]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: The information is not available in the form requested.

On the Welsh trunk road network, the Welsh Office is considering approximately 20 locations as possible sites for trials of significant traffic-calming measures mainly on the rural network in Gwynedd, Powys and Dyfed.

To date, eight sites have been authorised with a total cost of approximately £400,000 being fully funded by the Welsh Office as the trunk road highway authority. Design work is proceeding on a further three locations.

The information on the county road network is not held by the Welsh Office. However the Welsh Office has received eight applications for the approval of 20 mph zones and a number of additional applications for the authorisation of non-standard measures in the period 1992–94. Decisions on implementation rest with the local highway authority and funding is provided from unhypothecated resources.

National Blood Service

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement concerning the reorganisation of the National Blood Service as it affects Wales. [41266]

Mr. Richards: The review of the National Blood Service undertaken by the National Blood Authority is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health. Organisational changes stemming from the review which could have implications for the delivery of blood services in Wales will be considered by the Welsh Office and the managers of the National Blood Transfusion Service (Wales).

Prostate Cancer

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many cases of prostate cancer have been treated in each of the last 10 years, and if he will make a statement. [41249]

Mr. Richards: Information on the number of cases of prostate cancer treated is not available. The latest information on the number of new cases of prostate cancer registered by the Wales Cancer Registry is given in the following table.

Prosate Cancer (ICD9 185)

Year	*Number*
1981	569
1982	548
1983	625
1984	691
1985	705
1986	681
1987	699
1988	729
1989	859
1990	857

Source:
Wales Cancer Registry.

English and Welsh Education

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to improve spoken English and Welsh in schools. [41316]

Mr. Richards: The revised national curriculum, in place from September 1995, sets clear targets for improvements in spoken English and Welsh. Progress against these targets is assessed at ages seven, 11 and 14 and at age 16 through the GCSE. Additionally, discussions will be held shortly with the Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales and the Welsh Joint Education Committee on recording grades of spoken English and Welsh on GCSE certificates.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of these schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41737]

Mr. Hague: Within Welsh Office programmes, no contracts have been signed to date under the private finance initiative for projects costing over £1 million. Information on schemes costing less than £1 million is not collected.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many persons in his Department are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list their names; and how much each is paid; [42044]

(2) how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by his Department relating to the Scott inquiry and if he will list such persons. [42045]

Mr. Hague: None.

Environment Charters

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list those district councils which have published environmental charters since 1991; and if he will make a statement. [42081]

Mr. Hague: This information is not held centrally. In 1993 the Government published guidance to assist local authorities in the production of local environmental charters and a number of Welsh councils have now prepared these.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish those projects promoting the Welsh language and culture which have received European funding during the last five years, indicating the amount received in each case. [42092]

Mr. Hague: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Rural Development

Mr. John Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for [illegible]les if in the further consideration he is giving to rural development he will issue guidelines as to how much housing development he will allow in villages, in order that they retain their present character. [40937]

Mr. Gwilym Jones *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* At present, planning guidance on housing development in villages is included in planning policy guidance note 7 "The Countryside and The Rural Economy", issued in January 1992. This indicates that new housing will continue to be required in rural areas to sustain the health of the rural economy and the viability of village communities and that in many villages, provision can be made for modest development without damage to the character of the village. It is for the local planning authorities to determine the level of housing allowed in particular villages. These issues have been raised in the responses to the consultation exercises which have taken place both on the proposed revision of planning policy guidance in Wales and on the forthcoming rural White Paper for Wales. My right hon. Friend is now considering the responses received.

Mr. Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consideration he has given to Welsh Office guidelines on out-of-town store development; and what account he has taken of the rules governing planning applications in England. [40936]

Mr. Jones *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* Planning policy guidance on out-of-town retail developments is incorporated in the draft planning policy guidance (Wales) document which my right hon. Friend issued for public consultation in July. This draft provides similar planning policy guidance to that contained in the draft PPG6—"Town Centres and Retail Developments" issued by DoE for Consultation in England.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list by type of product *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41742]

Mr. Howard: Two contracts have been awarded under private finance initiative terms to date:

The police national network

Immigration detention facilities at Gatwick airport

The total capital values of these projects are matters for the contractors, but are estimated to be £50 million and £12 million respectively.

No public sector initial contribution has been required. Individual police forces purchase usage of PNN from public funds, but the value during the lifetime of the scheme will vary with demand. The rental for the Gatwick centre is projected to be £987,000 per annum.

Private Security Industry

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if it is his policy to introduce legislation in the coming Session of Parliament to bring into effect statutory regulation of the private security industry; [41930]

(2) if he will make it his policy to establish a system of regulation in the private security industry to provide for *(a)* the international nature of operators and *(b)* the range of inter-related services provided by some operators; [41936]

(3) if he will make it his policy to introduce a statutory system to regulate the private security industry; and if he will set a target date for these measures; [41929]

(4) if he will make it his policy to protect those companies in the private security industry which his Department assesses to be well run under statutory regulation of the industry; [41939]

(5) if he will make it his policy to establish a system of regulation for the private security industry which can respond quickly to changes in the market. [41937]

Mr. Maclean: The case for regulation is being considered in the light of the Home Affairs Select Committee report. We will provide a full response to the Committee as soon as possible.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what mechanisms are in place in his Department to ensure that any private security company providing services to his Department is and remains a member of the relevant voluntary regulatory body for the industry. [41934]

Mr. Howard: No formal systems are in place, but membership of voluntary regulatory bodies may be taken into account with other factors when assessing companies for the award of security services contracts.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to bring into effect arrangements to allow for proper vetting procedures for *(a)* employees and *(b)* employers within the private security industry within statutory provisions to regulate that industry. [41938]

Mr. Maclean: We are aware that there are concerns about the employment within the industry of individuals with criminal records. The whole issue of disclosure of criminal records for employment vetting purposes is currently under review. A White Paper containing the Government's proposals in this area will be issued during the next few months.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to give powers to the police to intervene in the work of the private security industry in circumstances where there is a threat to public safety. [41926]

Mr. Maclean: The police have comprehensive powers to protect the public and to deal with criminal behaviour whenever it occurs.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will include *(a)* manned guarding and *(b)* patrol duties and *(c)* door supervision within statutory provisions to regulate the private security industry. [41931]

Mr. Maclean: The issue of regulation for the industry is under review. We are aware that concerns lie mainly in the contract manned guarding sector, which includes private patrolling services. Door supervisors raise particular difficulties which are being tackled through local registration schemes—a measure which the Home Affairs Select Committee supported—and guidance on these will shortly be issued.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the private security firms undertaking work for his Department during the present financial year and for each of the last five financial years, listing in each case and for each year the total number of full time equivalent posts paid for by his Department and the numbers in each category of role in each year; [41932]

(2) how many private security firms employed by his Department have ceased to be a member of the relevant voluntary regulatory body during the period in which such services were being provided; and if he will indicate *(a)* the firms and *(b)* the regulatory bodies concerned; [41935]

(3) if he will list the organisations providing private security services of any sort to his Department or to any agency responsible to him or to his Department in the current financial year and in any part of each of the past five financial years; indicating against each name the voluntary regulatory body or bodies to which each belongs. [41933]

Mr. Howard: The following organisations have provided private security services to my Department over the past five years. Those marked are currently employed.

Airline Security Consultants Ltd.
Armaguard Ltd.*
Aviation Defence International
Aviation Security Consultants*
Burns International Security Services Ltd.*
Care Security Systems Ltd.*
Chubb Wardens Ltd.
Chubb Alarms Ltd.*
Defence Security Services
Defenco Security Services*
Felixstowe Security Co
Group 4 Court Service Ltd.*
Group 4 Remand Services Ltd.
Group 4 Prison Services Ltd.*
Group 4 Securitas (Security Express)*
Group 4 Total Security Ltd.*
Grundig International Ltd.
Harlow Security Systems Ltd.
Lisburn Security Services*
Maritime Aviation Security Services*
North Essex Security Services Ltd.
Potton Leisure Ltd.
Premier Prison Services Ltd.*
Reliance Security Service Ltd.*
Rentokil Security Services Ltd.
Scrottons Aviation Security*
SDA (1979) Ltd.
Securicor Custodial Services Ltd.*
Securicor Ltd.*
Securicor Management Group
Securicor Security Services Ltd.*
Securiguard Services Ltd.*
Securite Service Ltd.
Security Express Guards Ltd.
Security Ulster Ltd.*
Security Wales Ltd.*
Sigma Security Ltd.*
Shorrock Security Guards Ltd.*
Sterling Granada
UK Detention Services Ltd.*

Information about the voluntary regulatory bodies to which these organisations belong, and whether the membership of such bodies has been maintained for the duration of the contract period, is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Information about the number of staff employed on each contract and their role is also not readily available; in some cases the number varies from day to day for operational reasons.

Kent Police Costs

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the expenditure on the police in Kent in 1979; and what it is at present and on a cash basis and as a percentage change in real terms since 1979. [41876]

Mr. Maclean: Total expenditure on the Kent county constabulary has increased from £27.05 million in 1978–79 to an estimated £164.93 million for 1995–96. This is a real terms increase of 103 per cent.

Mr. Abdul Onibiyo

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration he gave to the safety of Abdul Onibiyo before ordering his removal to Nigeria; and if he will make a statement. [42003]

Mr. Kirkhope: Mr. Onibiyo's asylum application was fully considered and rejected. This decision was subject to review by the independent appellate authority, which dismissed his appeal. Mr. Onibiyo's further application for leave to appeal to the tribunal was not granted and he was therefore returned to Nigeria under normal immigration procedures.

Employment Vetting

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to introduce effective penalties against those who fail to follow proper procedures in respect of *(a)* vetting of staff, *(b)* vetting of employers and *(c)* provision of appropriate training to those so employed. [41925]

Mr. Maclean: The Government have been engaged in a review of all aspects of the employment vetting process and will be publishing a White Paper within the next few months setting out its proposals for new vetting arrangements.

Stage Hypnosis

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the review established to examine the evidence of the possible risk of harm to people taking part in stage hypnosis will report its findings. [42216]

Mr. Kirkhope: The expert panel appointed to consider this matter submitted its report on 11 October 1995. A copy of the report has been placed in the Library. The report concludes that there is no evidence of serious risk to the public from stage hypnosis. The report recommends that it may none the less be desirable to revise the scope of present licensing arrangements and the terms of associated guidelines. A public consultation paper will accordingly be issued shortly to interested parties.

Electronic Monitoring

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he has taken in respect of representations from the Magistrates Association about the trials of electronic monitoring currently in progress in Manchester, Reading and Norfolk: and if he will make a statement. [42217]

Mr. Howard: I have agreed to extend the area covered by the trials from the city of Manchester to the whole of Greater Manchester, and from Reading to the whole of Berkshire, and a statutory instrument has been made to give effect to this from Monday 6 November. As a separate issue, I am considering whether to extend the number of courts involved in the trial.

I have also agreed to fund a Magistrates Association seminar on sentencing in relation to electronic monitoring and this will be held on 8 and 9 November.

Former Yugoslavia

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements are being made for the reception and support of those additional people whom he announced on 6 August the Government had accepted under the temporary protection programme for people from the former Yugoslavia. [42218]

Mr. Kirkhope: On 28 July this year the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees wrote to a number of Governments asking for further 5,000 temporary protection places for citizens of the former Yugoslavia. In view of the pressing humanitarian need, my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary announced on 6 August that the United Kingdom would accept 500 people, principals and dependants, under the programme. This was an addition to the 1,000 vulnerable people and their dependants accepted under the previous programme announced in November 1992. The United Kingdom was one of the first countries in the world to respond to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' request.

The UNHCR will continue to be responsible for identifying those who are most in need of temporary protection. The first group arrived on 5 October and arrangements are in hand to bring in a further group shortly. The Home Office is continuing to liaise with UNHCR about the timing of further arrivals.

The Home Office is funding the Refugee Council and other voluntary agencies to support these new arrivals, by running reception centres to accommodate them on arrival, arranging more permanent housing and providing support in the community. Two centres have been opened and two more will open in November. On leaving the reception centres the evacuees will be housed, as were those on the current programme, in "clusters" which enable them to support each other but do not place an undue burden on local services. Programmes are being established to involve volunteers in the work of reception centres and in providing community help such as sports, social and cultural events.

A request was also received from the International Organisation for Migration for the United Kingdom and other countries to accept for treatment sick and wounded people from the former Yugoslavia. The United Kingdom has agreed to accept a further 20 medical evacuees. Three patients have so far arrived under this programme.

In addition to the temporary protection programme, the Home Office continues to examine carefully asylum applications made in the United Kingdom by people from the former Yugoslavia. Up to the end of June more than 12,000 people had applied for asylum. The Government's policy remains that those refused asylum will not be expected to return to a war zone, but will be granted leave to remain exceptionally until it is safe for them to return.

Police Personnel Services

Mr. Booth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are his proposals for bringing competition to bear on police personnel services. [42219]

Mr. Maclean: It is the Government's intention that compulsory competitive tendering should be introduced to police white collar support services as part of a rolling programme. Detailed consultation proposals for police personnel services were issued on 24 February 1995. The Government have now considered the responses received from the police service, local authority associations and other interested bodies.

The Government have decided that police authorities will be subject to the same CCT regime for personnel services as other authorities defined under the Local Government Act 1988, except for a number of specific exemptions. The exemptions centre on the provision of operational and specialist training, together with the personnel work associated with police complaints and discipline, unsatisfactory performance proceedings against police officers, and discharging probationary constables. The exemptions will protect operational policing, security, and management functions special to the police service.

Prisoner Costs

Mr. Heppell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total cost per prisoner in each prison within the United Kingdom. [41971]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. John Heppell, dated 7 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the cost per prisoner in each prison within the United Kingdom.

The attached table shows the net average operating cost per prisoner per year for each of the prisons in England and Wales for the year 1993–94, the latest year for which information has been published.

Information on prisons in Scotland is a matter for the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Scottish Prison Service and on prisons in Northern Ireland for the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Net operating cost for prisoner per year

Establishment	*Net operating cost per prisoner per year* £
Local prisons and remand centres	
Bedford[1]	27,419
Belmarsh	29,310
Birmingham	20,077
Brinsford	20,273
Bristol	24,824
Brixton[1]	33,764
Bullingdon/Oxford	19,896
Canterbury	29,500
Cardiff	20,925
Chelmsford	23,692
Dorchester	21,390
Durham	27,006
Elmley	17,110
Exeter	22,572
Gloucester	25,893
Haslar	15,603
Highdown	23,732
Holme House	19,292
Hull	25,065
Lancaster Farms[1]	24,000
Leeds	16,864
Leicester[1]	23,780
Lewes	24,024
Lincoln	16,890
Liverpool	16,331
Manchester[1]	43,087
Moorland[1]	17,298
Norwich	26,969
Pentonville	23,124
Preston	20,583
Rochester	35,000
Shrewsbury	20,000
Swansea	21,790
Wandsworth	25,461
Winchester	28,177
Woodhill[1]	26,514
Wormwood Scrubs	25,560
Contracted out prisons	
Blakenhurst	21,727
Wolds	18,069
Dispersal prisons	
Frankland	38,905
Full Sutton	34,122
Long Lartin	36,982
Parkhurst[1]	55,066
Wakefield	25,270
Whitemoor[1]	32,099
Category B training prisons	
Albany	25,574
Blundeston	20,000
Dartmoor	21,002
Garth	17,717
Gartree	29,249
Grendon/Springhill	21,237
Kingston–Portsmouth	30,189
Maidstone	19,415
Nottingham	25,121
Swaleside	16,298
Category C Training Prisons	
Acklington	14,050
Aldington	21,429
Ashwell	13,695
Blantyre House	20,213
Brockhill	22,388
Camp Hill	21,127
Channings Wood	14,071
Coldingley	25,455
Downview	20,357
Erlestoke	23,500
Everthorpe	22,273
Featherstone	14,638
Haverigg	18,563
Highpoint	16,410
Kirklevington Grange	29,508
Lancaster	14,800
Latchmere House	16,279
Lindholme[1]	18,851
Littlehey[1]	14,857
The Mount	13,816
Ranby	18,269
Risley[1]	19,850
Send	20,370
Shepton Mallet	20,000
Stafford[1]	17,631

Net operating cost for prisoner per year

Establishment	*Net operating cost per prisoner per year* £
Stocken	15,385
Thorpe Arch	20,245
Usk/Prescoed	22,330
The Verne	14,695
Wayland	14,201
Wellingborough[1]	18,557
Whatton	16,588
Wymott	24,051
Adult Male Open Prisons	
Ford	13,064
Hewell Grange	16,250
Kirkham	11,504
Leyhill[1]	14,925
Morton Hall	12,651
North Sea Camp	15,385
Rudgate	14,015
Standford Hill[1]	17,532
Sudbury/Foston	13,948
Young Offender Closed Establishments	
Aylesbury	28,070
Castington	19,291
Deerbolt	19,242
Dover	27,320
Glen Parva	16,780
Hollesley Bay[1]	31,186
Huntercombe/Finnamore Wood	23,176
Northallerton	25,490
Onley	15,914
Portland	21,557
Stoke Heath	21,377
Swinfen Hall	24,260
Werrington House	21,154
Wetherby	27,132
Young Offender Open Establishments	
Guys Marsh	28,750
Hatfield and Gringley	23,377
Thorn Cross	21,965
Young Offender Remand Estabishments	
Feltham	20,267
Hindley	23,051
Low Newton	19,433
Reading	31,788
Female Establishments	
Askham Grange	20,588
Bullwood Hall	32,407
Cookham Wood	22,727
Drake Hall	18,717
East Sutton Park	21,333
Holloway	31,435
New Hall	32,667
Pucklechurch	39,344
Styal	29,534

Vehicle Crime

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list for each year since 1990 the numbers of *(a)* thefts from vehicles and *(b)* thefts of vehicles, together with the numbers of vehicles involved (i) by make of vehicle and (ii) by year of manufacture. [41862]

Mr. Maclean: The requested information on the number of thefts from and of a motor vehicle is published in table 2.18 of "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales" Cm 3010, a copy of which is in the Library. Information is not collected centrally on the make and year of manufacture of vehicles.

Mr. Robert Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was *(a)* the number of vehicles stolen, *(b)* the number of vehicles recovered and *(c)* the recovery rate for 1994 (i) in the United Kingdom and (ii) by constabulary area. [41458]

Mr. Maclean: The latest published information relates to England and Wales and is contained in table 2.14 of "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, 1994", Cm 3010. A copy of this publication is in the Library. Information on Scotland and Northern Ireland are matters for the Secretary of State for each Department.

Prisons (Efficiency Savings)

Mr. Heppell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the target efficiency savings from the year 1992–93 to 1995–96 in each of Her Majesty's prisons within the United Kingdom; and what ere the actual savings in spending from 1992–93 to 1994–95. [41970]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. John Heppell, dated 7 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the target efficiency savings from the year 1992–93 to 1995–96 in each of Her Majesty's prisons within the United Kingdom; and the actual savings in spending from 1992–93 to 1994–95.

For England and Wales as a whole current expenditure costs per prisoner place reduced in real terms by 2.1 percent between 1992–93 and 1994–95, equivalent to £27 million. Details relating to individual prisons are not readily available.

Access to Criminal Records

Sir Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish the Government White Paper on new arrangements for access to criminal records. [41695]

Mr. Maclean: I expect to publish the White Paper within the next few months.

Immigration

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, in the exercise of discretion in allowing a person who has resided in the United Kingdom for more than 10 years with leave to remain indefinitely, it is his practice to take into account residence in *(a)* Ireland and *(b)* other parts of the common travel area. [41467]

Mr. Kirkhope: Under the long residence concession, a person who has 10 years or more continuous lawful residence in the United Kingdom, or 14 years continuous residence regardless of legality, may qualify for the grant of indefinite leave to remain in the absence of any strong countervailing factors. For the purposes of the concession, residence in the Republic of Ireland is not considered to be residence in the United Kingdom and is therefore not taken into account. The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are, for the purposes of the concession, considered to be part of the United Kingdom. Residence in the islands is therefore taken into account.

Police National Computer

Mr. Mike O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of information available to the police between January 1991 and 22 May 1995 has been placed on to the Phoenix system of the police national computer; which company has the contract for preparing the information to be placed on Phoenix; what percentage of files which have been attempted to be loaded have been rejected by the system in each week of September 1995; what was the expected number of files to be placed on the system for each week in September; what was the actual number which were loaded; and to what extent these results breached the contract. [41360]

Mr. Maclean: The Phoenix database holds specified categories of data. It is not possible to assess what proportion this forms of all information available to the police between January 1991 and 22 May 1995. Since Phoenix went live on 22 May 1995 the police have input information directly for new offenders. Conversion of existing records by keying data from scanned images of the microfiche records held by the national identification service, and the provision of specially written software for quality assurance and problem resolution is undertaken by PCL Group Ltd.

The percentage of records which have been loaded and rejected by the system in each week of September 1995 is shown in the table, together with the actual number of records loaded in each week. The expected average number of records to be placed on the system for each week over the life of the contract is 46,000. Discussions between the Home Office and PCL Group on technical and contractual matters are commercially confidential.

Records exported to Phoenix in September 1995

Week	*Total accepted*	*Percentage rejected*
1	7,178	28.23
2	3,087	30.14
3	3,866	27.84
4	765	23.5

Mr. O' Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints have been received from *(a)* police officers and *(b)* others about the quality of information on Phoenix. [41362]

Mr. Maclean: We have received no complaints about the quality of the information currently held on Phoenix from the police service or others.

Mr. O' Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Phoenix system on the police national computer went live; and when was it nationally announced to go live. [41358]

Mr. Maclean: The Phoenix system went live on 22 May 1995. The police service was informed of this date on 24 March 1995.

Mr. O' Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many days in September 1995 the police national computer office attendant did not receive tapes from the company designated to provide information to go on to Phoenix. [41361]

Mr. Maclean: Tapes were not sent to Hendon data centre on nine of the 21 working days in September.

Mr. O' Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of *(a)* pre-1981 information and *(b)* post-1981 information is on Phoenix for direct access by the police. [41359]

Mr. Maclean: All criminal record data held on the police national computer was transferred to the Phoenix database on 22 May 1995. This comprised 2.8 million records originating before 1981 which consisted of name and criminal record office number and 2.3 million records originating after 1981 which also included details of convictions. Back record conversion is in progress which will add information currently held only on microfiche to selected earlier records. It is not possible to state precisely what percentage of all criminal record information held centrally or locally by the police service this represents.

Police Numbers

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the numbers of police posts requested and granted under the annual application procedure in each police authority region in 1995; and if he will make a statement; [41452]

(2) if he will list the numbers of officers requested by each chief constable in each police authority region for the year 1995–96 under the annual application procedure; and if he will make a statement. [41451]

Mr. Maclean: No applications were submitted for 1995–96. The centralised system of determining police numbers by setting an establishment of officers for each police force was abolished from 1 April 1995.

Mr. Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he expects to allocate the 3,000 new police officers outlined in the Prime Minister's speech of October 1995; where he will locate the officers; what is the timetable; and if he will make a statement. [41453]

Mr. Maclean: Funding will be provided to enable chief constables to recruit an additional 5,000 officers over the next three financial years. The basis on which that funding will be distributed between police authorities is still to be decided. An announcement about police funding will be made after the Budget.

Gaming Act Review

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish his review of the Gaming Act 1968; and if it is his intention to introduce legislation in the next Parliamentary Session. [41364]

Mr. Kirkhope: We are currently reviewing the present controls on casinos and bingo clubs as part of the Government's deregulation initiative. Public consultation would be necessary before introducing legislation. We hope to publish a consultation paper soon.

Young Offenders (Yorkshire)

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has to establish a secure unit for young offenders in *(a)* Barnsley, *(b)* South Yorkshire or *(c)* Yorkshire. [41367]

Mr. Maclean: We have no plans to set up a secure training centre in Barnsley, South Yorkshire or Yorkshire and no plans to establish a new young offender institution in this area.

Prisoners from Wales

Mr. Allan Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* convicted and *(b)* remand prisoners from Wales are currently in custody (i) by county (ii) by sex and (iii) in total. [41382]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Allan Rogers, dated 7 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question asking how many a) convicted and b) remanded prisoners from Wales are currently in custody i) by county ii) by sex and iii) in total.

Table 1 gives the number of prisoners born in Wales who were held on 30 September in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales. Information by county of birth is not routinely collected. However, the 1991 National Prison Survey collected this information for the prisoners in that sample. The numbers given in table 2 should be treated with care as they are taken from a medium sized sample study.

Table 1: Population in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales on 30 September 1995 whose country of birth was Wales[1]

Type of custody	*Sex* *Males*	*Females*
Remand	489	3
Sentenced	1,754	25
Fine defaulters	20	—
Total	2,266	28

[1] Provisional figures, total includes 3 non-criminal prisoners.

Table 2: The 1991 National Prison Survey sample showing county of birth within Wales

County	*Number in the sample*
Clwyd	15
Dyfed	11
Gwent	28
Gwynedd	10
Mid Glamorgan	29
South Glamorgan	41
West Glamorgan	25
Powys	3

Police Standard Spending Assessment

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take into account the number and type of police stations within a police authority's area when calculating the police standard spending assessment. [41275]

Mr. Maclean: No.

Police (Firearms)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions in the last year officers in each police force had to draw firearms in the line of duty; and what are the figures for each of the previous three years. [41363]

Mr. Maclean: Numbers of police operations in England and Wales in which firearms were issued to officers are as follows:

Forces	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995*
Avon and Somerset	66	42	56	175
Bedfordshire	35	27	53	36
Cambridgeshire	64	105	66	73
Cheshire	42	43	40	93
City of London	71	93	23	8
Cleveland	5	28	22	107
Cumbria	16	11	18	44
Derbyshire	14	31	28	68
Devon and Cornwall	38	46	51	29
Dorset	33	27	28	46
Durham	49	27	134	100
Dyfed-Powys	14	9	7	16
Essex	107	140	138	267
Gloucestershire	5	6	10	27
Greater Manchester	100	100	107	110
Gwent	27	15	13	20
Hampshire	94	180	215	195
Hertfordshire	49	53	57	69
Humberside	14	6	89	49
Kent	96	74	89	95
Lancashire	9	23	45	57
Leicestershire	27	18	41	78

Forces	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995*
Lincolnshire	21	22	41	50
Merseyside	35	57	74	116
Metropolitan Police	1,520	1,838	[1]2,585	1,804
Norfolk	38	28	30	56
North Wales	38	29	34	60
North Yorkshire	16	26	25	25
Northamptonshire	11	10	43	40
Northumbria	325	320	299	593
Nottinghamshire	35	28	77	47
South Wales	24	18	22	55
South Yorkshire	39	.78	244	172
Staffordshire	15	18	29	21
Suffolk	84	99	75	119
Surrey	37	64	36	60
Sussex	116	63	53	375
Thames Valley	37	34	48	65
Warwickshire	12	12	28	25
West Mercia	63	64	73	50
West Midlands	66	172	209	141
West Yorkshire	200	377	258	181
Wiltshire	15	18	12	26
England and Wales Total	3,722	4,479	5,625	5,843

[1] This figure is unreliable due to inadvertent double-counting.

Figures for operations in which firearms were issued to officers are not available for the first three months of 1994. The number of operations in which police firearms were fired was five in 1991, 12 in 1992, five in 1993 and six between 1 January 1994 and 31 March 1995.

Domestic Violence

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide figures collected by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary on domestic violence incidents recorded by the police in England and Wales in 1994 in terms comparable with the 1993 figures given in the answer on 26 October 1994 to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton), *Official Report,* columns *640–41.* [41173]

Mr. Maclean: The information available has been provided by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary and is in the table. It covers incidents of domestic violence recorded by the police in England and Wales in calendar year 1993 and financial year 1994–95. HMIC is currently examining the reasons for the disparities highlighted in the table and the methods used by police forces to record incidents of domestic violence.

Domestic violence incidents recorded by the police in England and Wales in 1993 and 1994–95

Forces	*1993*[1]	*1994–95*[2]
Avon and Somerset	n/a	1,570
Bedfordshire	n/a	6,338
Cambridgeshire	2,253	2,566
Cheshire	17,918	3,117 different classification used
City of London	0	3
Cleveland	3,448	3,397
Cumbria	654	1,857 collection and systems improved
Derbyshire	7,606	n/a
Devon and Cornwall	n/a	7,294
Dorset	5,624	6,138
Durham	3,277	1,619
Dyfed-Powys	1,223	1,612
Essex	1,724	12,011 under-recording in 1993
Gloucestershire	2,401	4,612
Greater Manchester	33,988	35,084
Gwent	135	207
Hampshire	n/a	4,908
Hertfordshire	3,367	3,748
Humberside	8,401	514 different classification used
Kent	5,875	5,865
Lancashire	6,090	5,601
Leicestershire	4,075	4,467
Lincolnshire	373	625
Merseyside	11,956	14,088 1993 figure revised from previous table
Metropolitan Police	11,420	n/a
Norfolk	881	n/a
North Wales	287	357
North Yorkshire	15,841	n/a
Northamptonshire	2,104	2,508
Northumbria	2,071	10,364 used wider classification
Nottinghamshire	1,990	2,267
South Wales	3,451	3,830
South Yorkshire	482	n/a
Staffordshire	n/a	n/a
Suffolk	1,396	1,619
Surrey	3,155	4,471
Sussex	1,157	2,107
Thames Valley	9,167	3,547 1993 includes domestic disputes
Warwickshire	n/a	500
West Mercia	916	631

[1] Calendar year.

[2] Financial year.

Child Sex Offenders

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what records exist within his Department in respect of convicted child sex offenders who have committed such offences outside the United Kingdom; [40945]

(2) in what circumstances his Department seeks to be informed of people convicted of sex offences overseas who have served their prison sentence and have then departed to the United Kingdom. [40944]

Mr. Maclean: The national criminal intelligence service maintains a paedophile index which holds detailed intelligence based information on known active paedophiles, whether they are active in the United Kingdom or abroad. There is no formal requirement for NCIS to be notified of the convictions of people normally resident in the United Kingdom who commit child sex offences abroad, but it receives information from foreign law enforcement agencies and also from non-governmental organisations concerned about overseas paedophile activities.

Mr. Jamieson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the arrangements for children giving evidence in court against alleged sex offenders; and if he will make a statement. [41708]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* We keep this area of law under review. We have already done a great deal to make it easier for children to give evidence effectively and to make the experience less of an ordeal. Recent research has indicated that the provisions for children's evidence which we have introduced have been useful, particularly in reducing the level of trauma for the child. We are considering in conjunction with the other agencies involved how further practical improvements can be made.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to implement the recommendations of the report, "The Game's Up", on child prostitution. [39697]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* We share the concern of the Children's Society about child prostitution and fully support the multi-agency approach recommended by the report. We will continue to encourage all the agencies concerned to give a high priority to action to prevent the sexual exploitation of children and young people.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and as a proportion of the total work force; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41121]

Mr. Howard: Breakdowns by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—normally those engaged for a period of up to 12 months, but, exceptionally, up to two years—and the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library.

Crime, South Yorkshire

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the latest quarterly recorded crime figures for South Yorkshire metropolitan area; what the figures were one year ago; and if he will make a statement. [40978]

Mr. Maclean: There were 37,494 offences recorded in the South Yorkshire police force area in April to June 1995. This represents a fall of 3 per cent. over the April to June 1994 figure of 38,500 offences.

HM Inspector of Prisons

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to announce the name of the new inspector of prisons. [40946]

Mr. Howard: In due course.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40738]

Mr. Howard: The information requested is as follows:

1990–91: £210,096

1991–92: £170,903

1992–93: £207,980

1993–94: £233,916

1994–95: £195,916

Home Office Ministers do not use their own vehicles for official business.

Prison Service Performance Indicators

Ms Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made with the seven key performance indicators since the appointment of Derek Lewis as Director General of the Prison Service. [39603]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Ms Janet Anderson, dated 7 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the Prison Service's progress against its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) since April 1993.

The attached table shows the Service's KPI performance in the first six months of 1995–96 and compares this performance to 1992–93.

Prison service performance against KPIs; April 1993–September 1995

Key performance indicator (KPI)	*Performance: April to September 1995*	*Comparison to 1992–93*
KPI1: Escapes	64 escapes in total so far, including 15 which, in previous years, would have been the responsibility of the police, (annualised escape rate 0.19 per cent. of population)	169 in same period 1992–93 (annualised rate of 0.74 per cent. of population):
KPI2: Assaults	2,739 assaults in total so far this year (annualised assault rate 10.7 per cent. of population)	2,244 in same period 1992–93 (annualised rate 9.9 per cent. of population). 10 per cent. reduction on same period 1994–95
KPI3: Overcrowding	no prisoners held 3 to a cell for 1 so far this year	average of 817 in same period 1992–93
KPI4: Sanitation	97 per cent of prisoners have 24 hour access to sanitation	70 per cent in March 1992
KPI5: Purposeful activity	average of 25.5 hours per prisoner per week so far this year	23.7 hours per prisoner per week in 1992–93
KPI6: Time unlocked	41 per cent. of prisoners unlocked 12+ hours at end of August	24 per cent of prisoners unlocked 12+ hours at end March 1993
KPI7: Minimum visits	100 per cent of prisoners exceeding minimum visits so far this year	90 per cent. at end March 1993
KPI8: Cost per prison place	in 1994–95, the average cost of a prison place was £22,037 (at 1992–93 prices	in 1992–93, the average cost of a prison place was £22,588.

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[1] Escapes which would, in previous years, have been the responsibility of the police, are shown separately. to ensure a like-for-like comparison, these are excluded in the year-to-year measurement of escapes as a percentage of the prison population.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has so far been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and in how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41545]

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* My Department has laid two draft deregulation proposals to date. The measures concerned are not expected to accrue any significant savings to the Exchequer, but certain benefits to business are expected. For example, in the case of the draft Deregulation (Greyhound Racing) Order, the financial savings likely to accrue to the greyhound industry have been estimated at £260,000 per annum.

The explanatory document which is presented to the Committee alongside each draft order is required to contain an assessment of the cost savings to business and any other persons whom the draft order is intended to benefit.

Michael Hunt

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what conditions Michael Hunt is released from prison; and if he will make a statement. [41076]

Miss Widdecombe *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

Secure Training Centres

Ms Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now outline the measures he proposes to take following the court hearing of 26 September to ensure that the secure training centres conform to the Children Act 1989 and the volume 4 guidance and regulations. [41370]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* Secure training centres will be regulated by secure training centre rules as provided for in section 6 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, and contract terms. Secure training centre rules will be made by statutory instrument shortly before the first centres open, and it is intended that they will take account for the principles on which the Children Act 1989 is based.

Volume 4 of the Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations produced by the Department of Health for children's homes will not apply to secure training centres. However, it is a source document for the development of the rules.

Ms Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he proposes to complete the signing of the first two contracts for secure training centres; and if he will lodge the relevant documents in the Library, with particular reference to information which indicates how the contracts comply with the Children Act 1989. [41371]

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* The signing of the first two contracts for the provision of secure training centres at Gringley, Nottinghamshire, and at Cookham Wood, Kent will take place as soon as possible after completion of negotiations with tenderers. The final signed contract documents will be placed in the Library. These documents will not contain commercially confidential information such as costs or prices.

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has to increase the security of the Needlewood centre in Barnsley to accommodate young offenders. [41366]

Mr. Bowis: I have been asked to reply.

Responsibility for the arrangements for the accommodation of young persons in the Needlewood centre, Barnsley, lies with Barnsley metropolitan borough council. The hon. Gentleman may wish to contact the chairman of the social services committee of the council.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Child Support Agency

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many absent parents had their Child Support Agency assessments *(a)* increased and *(b)* decreased as a result of the changes introduced in April; and if he will provide a breakdown. [41038]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Ann Chant. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Miss Ann Chant to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 6 November 1995:

I am replying to your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary for Social Security about Child Support Agency assessments.

It is estimated that no more than 150 absent parents have had their child maintenance assessments increased because of the April changes. We believe that nearly all these relate to cases where parents with care were awarded an allowance for travel to work costs.

So far over 40,000 absent parents had their maintenance decreased because of the April changes. It is not possible to give a precise breakdown of this figure and cases are still being processed. It is estimated that almost 19,000 absent parents benefitted from the new 30% of net income limit on the amount of maintenance an absent parent is required to pay and 16,000 benefitted from the inclusion of all housing costs in exempt income. So far about 2,000 absent parent have benefitted from either the award of allowances of property and capital settlements or from the award of an allowance for travel to works costs. The balance of over 3,000 cases would have been reduced because they were affected by one or more of the other changes (e.g. reduction in the maximum amount paid under the formula; liability plus arrears to be a maximum 33% of absent parents earnings).

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will outline the specific changes that have recently been made to the accuracy measurements of the Child Support Agency to ensure that they align with the definition used by the National Audit Office. [41040]

Mr. Mitchell: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Ann Chant. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Miss Ann Chant to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 6 November 1995:

I am replying to your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Social Security about accuracy measurements of the Child Support Agency.

The Child Support Agency developed a definition to measure the accuracy of maintenance assessments, in liaison with the National Audit Office during 1994/95.

The Agency asked the National Audit Office to examine how this definition worked in practice as part of the audit undertaken early in 1995. The National Audit Office concluded that we should alter our method of measuring the cash value of assessments in the following ways.

We should exclude from the calculation any cases which were closed prior to assessment.

We should attempt to establish whether assessments made before all the evidence was gathered, were correct at the time of the assessment. If so these should be treated as correct, as the value of the assessment was not in error. Although procedures may not have been followed precisely, this will not have had an adverse impact on our clients. Other cases in this category, for instance where the missing evidence would result in a changed assessment, should be treated as errors.

Both these changes were implemented from April 1995.

I hope this is helpful.

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to establish an independent complaints adjudicator for the Child Support Agency. [41887]

Mr. Mitchell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has asked the chief executive to look at current complaints procedures and see how they might be improved. One of the options could be the establishment of a Child Support Agency complaints adjudicator. It is too soon to say whether such an arrangement could operate in the context of CSA business.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many of the cases assessed by the Child Support Agency would have had no opportunity to arrange a child maintenance agreement *(a)* because they are new separations or *(b)* for some other reasons. [41339]

Mr. Mitchell: All cases assessed by the Child Support Agency have had the opportunity to make a child maintenance agreement whether or not they are newly separated. However, if an agreement is made which is insufficient to remove the need for the parent with care to claim either income support, family credit or disability working allowance, the parent with care may be required to authorise the Secretary of State to take action to recover child support maintenance.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many of the absent parents who had previously paid no child maintenance at the time they were taken on by the Child Support Agency were on benefits. [41341]

Mr. Mitchell: The agency does not collect this information as there is no business need for it.

Mrs. Roe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will report on the review of the arrangements for compensating clients who have a genuine grievance against the Child Support Agency. [42192]

Mr. Mitchell: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Gunnell) on 17 July 1995, *Official Report*, column *1300.*

Since its inception, the agency has had the facility to consider special payments to compensate clients where a clear, unambiguous error or delay has been caused by the agency.

Although each case is considered on its individual merits, the agency has now established clear criteria for deciding whether, and if so, how much, to pay in compensation.

The details of this scheme, which is comparable to those operated by other DSS agencies, have now been developed from experience of cases arising in this new and unique business. This will ensure that each case receives fair and consistent consideration.

Claimants, Doncaster and Mexborough

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the number of current benefit claimants at each of his Department's benefit offices covering the Doncaster and Mexborough area; and what the figure was 12 months ago. [39483]

Mr. Roger Evans: The administration of social security benefits is a matter for Mr. Peter Mathison, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member with such information as is available.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 6 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Social Security has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what is the number of current benefit claimants at each of his Department's benefit offices covering the Doncaster Mexborough area; and what was the comparable figure 12 months ago.

The latest information for locally administered benefits (ie those benefits calculated and paid at the Benefit Agency's local offices) is provided in the enclosed Appendix A and includes the comparable figure for 12 months ago. You should note that more than one benefit can be payable to a customer at the same time.

Information is usually collated at District level. On this occasion, however, I am able to give you details about incapacity benefits for Doncaster East, Doncaster West and Mexborough offices and details about Income Support for Doncaster East and Doncaster West. The Rother and Dearne District includes Mexborough, Goldthorpe, Rotherham South and Rotherham North offices. Information about Income Support is only available at District Level for Rother and Dearne.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

The latest available statistics for locally administered incapacity benefits are as follows:

Appendix A—incapacity benefits

	Doncaster West BO	*Doncaster East BO*	*Mexborough BO*
September 1994			
Invalidity Benefit	7,457	6,018	4,025
Sickness Benefit	1,909	1,354	308
Maternity Allowance	24	24	11
Severe Disablement Allowance	1,095	788	577
September 1995			
Incapacity Benefit[1]	8,323	7,000	4,239
Maternity Allowance	41	27	11
Severe Disablement Allowance	1,231	839	597

[1] From 13 April 1995 Invalidity Benefit and Sickness Benefit were replaced by Incapacity Benefit.

Income Support

	August 1994	*August 1995*
Doncaster East BO	13,039	13,054
Doncaster West BO	17,397	17,664
Rother & Dearne District Office	38,431	38,686

Note:
More than one benefit can be payable to a customer at the same time.

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security for what grant-giving funds his Department is responsible requiring a private sector contribution where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38608]

Mr. Burt: We have no schemes which seek exclusively non-public sector funding in partnership.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the cost of the employment of Ernst and Young as consultants in two pilot areas commencing on 2 October in connection with the identification of benefit claimant fraud; and which two areas have been selected for this. [39973]

Mr. Heald: The estimated cost of the employment of Ernst and Young to work in partnership with fraud managers in the Benefits Agency for a period of 12 months is £525,000. The two areas taking part are West Mercia and Manchester. This partnership will examine work processes, information technology and management of fraud investigations. What we learn from this partnership will be applied across the whole of the Benefits Agency, helping further to increase the productivity of its fraud investigation services and to target resources more effectively.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security approximately how many blind or partially sighted people have appealed to the disability appeal tribunal against the disability living allowance unit's decision not to award them the middle rate of the DLA care component since 14 October 1994. [40892]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The information is available only at disproportionate cost.

Temporary and Part-time Staff

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many staff are currently employed in his Department and in related agencies on *(a)* temporary or casual employment contracts and *(b)* part-time employment contracts, given as an actual figure and a proportion of the total workforce; and what were the corresponding figures for five years ago. [41122]

Mr. Burt: Breakdowns by Department and executive agency for 1 April 1995 of the number of permanent staff, the number of casual staff—normally those engaged for a period of up to 12 months, but, exceptionally, up to two years—and of the number of part-time staff are presented in the civil service staff in post summary table for 1 April 1995, a copy of which is in the Library. Estimates on a comparable basis for 1 April 1990 have also been placed in the Library.

National Insurance Contributions

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the extra return to the Exchequer resulting from removing the upper limit on employees' national insurance contributions; and what proportion of employers' national insurance contributions that would represent if their gross national insurance contributions were reduced by that amount overall. [40907]

Mr. Heald: The additional return and proportion of employers' national insurance contributions would be about £3.1 billion and 12.8 per cent. respectively in Great Britain for 1995–96 in a full year, if the upper limit on employees' NICs was removed, but an upper earnings limit at current levels remained in place for the purposes of calculating contracted-out rebates. Information for Northern Ireland is a matter for my right hon. Friend and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Source: Government Actuary's Department.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what is his policy towards the introduction of exemptions from national insurance contributions for employers of seafarers; [41596]

(2) if he will list the European countries which *(a)* exempt and *(b)* do not exempt seafarers employers from national insurance contributions. [41597]

Mr. Heald: Exemptions for this or any other group of employers would be contrary to the principle of universal contribution liability for universal benefit coverage on which the national insurance scheme is based. The information in the table shows that most European countries do not exempt seafarers' employers from contribution liability. We are, however, aware of the concerns expressed by the shipping industry about their national insurance position and these are being considered.

European Countries which (a) exempt and (b) do not exempt seafarers employers from national insurance contributions

(a) Exempt
  Denmark[1]
  Portugal[1]
(b) Not exempt
  Belgium
  Luxembourg
  Finland[2]
  France
  Germany
  Greece
  Ireland
  Italy
  Netherlands
  Norway
  Spain
  Switzerland
  United Kingdom

Notes:

1. Exemption applies only in respect of crews of ships on the second register.

2. Contributions are refunded to employers in respect of crews of ships on the second register.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the total weekly cost of benefits paid to those awaiting determination of their application for asylum in the United Kingdom as at 12 October. [41497]

Mr. Roger Evans: The latest figures available are in the November 1994 quarterly statistical inquiry. This indicates there were about 42,000 asylum seekers in receipt of income support. The estimated cost of income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit payments to those people was about £5 million per week. The information is not available for other benefits.

Parliamentary Ombudsman

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security in how many cases his Department or its agencies has been criticised by the parliamentary ombudsman since 1979. [41253]

Mr. Burt: The information is in the table.

Year	*Complaints upheld*	*Complaints not upheld but department criticised*	*Total*
1979	42	15	57
1980	50	9	59
1981	53	16	69
1982	26	34	60
1983	29	44	73
1984	38	41	79
1985	42	29	71
1986	48	33	81
1987	40	37	77
1988	33	25	58
1989	36	23	59
1990	38	47	85
1991	48	32	80
1992	52	36	88
1993	68	19	87
1994	62	25	87

Widow's Benefit

Sir Anthony Durant: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the number of widows in receipt of widow's benefit excluding those receiving widow's bereavement allowance as at March. [41612]

Mr. Heald: The information is not available in the format requested. The number of widows in receipt of widow's benefit at March 1995 is 290,000[1]. The number of widows in receipt of widow's bereavement allowance in the 1995–96 tax year is 70,000[2].

Source:

1. DSS Statistics

2. Inland Revenue Statistics

War Pensions

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list those councils in Norfolk which allow war pensioners and war widows to keep all their war pension even if they are receiving benefits and those which do not. [40114]

Mr. Heald: The following local authorities in Norfolk have advised me that they operate local schemes which disregard war pensions in full when calculating entitlement to housing benefit and council tax benefit: North Norfolk, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Breckland and Broadland.

Great Yarmouth, South Norfolk and Norwich city have advised that they do not operate such a local scheme.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much, on average, war pensions have changed in real value since the new guidelines for determining housing and council tax benefit were introduced. [41605]

Mr. Heald: Since the introduction of the revised housing benefit scheme in April 1988, the basic weekly rate of war disablement pension payable in respect of a 100 per cent. disabled private soldier, and equivalent, has increased from £67.20 to £101.10. If increased only in line with the retail prices index, the estimated current rate would be £95.30 per week.

The basic weekly rate of war widow's pension payable to the widow of a private soldier, and equivalent, has increased from £67.20 to £76.35. Increases in line with RPI alone would have produced an estimated current rate of £75.85 a week.

In addition, since April 1990, most war widows have received a fully upratable supplementary pension—originally £40 a week, currently £49.77—which is totally disregarded for housing benefit and council tax benefit purposes.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Heppell: To ask the Secretary of Social Security what extra provision is and will be provided for the existing claimants who will lose benefit due to the change to incapacity benefit from invalidity benefit over the first three years in which incapacity benefit is paid. [41962]

Mr. Burt: Unemployment benefit and income-related benefits such as income support are available to those who are no longer incapable of work and who are seeking and available for employment. In addition, significant extra resources have been made available to the Employment Service over the first three years to fund back-to-work help for those leaving incapacity benefit.

Disability Discrimination

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if children with learning difficulties who are currently attending special schools for children with learning difficulties will be automatically protected under the disability discrimination legislation. [41340]

Mr. Burt: The definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Bill, subject to the provisions of schedule 1, provides that a person has a disability for the purposes of the Act if he has or has had a physical or mental impairment which has or had a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Children who meet this definition will be protected by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Bill and by complementary provisions of the Education Act 1993.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many children with learning difficulties are estimated to be covered under the Disability Discrimination Bill. [41343]

Mr. Burt: Centrally maintained statistics are not kept in a form that will provide this information. The definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Bill does not correlate directly with information held by the Department of Health about children who have learning disabilities, or to definitions used by the Department for Education and Employment to collect information about children with learning difficulties.

Evidence from epidemiological studies suggest that there are about 30,000 children under the age of 16 in England with severe or profound learning disabilities, but others with a mild or moderate degree of learning disability.

Under the Education Act 1993, a child has special educational needs if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of that age. This difficulty in learning may be entirely unrelated to any disability. It has been estimated that up to one in five children may have special educational needs at some time in his or her school career.

In view of the existing comprehensive protection under the 1993 Act and code of practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs, the House has agreed that education should be excluded from the scope of part III of the Bill. Subject to that, the other relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Bill will apply equally to children with special educational needs as to all other people.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what financial assistance will be available for children with learning difficulties to enable legal action to be taken on their behalf under the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Bill. [41345]

Mr. Burt: The majority of actions taken under the new right of access will be via the small claims procedure, where the proceedings are informal, legal representation is not required and no costs can be awarded. Where actions are taken in open court of proceed to higher courts, legal aid will be available to children with learning disabilities provided they meet the normal means and merits tests. Children are assessed for legal aid according to their own means and not their parents. A child is therefore more likely to be financial eligible than an adult.

Child Support

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement in respect of the operational policy of the Department of Social Security liable relatives unit and the child support unit when arranging child maintenance from liable parents. [41779]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: There was no liable relative unit as such: liable relative work formed part of the operation of DSS local offices. The aim of liable relative sections in those offices was to ensure that people liable to maintain their spouse, child or sponsored immigrant did so to the best of their ability, where possible removing the need for income support. The child support unit had similar aims but relating to child maintenance only.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security by how much the combined value of child benefit and child dependency increases would have to be raised in April 1996, in cash and percentage terms to restore them to their November 1979 values relative to prices and average earnings for *(a)* war widows and *(b)* other widows. [41640]

Mr. Mitchell: The information for values relative to prices is set out in the table.

The same information for values relative to average earnings is not yet available.

War widows	*Cash rise*	*Percentage rise*
Eldest qualifying child	£10.60	43.4
Other children	£11.35	48
Other widows		
Eldest qualifying child	£7.50	37
Other children	£8.25	42.3

Notes:

1. A higher rate of child benefit for the eldest child was introduced in April 1991. Prior to that date all children were paid at the same rate.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5p.
3. The retail prices index, all items, as published by the Central Statistical Office was used in the calculation.

Lone Parents

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much his Department has spent on research into *(a)* lone-parent families and *(b)* absent parents, in each year since 1989. [41800]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The Department's research programme is announced each year. Details and overall costs of all projects are set out in the Department's research yearbook, published annually by HMSO, copies of which are available in the Library. Previous editions cover projects from 1989 onwards; the yearbook for 1994–95 will contain details of projects currently under way and will be published in December.

Income Support (Young People)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the cost in a full year of reintroducing income support payments for 16 to 17-year-olds. [41867]

Mr. Roger Evans: Information is not available to calculate the cost of reintroducing income support payments for 16 to 17-year-olds within normal estimating margins. The behaviourial factors are difficult to estimate; however, illustrative costs, based on a range of assumptions, are in the table:

Cost of restoring income support to 16 and 17-year-olds

£ million

Assumptions	*Benefits costs 1996–97*
10 per cent. move from Education to Income Support	340
20 per cent. move from Education to Income Support	550
40 per cent. move from Education to Income Support	975

Notes:

1. Costs are derived from the movement of young people from education to income support *plus* the cost of those who claim income support while waiting for a youth training placement *plus* the costs of those who claim income support who are not in education, training, nor employment.
2. In addition to assumptions regarding the movement from education to income support, it is assumed that: all 16 and 17-year-olds move on to income support from day one of the policy change; 15 per cent. of the families of 16 and 17-year-olds in education are on income support; this assumption is the basis for an estimate of reduction in cost as a result of families losing entitlement to dependency and other family benefits; half of the 16 and 17-year-olds who claim income support move away from home and live independently and so receive housing benefit; and half of the 16 and 17-year-olds are the only children in their families.
3. The numbers of education and youth training are based on projections for 1996–97.
4. The numbers not in education, training or employment are based on information from the spring labour force survey and DSS benefit statistics.
5. Costs have been rounded to nearest £5 million but are not accurate to that degree.

Medical Reports

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to apply *(a)* the commitment given by his predecessor on 8 July 1988, *Official Report*, column 1355, during the passage of the Access to Medical Reports Act and *(b)* the provisions of the Access to Health Records Act 1990 to medical reports prepared by the Benefits Agency for its own use or that of an equivalent authority overseas; and if they will be available to, and may be corrected by, the subject of the report. [41997]

Mr. Roger Evans: It has for many years been the practice of the Department of Social Security to supply copies of medical reports in connection with claims to benefit at the request of the claimant, subject to any information which could be detrimental to the claimant's well-being removed.

In the event of an appeal against a decision made by the independent adjudicating authorities, copies of all reports are supplied to the claimant, again subject to withholding information as described above. If the claimant disagrees with the information in the reports, an appeal to the relevant tribunal is the means by which they can express their disagreement.

Nursing Home Residents

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what has been the annual cost of higher level income support payments to nursing home residents with preserved rights in each of the last three years *(a)* nationally, *(b)* regionally and *(c)* by area. [41943]

Mr. Roger Evans: Information is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is set out in the table:

Annual cost of income support limits for nursing home residents

£ million

	1992	*1993*	*1994*
England	1,071	1,184	916
Scotland	127	132	104
Wales	106	100	78
Great Britain	1,300	1,416	1,097

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the million. Due to rounding some of the totals may not tally.
2. Estimated annual expenditure is calculated by multiplying the number of cases in May of each year by the average weekly income support at the enquiry date and then multiplying by 52.

Source:

Income support statistics residential care/nursing home quarterly inquiries May 1992–1994.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Apprenticeships

10. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans the Government have to increase apprenticeships for school leavers. [40047]

Mr. Paice: The Government welcome employers' enthusiastic response to the modern apprenticeships initiative. We hope that approaching 30,000 trainees will be recruited in the current year.

Grant-maintained Schools

11. **Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many pupils are currently educated in grant-maintained schools. [40049]

Mr. Robin Squire: More than 680,000 pupils are currently being educated in grant-maintained schools in England.

Primary School Class Sizes

12. **Mr. Chris Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many primary school pupils in England are taught in classes of 36 or more; and if she will make a statement. [40051]

16. **Mr. Connarty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many primary school children are currently being taught in class sizes of more than 35. [40055]

Mr. Robin Squire: In January 1995 there were 108,000 primary school pupils taught in classes of 36 or more in England.

Economic Regeneration, Workington

13. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what contribution her Department is able to make to local economic regeneration in Workington. [40052]

Mr. Forth: This Department makes a major contribution to the development of Workington through the activities of the Employment Service and Cumbria training and enterprise council.

Grammar Schools, Kent

14. **Mr. Dunn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many grammar schools there are in Kent. [40053]

Mrs Gillan: Thirty-nine.

School Repairs

15. **Mr. Heppell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to deal with the backlog of repairs to schools. [40054]

Mrs. Gillan: It is up to individual local education authorities and governors to make their own plans for any repairs to schools.

Standard Spending Assessments

17. **Dr. Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make it her policy to ensure that education standard spending assessments are adjusted fully to take into account increases in pay and prices and demographic changes. [40056]

Mr. Robin Squire: When determining the level of resourcing for education, the Government take into account the pressures on the education service, including projected trends in pupil numbers and inflation. But we also look at the scope which local authorities have for making efficiency savings and consider what the country can afford given the continuing need for restraint in public expenditure.

Primary School Standards

18. **Sir Malcolm Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what action she is taking to raise standards in primary schools. [40117]

Mrs. Gillan: The national curriculum and its assessment, national tests, regular inspections, improvements to teacher training and our improving schools programme all act to raise standards in primary schools. The chief inspector of schools has confirmed that our reforms are improving the quality of education.

Higher Education Review

19. **Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what progress has been made on her review of higher education. [40118]

Mr. Forth: We consulted earlier in the year on the purpose of higher education and its future shape and size. Around 100 responses were received: copies have been placed in the Library. As my right hon. Friend announced at the beginning of July, a further consultative paper will be issued around the turn of the year.

Work Experience

20. **Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to give pupils at secondary schools the opportunity for direct experience in the workplace. [40119]

Mr. Paice: We have asked training and enterprise councils and their local partners to encourage work experience for pupils and have made funds available specifically to support it for all in their last year of compulsory schooling. The need for further action is being kept under review.

School Discipline

21. **Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what measures the Government have taken to promote good discipline in school classrooms. [40120]

Mr. Robin Squire: My right hon. Friend announced on 27 September a range of initiatives to help schools combat the problem of disruptive pupils. These initiatives build on guidance on pupil behaviour and discipline sent to all schools, as part of the "Pupils with Problems" pack in May last year. We have also asked the consultative group on school standards to advise the Department on what else can be done to help schools maintain and improve discipline.

Access to Work

22. **Ms Lynne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what are her plans for the access to work programme once Royal Assent has been given to the Disability Discrimination Bill. [40121]

Mrs. Gillan : The access to work programme is being reviewed following its first year of operation, as we announced would happen when it was launched. We intend to continue providing help under the programme, and the review is therefore taking account of the experience of its operation so far, and of the implications of the Disability Discrimination Bill. We intend to announce details of any changes to the programme before the Act comes into force.

Remploy

23. **Mr. McMaster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement about the future of Remploy. [40122]

Mrs Gillan: I am not aware of any developments that would warrant a statement.

Unemployment (Teenagers)

24. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what factors she has assessed as having the greatest impact on the levels of unemployment among *(a)* teenage women and *(b)* teenage men. [40123]

Mr. Forth: The acquisition of relevant qualifications and work-related skills, and the creation of a competitive, efficient and flexible labour market, are particularly important in keeping unemployment low among both teenage men and teenage women.

Whithinfields School

25. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will visit Halifax to inspect working conditions at Withinfields school, Southowram. [40124]

Mr. Robin Squire: My right hon. Friend has no plans to visit Withinfields school. I visited the school on 21 April 1995.

Further Education Colleges (Funding)

Mr. Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what recent representations she has received regarding the funding of further education colleges. [40125]

Mr. Paice: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has received some 20 representations regarding the funding of further education colleges since colleges' 1995–96 allocations were announced by the Further Education Funding Council at the end of May.

Class Sizes

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is her policy on the optimum class size in primary and secondary schools. [40126]

Mr. Robin Squire: It is for the governors and headteachers of individual schools to decide how to organise their classes.

Jobfinder's Grant

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many unemployed people in each region and in Great Britain as a whole have applied for a jobfinder's grant and *(a)* received a grant and *(b)* not received a grant since April; what is the means-tested savings limit in each region; 'what procedures are in place for appeals for people whose grant applications are turned down; if she will provide a breakdown of recipients of the jobfinder's grant by their gross weekly wage level; and if she will make a statement. [41918]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Mr. Terry Rooney, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the Jobfinder's Grant.

The attached table (Annex 1) shows the number of Jobfinder's Grants applied for and awarded nationally and by region since the programme was introduced on 18 April (22 May in Yorkshire and Humberside region, where a more flexible variant to the programme is being piloted) up to 6 October, which is the latest date for which figures are available.

The table also shows the gross weekly wage level of grant recipients. To be eligible for the grant, applicants must take jobs paying £150 gross per week or less (£250 per week gross or less in Yorkshire and Humberside region).

The savings limit for the grant is £2,800 in all regions except Yorkshire and Humberside and the South West, where it is £2,600. (In these two regions, pilot variants to the programme allow grants of up to £400, which is double the £200 flat rate grant in the rest of the country.)

The grant has been made available to help jobseekers who have been unemployed for a very long time to overcome the barrier, perceived or otherwise, of the transitional phase from losing benefits to receiving their first wage. It is not a benefit and there is no statutory right to the grant. Therefore, there is no formal appeals procedure for applications which are turned down.

I hope this is helpful.

Annex 1: Jobfinder's grant

	Grants applied for (up to 6 October)	*Grants awarded (up to 6 October)*
National total	9,128	5,478
London and South East	1,289	745
South West	751	426
Wales	563	369
West Midlands	1,328	814
North West	1,252	826
Scotland	782	377
Northern	718	446

Annex 1: Jobfinder's grant

	Grants applied for (up to 6 October)	*Grants awarded (up to 6 October)*
Yorkshire and Humberside	734	526
East Midlands and Eastern	1,711	949

Gross weekly wage level	*Number of grant recipients*
£200+ gross per week	30
£150–£199 gross per week	320
£100–£149 gross per week	3,691
Less than £100 gross per week	794
Wage not known	18

Note:

This information is from a database held by the company contracted to evaluate the Jobfinder's Grant, on the basis of 4,853 grant recipients inputted to the database up to the end of October.

Nursery Voucher Scheme

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) what is the cash value of the contract awarded to Capita Managed Services Ltd. to administer the nursery voucher scheme in the financial years *(a)* 1995–96 and *(b)* 1996–97; [42034]

(2) what estimate was given by Capita Managed Services Ltd. for the cost of administering the nursery voucher scheme. [42035]

Mr. Robin Squire: The financial details of the Government's contract with Capita Managed Services Ltd. to administer the nursery voucher scheme are commercially confidential, but the contract was awarded by competitive tender from a short list of 10 companies.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what budget has been allocated for the nursery voucher information campaign in *(a)* Norfolk, *(b)* Kensington and Chelsea, *(c)* Wandsworth and *(d)* Westminster. [42033]

Mr. Robin Squire: The total budget allocated to inform parents and providers about the first phase of the nursery voucher scheme in voluntary local education authorities, is £750,000. It is not possible to break this down for individual voluntary areas.

European Funds

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what element of European social funds is restricted solely to objective 4; and when the Government intend to draw up an objective 4 programme. [41981]

Mr. Forth: The Government have not allocated any European social fund money to objective 4 and have no plans to draw up a programme for that objective.

Training and Employment, Sheffield

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will encourage the development of a local training and employment plan in the Darnall area of Sheffield following the publication of the Darnall review. [40037]

Mr. Paice: I know that the local training and enterprise council is taking a keen interest in the Darnall review. I fully support sensible initiatives to revitalise disadvantaged areas.

Nursery Education

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what action she is taking to safeguard existing nursery education places for three and four-year-olds under her proposed national voucher scheme for all four-year-olds; and if she will make a statement. [40298]

Mr. Robin Squire: The parents of every four-year-old will receive a nursery education voucher which they can redeem for three terms of good quality nursery education in the state, private or voluntary sector. In exercising the choice which the voucher scheme provides, parents are likely to continue to make use of places which meet the needs of them and their children.

The voucher scheme should not affect existing places for three-year-olds. The proposed funding mechanism will allow local authorities to continue to spend on such places as they judge appropriate.

Student Loans Company

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what discussions she has had with the Student Loans Company regarding levels of debt experienced by students. [40050]

Mr. Forth: I have had a number of discussions with senior executives at the Student Loans Company. It is entirely right that graduates should contribute towards the cost of their higher education. The loans scheme is fair and generous.

Skills Training Agency Sites

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment which of the former sites occupied by the Skills Training Agency have been disposed of and which remain for disposal; who have been appointed to advise on the disposal, what fees they have been paid to date; and what is the amount so far received from the sale of the sites. [40939]

Mr. Robin Squire: The following former Skills Training Agency sites have been disposed of:

Leicester; East Lancashire; Chelmsford; Leeds; Wakefield; Edinburgh; Southampton; Slough; Reading; Twickenham; Portsmouth; St. Helens; Cardiff and Deptford.

The sites remaining for disposal are as follows:

Letchworth; Swindon; Northampton; Ipswich and Skyline House.

Chartered surveyors King and Co—now Kings Sturge and Co—were appointed to advise on the disposal. Its fees are determined, under their contract with the Department, using different percentage figures according to the method of disposal—that is, sale of freehold or assignment of leasehold interest.

The net amount so far received from the sale of sites is £14,731,372.

Disability Discrimination

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if children with learning difficulties who have received a statement of special educational needs under the provisions of the 1981 and 1993 Education Acts will be automatically protected by the Disability Discrimination Bill. [41342]

Mr. Forth: Under the Education Act 1993 local education authorities have a statutory duty to arrange the provision specified in a statement of special educational needs. In view of the existing comprehensive protection under that Act, the House has agreed that education should be excluded from the scope of part III of the Bill. Subject to that, the other relevant provisions of the disability Discrimination Bill will apply equally to children with statements as to all other people.

Access to Work Scheme

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) if she will list the employers contacted by her Department during the last three months in respect of providing voluntary funding for adaptations for disabled employees under the access to work scheme; [41794]

(2) how many employers have been contacted by letter by her Department during the last three months concerning the voluntary payment of adaptations for disabled employees undertaken under the access to work scheme; and if she will indicate the number of employers who *(a)* offered to pay voluntary contribution in full, *(b)* offered to part-fund costs and *(c)* expressed objections to paying any costs in part or in full. [41793]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions about employers contacted by letter concerning voluntary contributions towards adaptations for disabled people undertaken under the Access to Work programme.

The information you ask for is not kept centrally, but it is our policy to ask every employer to consider whether they are able to make a contribution.

The Government launched the Access to Work programme in June 1994 without a requirement by employers to contribute towards the cost of help. However, it has always been our practice to seek voluntary contributions from employers. There are also some cases where the help we provide for individual disabled people clearly gives additional benefits to the employer's business. In those cases, we negotiate what it is reasonable for the taxpayer to pay and we expect the employer to pay the rest.

The number of applications made under Access to Work and the scale and the costs of help are increasing. We therefore decided that all Placing, Assessment and Counselling Teams (PACTs) should adopt a common approach to employers to ensure that the approach was made at the appropriate level within companies. Local PACT managers are responsible for administering the Access to Work programme, including asking employers for contributions toward the cost of help.

I am sorry I cannot be more helpful.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many payments of *(a)* £100 or less, *(b)* between £100 and £250, *(c)* between £250 and £500, *(d)* between £500 and £1,000 *(e)* between £1,000 and £5,000 and *(f)* over £5,000 have been made under the access to work scheme since June 1994. [41798]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the distribution of payments made under the Access to Work programme since June 1994.

We do not regularly gather details of the distribution of the cost of help given under Access to Work and do not therefore have the information you ask for. However, we have recently received sample information of spend during the first 3 months of the current year, and I can say that the cost of providing special aids and equipment, which amounts to around 70% of the total cost of the programme, fell within the following bands:

Cost of providing special aids and equipment	*Percentage of people assisted*
Under £100	19
£101 to £259	14
£251 to £500	22
£501 to £1,000	20
£1,001 to £5,000	23
Over £5,000	4

In 1994/95, the first year of Access to Work, 10,349 people wer helped and so far this year about 6,000 new people have benefited.

I hope this is helpful.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment when she expects to receive recommendations from her departmental review team regarding the future of the access to work scheme. [41797]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the timing of the departmental review of Access to Work.

I expect the review to be completed and a report and recommendations presented to the Secretary of State by the end of December 1995.

I hope this is helpful.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will indicate how many applications for assistance under the access to work scheme have exceeded the £21,000 ceiling since June 1994; and what proportion that represents of the total number of applications made for assistance under the scheme. [41791]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the number of applications for help under the Access to Work programme since June 1994 that have exceeded £21,000. The information you have requested is not available.

While there is a ceiling of £21,000 on Access to Work help for an individual over a 5 year period, Regional Directors have authority to exceed this limit in exceptional circumstances. We do not maintain records on applications for help which exceed this ceiling but information gathered in June this year showed that we had agreed packages of help of over £21,000 for 70 people. This figure is included in the total of 10,023 people helped by Access to Work, in the period from 6 June 1994 to 31 May 1995.

I hope this is helpful.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) if she will list the research commissioned by her Department during the last six months as part of her Department's review into the access to work scheme; [41795]

(2) if she will make it her policy to publish the results of all research undertaken or commissioned by her Department as part of the departmental review into access to work. [41796]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the research undertaken and commissioned for the review of Access to Work.

We have commissioned Social and Community Planning Research to undertake research to feed into the Access to Work review. As an independent organisation they will be free to publish their research in due course. We expect that a report of the review will be published after it has been presented to the Secretary of State.

I hope this is helpful.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41738]

Mr. Forth: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has only a limited role in approving projects under the private finance initiative in the education sectors. Individual institutions, and local education authorities in the case of county and voluntary controlled schools, are free to enter into contracts with private sector bodies without recourse to her. She expects them to make full use of the freedoms and opportunities the private finance initiative offers to achieve best value for money.

The Employment Service has procured a personnel administration system under the private finance initiative. The value of the project, over seven years, is £3.2 million. This represents the contract costs over the life of the project which will be met by the Employment Service.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to consult with *(a)* disability organisations, *(b)* the Employers Forum on Disability, *(c)* the Confederation of British Industry, *(d)* the Institute of Directors and *(e)* the Federation of Small Businesses prior to the publication of recommendations concerning the departmental review of the access to work scheme. [41792]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about plans to consult certain organisations about the review of Access to Work.

The review is a Departmental study of the operation of Access to Work after its first year. We have no plans to request formal contributions from external bodies prior to publication although some organisations and individuals have given their views.

I hope this is helpful.

Pupil Costs

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is the percentage change in real terms in expenditure per child in *(a)* primary an *(b)* secondary education between 1979 and the current year. [41875]

Mr. Robin Squire: I will write my right hon. Friend as soon as possible and place a copy of the reply in the Library.

Employment Schemes

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) how many unemployed people have been referred to restart courses by Employment Service counsellors since April in each region and in Great Britain as a whole; how many of them were unemployed for over two years; how many attended and completed the course; what were the outcomes of the participants; how many had their income support reduced for not attending or failing to complete their attendance at the restart course; if she will break down this information by *(a)* ethnicity, *(b)* disability and *(c)* gender; and if she will make a statement; [41912]

(2) how many unemployed people have been referred to jobplan workshops by Employment Service counsellors since April in each region and in Great Britain as a whole; how many of them were unemployed for over one year; how many attended and completed the workshop; what were the outcomes of the participants; how many had their income support reduced for not attending or failing to complete their attendance at the jobplan workshop; if she will break down this information by *(a)* ethnicity, *(b)* disability and *(c)* gender; and if she will make a statement; [41913]

(3) how many unemployed people have been referred to workwise and worklink by Employment Service counsellors since April in each region and in Great Britain as a whole; how many were referred direct from restart interviews and how many were referred from the 1-2-1 programme; how many attended and completed the courses; what were the outcomes of the participants; how many had their income support reduced for not attending or failing to complete their attendance at the workwise and worklink course; if she will break down this information by *(a)* ethnicity *(b)* disability and *(c)* gender; and if she will make a statement; [41914]

(4) how many people have joined *(a)* jobclubs, *(b)* jobsearch seminars and *(c)* job review workshops in each region and in Great Britain as a whole since April; how many have left each programme during this period; what were the outcomes of the participants; if she will break down this information by (i) ethnicity, (ii) disability and (iii) gender; and if she will make a statement. [41916]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the questions has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Mr. Terry Rooney, dated 7 November 1995:

As the Employment Service is an Executive Agency, the Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions to him about Workwise/Worklink and 1-2-1, Jobclubs, job search seminars, Job Review Workshops, Restart Courses and Jobplan Workshops. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of the Agency.

The attached tables show for each region and nationally programme performance information and participant characteristics from April 1995 to September 1995 as follows:

Table 1 — Workwise and Worklink
Table 2 — Jobclubs
Table 3 — Job search seminars
Table 4 — Job Review Workshops
Table 5 — Restart Courses
Table 6 — Jobplan Workshops

Information is not routinely collected in respect of outcomes by individual characteristics of leavers. However information on characteristics is collected when participants join a programme, except for job search seminars, and this data has been included in the tables.

For job search seminars information about the numbers joining the programme is provided, but details about those not completing the programme are not routinely collected. In addition details about client characteristics and numbers entering non-job outcomes is not routinely collected.

Job Review Workshops are targeted mainly at unemployed professional and executive people and help individuals identify transferable skills so that they are able to consider a wider range of occupations. Information about outcomes which participants may enter during or following the two day workshop is not routinely collected.

Information about the number of attenders who have had their Income Support reduced for failing to attend or complete a programme is not routinely collected. The Benefits Agency (BA) provide the Employment Service with the number of decisions made on referrals to them for benefit sanctions. These decisions include both the numbers having their income support reduced and the numbers referred to them who do not have any sanction imposed. I have therefore provided information about the number of BA decisions made in respect of Workwise, Restart Courses and Jobplan Workshops.

The number of people helped by attending the programmes mentioned have been 318,737 so far this year. Over 116,000 people have taken up positive outcomes as a result of their attendance, including over 64,000 unemployed people who have entered jobs.

I hope this is helpful.

Table 1: Workwise/worklink management information April–September 1995

	Northern	*Y&H*	*EM&E*	*L&SE*	*SW*	*Wales*	*WM*	*NW*	*Scotland*	*National*
Number referred to programme	2,161	1,011	2,166	7,263	2,158	528	1,848	1,675	2,850	21,660
Starters on programme	1,094	505	886	2,894	1,119	254	836	724	1,149	9,461
Completers on programme	833	347	605	2,135	853	175	600	508	771	6,827
Outcomes—Jobcentre Job	38	8	17	56	38	18	29	13	29	246
—Non Jobcentre Job	71	29	57	204	113	18	93	36	49	670
—ES TEC/LEC programmes	261	93	152	648	225	69	200	159	296	2,103
—Other	86	30	28	231	71	12	60	22	35	575
—Total Outcomes	456	160	254	1,139	447	117	382	230	409	3,594
Number of Benefits Agency decisions made for clients failing to start or complete	418	170	402	1,173	368	73	279	367	724	3,974

The above data can not be broken down by characteristics for each data item but information is collected by participants as follows:

	Northern	*Y&H*	*EM&E*	*L&SE*	*SW*	*Wales*	*WM*	*NW*	*Scotland*	*National*
Starters Ethnic Group 1 (White)	1,055	431	776	2,039	1,050	244	651	668	1,121	8,035
—Ethnic Group 2 (Black/African)	3	9	37	474	22	4	42	17	2	610
—Ethnic Group 3 (Asian)	17	59	53	200	9	5	125	26	13	506
—Ethnic Group 4 (None of above)	4	3	6	83	6	0	9	4	2	117
—Ethnic Group 5 (Not any)	15	3	14	98	32	1	9	10	11	193
Starters Male	908	395	714	2,138	874	211	633	550	906	7,329
—Female	186	110	172	756	245	43	203	174	243	2,132
Starters Health Problem	94	47	94	249	115	14	65	54	62	794

Table 2: Jobclub Management Information April–September 1995

	Northern	*Y&H*	*EM&E*	*L&SE*	*SW*	*WALES*	*WM*	*NW*	*Scotland*	*National*
Number Entrants	7,170	10,625	10,593	39,749	10,040	5,753	12,252	14,238	12,105	122,525
Number Leavers	7,845	10,504	12,410	46,542	10,576	6,255	12,160	15,530	11,900	133,722
Outcomes										
Jobcentre Job	890	874	852	2,614	898	844	866	874	1,959	10,671
Non Jobcentre Job	2,264	3,544	3,511	14,393	3,843	2,157	3,993	4,761	3,858	42,324
Other Positive Outcomes	632	1,045	1,179	4,090	1,271	740	1,347	1,196	1,435	12,935
Total Outcomes	3,786	5,463	5,542	21,097	6,012	3,741	6,206	6,831	7,252	65,930

	Northern	*Y&H*	*EM&E*	*L&SE*	*SW*	*Wales*	*WM*	*NW*	*Scotland*	*National*
Leavers—Ethnic Group 1 (White)	7,695	9,607	11,506	34,158	10,225	6,066	9,954	14,065	11,696	11,5512
—Ethnic Group 2 (Black African)	27	195	220	5,718	128	48	565	259	19	7,179
—Ethnic Group 3 (Asian)	47	559	493	3,764	75	61	1,452	434	80	6,965
—Ethnic Group 4 (None of above)	36	63	62	1,500	47	26	75	104	37	1,950
—Ethnic Group 5 (Not say)	40	80	129	1,402	101	54	114	128	68	2,116
Leavers—Male	6,552	8,355	9,937	34,894	8,259	4,967	9,287	12,443	9,604	104,298
—Female	1,293	2,149	2,473	11,648	2,317	1,288	2,873	3,087	2,296	29,424
Leavers—Health Problem	609	908	1,731	4,285	1,384	793	986	994	1,141	12,831

Table 3: Job Search Seminar Management Information April—September 1995

	Northern	*Y&H*	*EM&E*	*L&SE*	*SW*	*Wales*	*WM*	*NW*	*Scotland*	*National*
Total Attenders	2,332	3,909	2,255	10,051	2,685	823	2,653	2,612	2,462	29,782
Outcomes—Jobcentre Job	49	88	29	140	42	25	34	44	94	545
—Non Jobcentre Job	193	546	216	1,428	385	111	236	263	223	3601
—Total Placings	242	634	245	1,568	427	136	270	307	317	4146

The above data can not be broken down by characteristics.

Table 4: Job review workshops management information April–September 1996

	Northern	*Y&H*	*EM&E*	*L&SE*	*SW*	*Wales*	*WM*	*NW*	*Scotland*	*National*
Total Starters	751	1,718	1,219	5,422	1,899	499	1,268	1,305	1,437	15,508
Total Completers	694	1,589	1,144	5,032	1,763	471	1,133	1,206	1,322	14,354
Starters—Ethnic Group 1 (White)	725	1,626	1,137	4,511	1,848	486	1,124	1,235	1,388	14,080
—Ethnic Group 2 (Black/African)	9	13	14	331	13	1	36	10	0	427
—Ethnic Group 3 (Asian)	8	51	37	307	10	8	77	34	12	544
—Ethnic Group 4 (none of above)	4	10	8	103	8	2	7	7	4	153
—Ethnic Group 5 (Not say)	5	18	23	170	20	2	14	19	33	304
Starters—Male	573	1,289	944	4,068	1,482	388	934	1,019	1,067	11,764
—Female	178	429	275	1,354	417	111	324	286	370	3,744
Starters-Health Problem	91	229	192	583	272	47	141	168	116	1,839

The above date can not be broken down by characteristics for each data Item but information is collected by participants as above:

Table 5: Restart courses management information April—September 1995

	Northern	*Y&H*	*EM&E*	*L&SE*	*SW*	*Wales*	*WM*	*NW*	*Scotland*	*National*
Number referred to programme	5,217	9,459	10,087	36,147	6,054	4,420	8,746	11,644	9,628	101,402
Starters on programme	3,297	5,482	5,435	18,733	3,179	2,421	4,977	6,269	5,011	55,344
Completers on programme	2,938	4,441	4,651	16,021	3,220	2,072	4,238	5,217	4,239	47,037
Outcomes—Jobcentre Job	19	44	44	150	42	44	65	40	95	543
—Non Jobcentre Job	51	163	150	587	169	72	143	158	139	1,632
—ES TEC/LEC programmes	458	691	778	3,991	622	400	1,239	1,203	1,359	10,741
—Other	114	285	195	941	169	60	226	163	67	2,220
—Total outcomes	642	1,183	1,167	5,669	1,002	576	1,673	1,564	1,660	15,136
Number of Benefits Agency decisions made for clients failing to start or complete	657	1,167	1,248	3,614	741	636	776	2,062	1,839	12,740

The above data can not be broken down by characteristics for each data item but information is collected by participants as follow:

	Northern	Y&H	EM&E	L&SE	SW	Wales	WM	NW	Scotland	National
Starters—Ethnic group 1 (white)	3,199	4,841	4,805	14,268	3,464	2,306	4,004	5,704	4,825	47,416
Ethnic group 2 (black/african)	14	127	206	1,950	45	20	280	142	6	2,790
Ethnic group 3 (asian)	30	350	207	1,290	23	19	567	236	29	2,751
Ethnic group 4 (none of the above)	14	49	44	411	34	12	36	50	29	679
Ethnic group 5 (not say)	40	115	173	814	153	64	90	137	122	1,708
Starters—male	2,884	4,769	4,679	15,815	3,147	2,129	4,272	5,426	4,346	47,467
—Female	413	713	756	2,918	572	292	705	843	665	7,877
Starters—health problem	396	884	884	2,433	680	333	762	721	586	7,679
Starters—U/E for 24 months+	2,870	4,178	4,565	14,452	3,119	1,758	4,077	5,153	4,315	44,487

Table 6: Jobplan management information April–September 1995

	Northern	Y&H	EM&E	L&SE	SW	Wales	WM	NW	Scotland	National
Number referred to programme	9,161	14,877	14,833	59,290	14,790	7,551	15,717	21,629	19,438	177,286
Starters on programme	5,445	7,371	7,208	27,437	7,994	3,683	7,909	9,876	9,194	86,117
Completers on programme	5,149	6,803	6,648	25,528	7,416	3,395	7,314	9,124	8,442	79,819
Outcomes—jobcentre job	47	48	86	242	102	40	123	90	222	1,000
—Non jobcentre job	145	341	226	805	269	124	315	290	263	2,778
—ES TEC/LEC programmes	1,142	1,463	1,177	6,668	1,581	864	2,247	1,805	2,837	19,784
—Other	312	514	285	1,184	253	105	514	294	197	3,658
—Total outcomes	1,646	2,366	1,774	8,899	2,205	1,133	3,199	2,479	3,519	27,220
Number of Benefits Agency decisions made for clients failing to start or complete	1,192	1,848	1,979	5,939	1,993	983	1,494	3,591	3,562	22,581

The above data can not be broken down by characteristics for each data item but information is collected by participants as follows:

	Northern	Y&H	EM&E	L&SE	SW	Wales	WM	NW	Scotland	National
Starters—Ethnic group 1 (white)	5,230	6,578	6,424	20,522	7,411	3,454	6,485	8,982	8,813	73,899
—Ethnic group 2 (black/african)	25	150	188	2,991	166	40	412	224	27	4,223
—Ethnic group 3 (asian)	70	415	336	2,202	76	40	786	366	114	4,405
—Ethnic group 4 (none of the above)	33	54	58	602	55	37	65	76	37	1,017
—Ethnic group 5 (not say)	87	174	202	1,120	286	112	161	228	203	2,573
Starters—male	4,718	6,236	5,969	22,071	6,492	3,088	6,509	8,293	7,798	71,174
—Female	727	1,135	1,239	5,366	1,502	595	1,400	1,583	1,396	14,943
Starters—health problem	708	1,156	1,261	3,506	1,340	512	1,308	1,101	1,047	11,939
Starters—U/E for 24 months+	5,392	7,146	7,130	25,976	7,353	3,167	7,655	9,731	9,009	82,559

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) if she will set out, according to the results from the youth training leavers survey, the number and level of NVQs or credits towards NVQs or other qualifications gained by people leaving YT in the period April 1994 to December 1994, for each region and for England and Wales as a whole, for all leavers and by ethnic group, disability and gender showing male, female and all; and if she will make a statement; [41922]

(2) if she will set out, according to the results from the training for work leavers survey, the number and level of NVQs or credits towards NVQs or other qualifications gained by people leaving training for work in the period April 1994 to December 1994, for each region and for England and Wales as a whole, for all leavers and by ethnic group, disability and gender showing male, female and all; and if she will make a statement; [41924]

(3) what are the results of the youth training leavers survey for the period April 1994 to December 1994, for each TEC area in England and Wales and for each region and for England and Wales as a whole, broken down to show the number and proportion of leavers who were *(a)* in full-time work with the same employer, *(b)* in full-time work with a different employer, *(c)* in part-time work, *(d)* on a full-time course at a college or training centre, *(e)* on another YT scheme, *(f)* doing something else, *(g)* unemployed and *(h)* had obtained a vocational qualification; what was (i) the number of questionnaires issued, (ii) the usable percentage response rate and (iii) the percentage of respondents who were early leavers and the reasons stated for leaving training early; and if she will make a statement. [41996]

Mr. Paice: As the information requested is contained in a large number of tables, I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library.

Travel-to-Interview Scheme

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will place in the Library a copy of the report of the evaluation of the travel-to-interview scheme pilot in the north-west region; and if she will make a statement. [41917]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service Agency under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Mr. Terry Rooney, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the evaluation report of the Travel to Interview Scheme.

The findings of the evaluation are still under discussion. I anticipate the report will be available in the next few weeks and a copy will be placed in the Library.

I hope this is helpful.

Consultancy Costs

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the full cost to her Department of the evaluation carried out by Coopers and Lybrand of the training for work starts and outcomes funding pilots; and if she will make a statement. [41919]

Mr. Forth: The report provides a thorough analysis of the funding pilots. The findings were considered carefully when the funding arrangements for training for work in 1995–96 were decided. The covering note which accompanies the consultants' report explains the background to those decisions.

Long-Term Unemployment

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what new measures she will bring forth to counter long-term unemployment. [40138]

Mr. Forth: We have a very wide range of programmes which are bringing long-term unemployment down. Their success is demonstrated by the fact that it has been falling now for six quarters in a row.

Schools Budget

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will show for each local education authority for the year 1995–96 the element of the potential schools budget which is not delegated to schools through the aggregated schools budget, expressed *(a)* as a percentage of the potential schools budget and *(b)* as a sum of money per pupil in schools covered by the LMS scheme. [25037]

Mr. Robin Squire *[pursuant to his reply, 18 October 1995, c. 299-300]:* The following revised and updated table, setting out the percentage of the potential schools budget not delegated by each LEA for 1995–96, should be substituted for the table contained in the answer given to the hon. member on 24 May 1995, *Official Report,* columns *614-15.*

Local Education Authority	*Percentage not delegated*
Avon	11.9
Barking and Dagenham	10.9
Barnet	9.8
Barnsley	10.9
Bedfordshire	8.8
Berkshire	6.9
Bexley	8.8
Birmingham	9.7
Bolton	11.1
Bradford	12.0
Brent	6.5
Bromley	12.2
Buckinghamshire	11.6
Bury	8.2
Calderdale	10.9
Cambridgeshire	10.7
Camden	12.6
Cheshire	9.1
City	11.1
Cleveland	10.6
Cornwall	11.0
Coventry	8.7
Croydon	10.0
Cumbria	8.2
Derbyshire	10.7
Devon	8.1
Doncaster	10.3
Dorset	10.3
Dudley	4.2
Durham	11.5
Ealing	10.1
East Sussex	11.1
Enfield	10.6
Essex	11.0
Gateshead	13.4
Gloucestershire	8.9
Greenwich	7.4
Hackney	13.1
Hammersmith and Fulham	9.2
Hampshire	11.4
Haringey	12.8
Harrow	9.9
Havering	8.3
Hereford & Worcester	9.2
Hertfordshire	5.9
Hillingdon	10.1
Hounslow	11.2
Humberside	11.3
Isle of Wight	9.8
Isles of Scilly	14.9
Islington	6.1
Kensington and Chelsea	10.0
Kent	12.5
Kingston	10.8
Kirklees	12.9
Knowsley	6.1
Lambeth	13.6
Lancashire	12.3
Leeds	6.6
Leicestershire	11.6
Lewisham	12.4
Lincolnshire	10.5
Liverpool	7.5
Manchester	8.0
Merton	10.8
Newcastle upon Tyne	11.8
Newham	13.5
Norfolk	8.6
North Tyneside	8.2
North Yorkshire	10.2
Northamptonshire	7.1
Northumberland	9.2
Nottinghamshire	11.2
Oldham	9.4
Oxfordshire	8.4
Redbridge	9.4
Richmond	9.6
Rochdale	7.1
Rotherham	10.6
Salford	9.3
Sandwell	11.9

Local Education Authority	*Percentage not delegated*
Sefton	11.3
Sheffield	12.2
Shropshire	11.8
Solihull	6.0
Somerset	8.9
South Tyneside	10.8
Southwark	12.0
St. Helens	10.5
Staffordshire	7.2
Stockport	9.1
Suffolk	9.4
Sunderland	7.7
Surrey	10.2
Sutton	9.8
Tameside	10.7
Tower Hamlets	9.1
Trafford	11.4
Wakefield	12.1
Walsall	9.7
Waltham Forest	6.1
Wandsworth	14.6
Warwickshire	11.6
West Sussex	11.1
Westminster	9.8
Wigan	7.3
Wiltshire	10.4
Wirral	9.7
Wolverhampton	8.1

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 8 November 1995

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Government Centre for Information Systems

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will outline his proposals for the future of the CCTA, the Government Centre for Information Systems. [42350]

Mr. Freeman: The CCTA offers an advisory service to Departments on the procurement of information technology and information systems, on which Government spend over £2 billion a year. But it does not have a sufficiently central place to influence and co-ordinate the strategy of Government in relation to information systems so as to ensure that the latest technology is harnessed to improve co-ordination across Government and the effective delivery of services to the public.

I therefore propose to establish a small central unit in the Office of Public Service designed to secure a strategic approach to IT across Government. It will be known as the central IT unit, and will work in close co-operation with the DTI, which is the sponsoring Department for the industry. It is expected to comprise no more than eight to 10 people drawn from the private and public sector. The unit will report through me to the Deputy Prime Minister.

At the same time, the existing CCTA will concentrate on providing intelligent customer support on IT issues to Departments and agencies which so wish to be advised and on a full repayment basis. We shall be consulting customers and staff about the appropriate status and role for CCTA and considering whether there is scope for more private sector involvement in its ownership and management. I intend to make a more detailed announcement in due course.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, pursuant to his answer of 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *7-10*, on next steps agencies what estimates he has made of the proportion of civil servants working in next steps agencies in *(a)* April 1996 and *(b)* April 1997.

The Deputy Prime Minister: The next steps programme is on course towards the Government's expectation that it will cover about three quarters of the civil service as a whole. Projecting proportionate coverage is uncertain because decisions on whether to establish candidate functions as agencies and the exact timing of the launch have yet to be made and will depend on a variety of considerations—and because the overall numbers of civil servants continue to fall.

However, taking our current indications of potential launches in April 1996 and adding their current staffing into the proportions I gave for 1 April 1995 in my report of 30 October would produce the following figures:

1995 including possible April 1996 launches

	Per cent.
Indicative projection of Home civil servants working on Next Steps lines on 1 April	70
Indicative projection of civil servants in Northern Ireland working on Next Steps lines on 1 April	72

Thereafter and on the same basis, I estimate that these proportions would rise to 75 per cent. and 78 per cent. respectively on the assumption that all functions currently under consideration were launched as agencies, mostly by April 1997.

Civil Service

Ms Jowell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will update table 8 of the Cabinet Office publication "10 Years Progress Report" on promotion rates in the administration group to include 1994–95 and extend the table to take in the higher executive grades of the service to grade 2 for the years 1991–92, 1992–93, 1993–94 and 1994–95 for men and women. [41749]

Mr. Horam: An up-dated table will appear in the data summary on equal opportunities in the civil service in 1994–5. This will be produced early in the new year, and copies will be laid in both Libraries of the House. There are no plans, however, to extend the table to the highest grades, as the numbers involved are too small to show meaningful trends.

Ms Jowell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will update table 1 of the Cabinet Office publication "10 Years Progress Report" on women's grade levels in the non-industrial home civil service at 1 April to include 1994–95. [41750]

Mr. Horam: An updated table will appear in the data summary on equal opportunities in the civil service in 1994–95. This will be produced early in the new year, and copies will be laid in both Libraries of the House. I also refer the hon. Member to figure 18 and table 4a in "Civil Service Statistics 1995"—placed in the House of Commons Library on 31 October 1995—about the proportion of women at key grade levels and occupational groups.

Outside Consultants

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the projects undertaken since 1992 by the Office of Public Service where outside consultants have been employed; and if he will list the contract fee and consultant in each case. [39831]

Mr. Freeman: The details of individual consultancy contracts let by the Office of Public Service and its agencies where outside consultants may have been used in some part of the contract are not held centrally in the form requested. The full information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, the costs of external consultancy contracts let by the Office of Public Service and its agencies in the last two completed financial years are as follows:

Year	*£*
1993–94	5,697,880
1994–95	5,832,044

The greater part of these totals was consultancy to CCTA, the Government Centre for Information Systems, mainly for the benefit of other Departments.

Charter Mark

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list those organisations which have unsuccessfully applied for a charter mark. [42169]

Mr. Horam: Applications for a charter mark are confidential. We publicise only the names of the winners and those who are highly commended. These we will announce at the charter mark awards ceremony on 4 December.

We do not disclose the names of unsuccessful applicants. It is for those organisations to decide for themselves whether to publicise the fact that they have applied.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many persons in the Deputy Prime Minister's office and in the Office of Public Service are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list their names; and how much each is paid. [42055]

The Deputy Prime Minister: There are no staff within my private office and the Office of Public Service employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry on a full-time or part-time basis, although some will inevitably be involved from time to time. There are also no external consultants or advisers employed on such matters by my private office or the Office of Public Service. It is not the practice to name staff or external advisers.

Parliamentary Candidates

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what rules govern parliamentary candidatures for senior Crown servants. [40900]

Mr. Freeman: Section 1 of the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 disqualifies for membership of the House of Commons any person employed in the civil service of the Crown, or any member of the regular armed forces of the Crown. Civil servants, except those in industrial and non-office grades, must resign from the civil service on their formal adoption as a parliamentary candidate. Industrial and non-office grade civil servants must resign before they give their consent to nomination in accordance with the parliamentary election rules.

Deregulation Task Force

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff have been employed on the deregulation task force; and what is the total estimated cost of its operations since it was established. [42031]

Mr. Freeman: The deregulation task force is assisted by three staff in the deregulation unit of the Cabinet Office, who provide administrative support. Its members are not paid, but they receive travel and subsistence expenses.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many committees and sub-committees of the deregulation task force have been established since its inception; and how many reports have been produced by them. [42030]

Mr. Freeman: There have been 10 ad hoc working groups since the inception of the deregulation task force, of which some have included non-task force members. The task force has produced two reports: "The Charities and Voluntary Organisations Report", which was published in July; and the task force's first annual report, which was published in September. Copies of both reports have been placed in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many of the 870 regulations identified by the deregulation task force were introduced since 1979. [42029]

Mr. Freeman: The 870 recommendations were made by Lord Sainsbury's eight deregulation task forces and published in 1994. The recommendations did not just identify regulations but covered other areas, such as enforcement. It would involve disproportionate cost to identify how many of the regulations on which the task force made recommendations were introduced since 1979. The text of the recommendations and the commentary on the progress made in implementing them has been placed in the Library of the House.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his office; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42310]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42311]

Mr. Freeman: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

Information and Planning Systems

Mr. Allen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what consideration the Prime Minister's advisor on efficiency has given to the management of information and planning systems report of May 1995; [42335]

(2) if he will list all Government Departments and agencies, specifying the precise steps being taken to ensure that their information and planning systems are up to the level of the best. [42334]

Mr. Horam: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40740]

Mr. Hanley: Transport for FCO Ministers is provided by the Government car service. Payments over the last five years were as follows:

Year	£
1990–91	220,688
1991–92	238,343
1992–93	330,096
1993–94	342,732
1994–95	342,732

The figures above represent the cost of the agreed options and do not include VAT. The Government car service says that it has not been possible to calculate the outside option charges or the despatch charges in the time given.

Ministers who use their own vehicles on official business may claim a private car allowance, now 37p per mile.

Details of claims are as follows:

Year	£
1990–91	No information available
1991–92	No claims received
1992–93	364
1993–94	2,762
1994–95	No claims received

Official Cars

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will specify the make and model of the official car used by each British High commissioner and ambassador serving overseas as of 21 October. [41771]

Mr. Hanley: A detailed list follows.

List of all embassies and High Commissions together with their flag cars

	Model
Abidjan	Jaguar SOV
Abu Dhabi	Jaguar XJ6
Accra	LR Discovery
Addis Ababa	Rover 825 SLD
Algiers	Range Rover
Almaty	Volvo 850
Amman	LR Discovery
Ankara	Rover 825
Antananarivo	LR Discovery
Asuncion	JAG Daimler
Athens	Jaguar XJ6
Bahrain	Jaguar XJ6
Baku	LR Discovery
Bandar Seri Begawan	Rover 827
Bankok	Daimler Limo
Banjul	Range Rover
Beirut	Jaguar SOV
Belgrade	Jaguar XJ6
Belmopan	LR Discovery
Berne	Rover 827
Bogota	Range Rover
Bonn	Rolls-Royce Silver Spur
Brasilia	Rolls-Royce Silver Spur
Bratislava	LR Discovery
Bridgetown	Rover 825
Brussels	Jaguar SOV
Bucharest	Volvo 960
Budapest	Rover 827
Buenos Aires	Rover 825 SD
Cairo	Rover 825
Canberra	Rolls-Royce Silver Spur
Caracas	Ford Grand Marquis
Castries	LR Discovery
Colombo	Range Rover
Copenhagen	Jaguar XJ6
Dakar	Rover 825
Damascus	Jaguar XJ6
Dar Es Salaam	LR Discovery
Dhaka	Daimler Limo
Doha	Rover 827
Dubai	Rover 827
Dublin	Rover 827
Freetown	LR Discovery
Gaborone	LR Discovery
Georgetown	Range Rover
Guatemala City	Range Rover
Hanoi	Rover 825
Harare	Jaguar XJ6
Havana	Jaguar SOV
Helsinki	Jaguar XJ6
Ho Chi Minh City	LR Discovery
Holy See	Rover 827
Honiara	LR Discovery
Islamabad	Daimler Limo
Jakarta	Range Rover
Kampala	LR Discovery
Kathmandu	Range Rover
Khartoum	LR Discovery
Kiev	Rover 825 SLD
Kingston	Rover 827
Kingstown	LR Discovery
Kinshasa	Range Rover
Kuala Lumpur	Jaguar Sov
Kuwait	Jaguar Sov
Lagos	Range Rover
La Paz	LR Discovery
Lilongwe	Rover 825
Lima	Range Rover
Lisbon	Rover 827
Ljubljana	Rover 820
Luanda	Range Rover
Lusaka	LR Discovery
Luxembourg	Rover 827
Managua	Range Rover
Manila	Range Rover
Maputo	Jaguar Sov
Maseru	LR Discovery
Mbabane	LR Discovery

List of all embassies and High Commissions together with their flag cars

	Model
Mexico City	Cadillac de Ville
Minsk	LR Discovery
Montevideo	Rover 820
Moscow	Range Rover
Muscat	Jaguar XJ6
Nairobi	Rover 825
Nassau	Rover 827
New Delhi	Rolls-Royce Silver Spur
Nicosia	Jaguar V12
Nuku'Alofa	Range Rover
Oslo	Jaguar XJ6
Ottawa	Jaguar XJ6
Panama	Rover 827
Paris	Rolls-Royce Silver Spur
Peking	Rolls Royce Silver Spur
Phnom Penh	Range Rover
Port Louis	Rover 825
Port Moresby	LR Discovery
Port of Spain	Range Rover
Prague	Rover 827
Quito	Jaguar V12
Rabat	LR Discovery
Rangoon	Rover 825
Reykjavik	LR Discovery
Riga	LR Discovery
Riyadh	Rolls-Royce Silver Spur
Rome	Rover 827
San Jose	Jaguar V12
San Salvador	Range Rover
Sanaa	Range Rover
Santiago	Rover 827
Sarajevo	LR Defender 110
Seoul	Jaguar XJ6
Singapore	Daimler Limo
Skopje	LR Discovery
Sofia	Jaguar V12
St. George's	LR Discovery
St. John's	LR Discovery
Stockholm	Daimler Limo
Suva	LR Discovery
Tallin	LR Discovery
Tashkent	LR Discovery
Tegucigalpa	Range Rover
Tehran	Rover 820
Tel Aviv	Rover 827
The Hague	Rover 827
Tirana	LR Discovery
Tokyo	Rolls-Royce Silver Spur
Tripoli	Range Rover
Tunis	Jaguar Sov
Ulaanbaatar	LR Discovery
Valletta	Rover 827
Victoria	Peugeot 605
Vienna	Rover 827
Vila	Range Rover
Vilnius	Volvo 850 GLE
Warsaw	Rover 827
Washington	Rolls-Royce Silver Spur
Wellington	Jaguar Sov
Windhoek	LR Discovery
Yaounde	Rover 820 SLI
Zagreb	Rover 827

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42315]

Mr. Hanley: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman shortly.

Fraud

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total number of cases of all forms of fraud committed by employees of his *(a)* Department, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies for each year from 1991–92 to 1994–95; and for each of these years, what was the total monetary sum (1) misappropriated in such frauds and (2) subsequently recovered. [39128]

Mr. Hanley *[holding answer 24 October 1995]:* The answer is as follows:

1991–1992:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO): One fraud valued at £19,206. No recoveries.

Overseas Development Administration (ODA): Two frauds valued at £2,400. No recoveries.

Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC): One fraud valued at £17,100. No recoveries.

British Council: Eight frauds valued at £26,881. £2,957 recovered.

1992–93

FCO: Nil

ODA: Nil

British Council: Eight frauds valued at £585,377. £30,100 recovered.

CDC: One fraud valued at £58,000. No recoveries.

1993–94

FCO: Four frauds valued at £13,479. £4,000 recovered.

ODA: Nil

British Council: Nine frauds valued at £168,718. £99,994 recovered.

1994–95

FCO: Five frauds valued at £79,283. £6,338 recovered to date.

ODA: One fraud valued at £5,000. No recoveries.

National Resources Institute (NRI): One fraud valued at £4,200. No recoveries.

British Council: Seven frauds valued at £68,246. £2,052 recovered.

Vigorous action for recovery and restitution continues.

European Parliament (Subsidised Visits)

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much the European Parliament spent on subsidising the visit of parties of visitors organised by Members of the European Parliament to it for each financial year since 1983–84; how many visits were subsidised; how many visitors were covered by these payments; and what representations the British Government has made to the European Union about these arrangements. [39407]

Mr. David Davis *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* The European Parliament annual budget for inward visits was 7.82 million ecu from 1992 to 1994, and 7.88 million ecu in 1995. The EP advises that it subsidised 3,218 and 3,463 group visits to EP sites in 1992 and 1993 respectively, and 1,223 visits to the EP in Brussels in 1994—figures for 1994 are not available for visits to

EP sites in Luxembourg and Strasbourg. Corresponding figures for 1983 to 1991, and for the total number of visitors subsidised, are not available. The EP sets its own administrative budget, within the limits agreed by the Council. The European Court of Auditors examines the expenditure of the EP and publishes its findings in its annual report.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Work-related Death and Illness

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what published statistics underlie the Northern Ireland Information Service press statement of 29 September on work-related deaths and illness. [40888]

Mr. Moss: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal; [41551]

(2) if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement. [41525]

(3) what is the estimated saving to the Exchequer by the repeal of each rule and regulation which has been the subject of a reference to the Deregulation Committee from his Department; and on how many cases a compliance cost assessment has been carried out. [41526]

Mr. Ancram: I shall write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Export Marketing Research Scheme

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many businesses in Northern Ireland will now be eligible for help from the export marketing research scheme. [41910]

Sir John Wheeler: Over 4,300 manufacturing businesses in Northern Ireland are eligible for assistance under the export marketing research scheme. Information on the number of tradeable services companies which would be eligible for the scheme is not available.

Making It Back Home Scheme

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications are currently under consideration for the making it back home scheme. [41897]

Sir John Wheeler: To date, the Local Enterprise Development Unit has received approximately 1,000 expressions of interest and is currently processing 40 live applications.

It is estimated that approximately 10 per cent, of the expressions of interest and approximately 66 per cent. of applications currently being processed will become firm projects.

New Jobs

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new jobs, created in each of the past 10 years with the assistance of LEDU, were located in *(a)* the borough of Ards, *(b)* the borough the Castlereagh and *(c)* district of Down. [41907]

Mr. Ancram: My noble Friend will write to the right hon.Gentleman as possible.

Newcastle Orange Hall (Attack)

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the reason for the delay in the issue of the Chief Constable's certificate, relating to the attack on Newcastle Orange hall. [42086]

Sir John Wheeler: The Chief Constable's certificate in respect of the attack on Newcastle Orange hall was issued as soon as the Chief Constable was able to form the opinion that the act was committed maliciously by a person acting on behalf of, or in connection with, an unlawful association.

Terrorist Campaigns (Unsolved Deaths)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many deaths, arising from the terrorist campaigns by Republicans and Loyalists, remain unsolved; and if he will make a statement. [42139]

Sir John Wheeler: I will write to the right hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42321]

Sir John Wheeler: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42319]

Mr. John M. Taylor: Unfortunately, in the time available, it is not possible to answer this question. I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Divorce

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list the timetable for divorce *(a)* proposed for the United

Kingdom and *(b)* currently applicable in other EU countries. [42159]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The White Paper proposal is that the minimum waiting period before a divorce decree can be applied for should be 12 months, provided arrangements for children, and financial and property matters have been decided.

The information requested about other European Union member states is currently being updated. I shall write to the hon. Member.

Kidderminster Court

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department when the Government expect a start date for work to start on the new Kidderminster court complex. [42330]

Mr. John M. Taylor: Unfortunately, in the time available, it is not possible to answer this question. I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Law Commission

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Department if he will list the current payments which are being made to each member of the Law Commission; if he will list for each member additional sums which they receive from the public purse for other services, including service as judges; and what additional sums are derived from private work. [42106]

Mr. John M. Taylor: The salaries paid to each of the members of the Law Commission are as set out in the answer to parliamentary question No. 42111. Other public services undertaken by members are set out in the table, together with the fees payable, were these to be claimed. Sums derived from private work, if any, are a matter for the individuals concerned.

Name	*Service undertaken*	*Fee per sitting day*
Mr. Justice Brooke	High Court judge	Salaried as High Court Judge—no additional remuneration as Chairman of the Law Commission
Charles Harpum	Rent Assessment Panel	£191
Diana Faber	Assistant Recorder (in training)	£135 (per specified training day)
Stephen Silber QC	Deputy High Court judge (Queen's Bench Division) Recorder	£2,250 per week or part week/or £450 per day £346
Andrew Burrows	None	

In all cases, travel and subsistence expenses are also payable.

DEFENCE

Ammunition Dumps, Solway Firth

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of the quantity of bombs or ammunition remaining in the Solway firth as a result of dumping following the end of the second world war; and if he will make a statement. [42161]

Mr. Soames: No munition dumping operations were conducted in the Solway firth.

Swan Hunter Shipyard

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if a figure has been agreed with the receivers of Swan Hunter shipyard in respect of claims made against his Department for additional costs arising from work on the auxiliary order replenishment vessel—AOR2; [42255]

(2) if a claim has been made by his Department against the receivers of Swan Hunter shipyard in respect of additional costs arising from the contract for three type 23 frigates; when potential liability first arose; and what additional costs arose directly from the company being in receivership. [42256]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I will write to the hon. Member.

Joint Rapid Deployment Force

Mr. Trotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where the headquarters of the joint rapid deployment force is to be located; what decisions have been taken on the level of commands; what will be the size of the headquarters; to what extent the staff will be dual-hatted; and if he will make a statement. [42259]

Mr. Soames: Headquarters and command arrangements for the JRDF have not been finalised. The JRDF implementation team will make recommendations on where the JRDF headquarters should be sited, the detailed command and control requirements of the force, the levels of command and the size of the headquarters.

Mr. Legg: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to contribute to a NATO-led implementation force in the event of an overall peace agreement in the former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Soames: Contingency planning for a NATO-led implementation force in the event of an overall peace agreement in the former Yugoslavia is continuing in parallel with the current peace talks in Dayton, Ohio. We would expect to make a substantial contribution.

As part of this contribution, we envisage a need to make use of a number of members of the Territorial Army and the Regular Army reserve. On present estimates, the number would not exceed 350 personnel, who would, as far as possible, be sought on a voluntary basis. My Department will shortly be setting in hand the necessary arrangements.

Radioactive Waste, Carlisle

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much radioactive material remains in the Carlisle area as a result of dumping following the British nuclear tests in the Pacific; and if he will make a statement. [42162]

Mr. Soames: No such material was ever sent to the Carlisle area.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42312]

Mr. Arbuthnot: I will write to the hon. Member.

PRIME MINISTER

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Prime Minister how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)*. [42309]

The Prime Minister: I will write to the hon. Member in due course.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Prime Minister how many persons in *(a)* the Prime Minister's Office or *(b)* the Cabinet Office are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list their names; and how much each is paid. [42068]

The Deputy Prime Minister *[holding answer 8 November 1995]:* I have been asked to reply.

The number of officials within the Cabinet Office wholly employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry is five and their direct annual salary cost is approximately £140,000. There are no officials employed on Scott inquiry-related matters within my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Office on a full-time or part-time basis, although some will inevitably be involved from time to time. There are also no external consultants or advisers employed on such matters by the Prime Minister's Office or the Cabinet Office. It is not the practice to name staff or external advisers.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Prime Minister how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by the Cabinet Office or the Prime Minister's Office relating to the Scott Inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42069]

The Deputy Prime Minister *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* I have been asked to reply.

Ministers, former Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Committee on Standards in Public Life

Mr. Peter Bottomley: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list where appropriate for each Nolan commissioner his or her most recent public salary. [41165]

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have been asked to reply.

Lord Nolan receives his judicial salary. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King) and the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) receive their parliamentary salaries. They receive no emoluments as members of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Of the remaining seven members of the committee, six were paid an honorarium of £1,000 per month from November 1994 to April 1995 and subsequently an attendance fee of £155 per day and one, who was then in receipt of a salary from public funds, was not. All seven are now entitled to the daily attendance fee.

Five of the seven have previously held full-time positions paid at public expense. Two members of the committee hold other current part-time appointments paid from public funds. Sir Martin Jacomb is chairman of the British Council, for which he receives an honorarium of £10,250 per year, and Diana Warwick is a lay member of the Employment Appeals Tribunal, for which she is paid an attendance fee of £186 per day.

Sir Gerald Warner

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Prime Minister what are the specific functions in the Cabinet Office of Sir Gerald Warner; and what are the terms on which he is remunerated. [42067]

The Deputy Prime Minister *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* I have been asked to reply.

Sir Gerald Warner is employed in the Cabinet Office at grade 2 level as the intelligence co-ordinator. As such, he advises the Secretary of the Cabinet on the co-ordination of the intelligence machinery and its resources and programmes. He chairs various formal and informal groups charged with intelligence management. He has particular responsibility for reviewing the United Kingdom's intelligence requirements and for advising on the allocation of the resources to enable the intelligence agencies to meet them. He is remunerated within the civil service grade 2 range.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41745]

The Deputy Prime Minister *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him today by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Public Appointments

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the public appointments for which his Department is responsible in the county of south Yorkshire, indicating in each case the duration of the appointment, the date when a new appointment is due, and the salary. [39427]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I was responsible for the appointment of a chairman and three members to the Yorkshire Regional Flood Defence Committee of the National Rivers Authority, a committee which covers a large proportion of south Yorkshire. These appointments are for three years and new ministerial appointments will be made on 1 July 1997. Other members are appointed by local authorities and the National Rivers Authority. Existing appointments will continue when the Environment Agency subsumes the National Rivers Authority next year. The chairman receives a salary of £9,715 per annum. Members receive expenses.

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to the answer of the Attorney-General of 30 October, *Official Report,* column 12, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and what was the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41218]

Mr. Boswell: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on Tuesday 7 November 1995, *Official Report,* column 697, by my hon. Friend, the Member for Boothferry (Mr. Davis).

Meetings

Dr. Strang: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) on how many occasions in the last year his senior civil servants, at or above the grade of assistant secretary in the Ministry, have met representatives of *(a)* the Consumers Association, *(b)* the National Consumer Council, *(c)* the Consumers in Europe Group, *(d)* the Vegetarian Society, *(e)* the Food Commission, *(f)* the National Food Alliance, *(g)* the National Federation of Women's Institutes, *(h)* the British Medical Association, *(i)* the National Federation for Coronary Heart Disease Prevention, *(j)* the British Heart Foundation, *(k)* the National Farmers Union, *(l)* the Food and Drink Federation, *(m)* the National Dairy Council, *(n)* the Retail Consortium, *(o)* the Confederation of British Industry, *(p)* the Institute of Grocery Distribution, *(q)* the Country Landowners Association, *(r)* the Advertising Association, *(s)* the Chemical Industry Association, *(t)* the British Agrochemical Association, *(u)* the Infant and Dietetic Foods Association, *(v)* the British Cake, Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionary Alliance and *(w)* the British Soft Drinks Association; [42136]

(2) on how many occasions in the last year ministerial colleagues in the Ministry have met with representatives of *(a)* the Consumers Association, *(b)* the National Consumer Council, *(c)* the Consumers in Europe Group, *(d)* the Vegetarian Society, *(e)* the Food Commission, *(f)* the National Food Alliance, *(g)* the National Federation of Women's Institutes, *(h)* the British Medical Association, *(i)* the National Federation for Coronary Heart Disease Prevention, *(j)* the British Heart Foundation, *(k)* the National Farmers Union, *(l)* the Food and Drink Federation, *(m)* the National Dairy Council, *(n)* the Retail Consortium, *(o)* the Confederation of British Industry, *(p)* the Institute of Grocery Distribution, *(q)* the Country Landowners Association, *(r)* the Advertising Association, *(s)* the Chemical Industry Association, *(t)* the British Agrochemical Association, *(u)* the Infant and Dietetic Foods Association, *(v)* the British Cake, Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionary Alliance and *(w)* the British Soft Drinks Association; [42122]

(3) on how many occasions in the last year he or his predecessor have met with representatives of *(a)* the Consumers Association, *(b)* the National Consumer Council, *(c)* Consumers in Europe Group, *(d)* the Vegetarian Society, *(e)* the Food Commission, *(f)* the National Food Alliance, *(g)* the National Federation of Women's Institutes, *(h)* the British Medical Association, *(i)* the National Federation for Coronary Heart Disease Prevention, *(j)* the British Heart Foundation, *(k)* the National Farmers Union, *(l)* the Food and Drink Federation, *(m)* the National Dairy Council, *(n)* the Retail Consortium, *(o)* the Confederation of British Industry, *(p)* the Institute of Grocery Distribution, *(q)* the Country Landowners' Association, *(r)* the Advertising Association, *(s)* the Chemical Industry Association, *(t)* the British Agrochemical Association, *(u)* the Infant and Dietetic Foods Association, *(v)* the British Cake, Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionary Alliance and *(w)* the British Soft Drinks Association; [42123]

(4) on how many occasions in the last 12 months *(a)* the Minister or his predecessor, *(b)* his junior ministerial colleagues in the Ministry and *(c)* senior civil servants, at or above the grade of assistant secretary in the Ministry, met representatives of interest parties in the dairy fats and margarine industries; and if he will list these and the companies they represented; [42126]

(5) how many times *(a)* the Minister of his predecessor, *(b)* his junior ministerial colleagues in the Ministry and *(c)* senior civil servants at or above the grade of Assistant Secretary in the Ministry, have met food and drink manufactures, retailers and other food industry trade associations in the last 12 months; and if he will list these meetings and the business they represented. [42127]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I and my ministerial colleagues, and senior officials in my department, meet regularly with most of the trade, industry and consumers organisations referred to, though contacts with health interests are primarily a matter for colleagues in the Department of Health. Details on all the meetings and the interests represented could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

National Nutritional Databank

Dr. Strang: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the Royal Society of Chemistry's marketing and distribution management of the national nutritional databank; and when this service and the data collected from it will be opened and made available for public consideration. [42129]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Government Food Advisory Committees

Dr. Strang: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what is the process by which appointments of consumer representatives to Government food committees are made; [42130]

(2) which commercial head-hunting firms have been used in the process of appointing consumer representatives to Government food advisory committees *(a)* currently and *(b)* in previous years; what has been the cost to the public purse; and if he will make a statement; [42131]

(3) on what grounds the steering group on chemical aspects of food surveillance is being closed down; and if he will make a statement. [42132]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Dr. Strang: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on how many occasions in the last three years individuals on MAFF and Department of Health advisory committees and working parties on food and health-related committees have declined to declare vested interests when asked to do so, whether on a voluntary basis or a compulsory basis. [42128]

Mr. Hogg: No member of a food-related advisory committee for which declaration of interest is required has declined to make such a declaration in the last three years. This policy is now being extended on a voluntary basis to all working parties on surveillance; a query in one of the working parties has now been resolved and all interests will be declared.

Food Surveillance Programme

Dr. Strang: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what plans he has for his Department to publish all the data generated by the food surveillance programme in the public domain; [42133]

(2) what programmes will be affected by charges in funding as a result of the priority-setting exercise for chemical food surveillance in 1996–97. [42134]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Cheese Production

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the changes proposed in regulations concerning cheese production; if these are required by European Union regulations; if they will be broadly applicable throughout the European Union; and what representations he has received regarding the regulations. [41461]

Mrs. Browning: As part of our deregulation plan, proposed changes to the Cheese Regulations 1970 were published earlier this year. These regulations are not based on EC legislation. Under single market rules, national compositional and labelling legislation cannot be applied to products imported from another member state in which they are lawfully produced and marketed.

We have taken careful note of the comments made during the consultation period and, as a result, have decided to amend the proposed changes to these regulations. We will not now be revolving the compositional standards for 12 named British cheeses. Nor will we be introducing a new requirement for cheese, and cream, to bear a separate declaration of their fat content. It is intended that the new regulations will come into force on 1 January 1996.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many units in each environmentally sensitive area were entered under tier 1 only for England and Wales. [41700]

Mr. Boswell: The following numbers of ESA agreements have been entered under the "basic" tier in each of the ESAs in England and Wales:

English ESAs	*Number of agreements with land in basic[1] tier*
Pennine Dales	668
South Downs	165
Somerset Levels and Moors	730
Broads	550
West Penwith	184
Breckland	105
Suffolk River Valleys	355
Clun	190
North Peak	69
Test Valley	31
North Kent Marshes	49
Avon Valley	31
South Wessex Downs	125
Exmoor	377
South West Peak	309
Lake District	806
Blackdown Hills	109
Cotswold Hills	292
Dartmoor	155
Essex Coast	57
Shropshire Hills	123
Upper Thames Tributaries	90
Welsh ESAs	
Cambrian Mountains (1995)	0
Cambrian Mountains (Original)	30
Cambrian Mountains (Extension)	77
Cambrian Mountains (Original revised)	54
Cambrian Mountains (Extended revised)	78
Clwydian Range	13
Preseli	90
Ynys Mon	219
Radnor	244
Lleyn Peninsula (Original)	272
Lleyn Peninsula (Revised)	76

[1] The "basic" tier requires agreement holders to maintain the existing landscape and conservation interests in the ESA.

Mrs. Michie: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the mean *(a)* tier 1 payment and *(b)* tier 2 payment for each of the English and Welsh environmentally sensitive areas. [41699]

Mr. Boswell: During the period 16 October 1994 to 15 October 1995, the mean payments made to ESA agreement holders in the "basic" and "enhancement" tiers in each of the ESAs in England and Wales were as follows:

	Basic tier mean payment £	*Enhancement tier mean payment £*
English ESAs		
Pennine Dales	3,647.61	1,135.25
South Downs	1,244.37	8,795.02
Somerset Levels and Moors	1,797.30	2,243.29
Broads	2,080.50	4,018.34
West Penwith	2,300.46	—
Breckland	5,649.40	5,897.50
Suffolk River Valleys	2,201.99	2,664.49
Clun	2,630.76	2,429.15
North Peak	8,556.51	27,475.43
Test Valley	2,144.55	4,946.40
North Kent Marshes	7,071.72	7,386.51
Avon Valley	1,937.79	595.99
South Wessex Downs	2,355.77	4,563.82
Exmoor	2,334.95	4,656.55
South West Peak	939.50	1,353.23
Lake District	3,508.24	1,055.17
Blackdown Hills	850.16	1,119.60
Cotswold Hills	1,988.55	4,468.34
Dartmoor	1,145.35	1,955.73
Essex Coast	2,297.12	3,099.14
Shropshire Hills	1,752.87	7,272.25
Upper Thames Tributaries	1,572.17	5,561.10
Welsh ESAs		
Cambrian Mountains (1995)	Nil	Nil
Cambrian Mountains (Original)	n/a	3,503.36
Cambrian Mountains (Extension)	n/a	6,997.76
Cambrian Mountains (Original revised)	n/a	10,895.70
Cambrian Mountains (Extension revised)	1,025.77	4,317.48
Clwydian Range	205.27	475.37
Preseli	65.49	1,990.57
Ynys Mon	519.31	1,673.24
Radnor	818.47	2,156.21
Lleyn Peninsula (original)	57.76	116.33
Lleyn Peninsula (revised)	433.39	1,385.15

Notes:

1. The "basic" tier requires agreement holders to maintain the existing landscape and conservation interests in the ESA.
2. "Enhancement" tiers seek to make radical improvements in the wildlife and landscape interests of each ESA.

Broiler Chickens

Mr. Morley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many broiler chickens died from heat stress on United Kingdom broiling farms in the period May to September; and if he will make a statement. [41807]

Mrs. Browning: Figures on the number of broiler chickens which have died from heat stress are not available.

The Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968 makes it an offence to cause unnecessary pain or distress to livestock. It is a provision of the code of recommendations for the welfare of domestic fowl made under the Act that accommodation should be so designed that its ventilation is adequate to protect birds from overheating under any weather conditions that can reasonably be foreseen. MAFF has funded an advisory booklet, video and a series of countryside meetings to help farmers prevent heat stress in poultry.

Deep-sea Fish

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the international efforts in which he is participating to form an intergovernmental regime to do research on and control fishing of, deep-sea fish, where habits are relatively unknown. [39289]

Mr. Baldry *[holding reply 2 November 1995]:* The UK participates in a range of intergovernmental bodies which promote research in, or control fishing for, deep sea fish. These bodies include the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization and the Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission. This summer the UK played an active role in the UN conference on straddling stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. At the end of November, the Ministry will participate in an international workshop considering the comprehensiveness and consistency of global arrangements for management of the oceans.

Alport Dale, Derbyshire

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what conclusions the regional advisory committee of the Forestry Commission, eastern region, came to at its meeting of 4 October concerning Food Enterprise's proposals for Alport dale in Derbyshire; if he will outline English Nature's official response as a statutory consultee to Forest Enterprise's proposals for Alport dale, Derbyshire; how many (i) letters and (ii) signatures on petitions he has received opposing the Forest Enterprise proposals for Alport dale, Derbyshire; and if Forest Enterprise has undertaken an environmental impact assessment of its proposals for Alport dale, Derbyshire. [42039]

Mr. Boswell *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* The regional advisory committee has not been asked to consider Forest Enterprise's plans for felling and replanting the maturing woodlands in Alport dale at this stage. Forest Enterprise is reviewing its proposals.

English Nature has expressed concern about the possible impact of the original proposals on landscape and conservation, especially in the area of land designated as a site of special scientific interest. Forest Enterprise will be discussing the terms of a management plan for the area within English Nature.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has received one letter about the proposals; I have received one and the Forestry Commission has received 10.

Forest Enterprise carefully considered the environmental impact of its proposals in preparing its design plan for the woodlands and will continue to do so in revising the plan.

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the ways in which *(a)* harvesting Forest Enterprise's plantations in Alport dale will affect the rural economy and *(b)* Forest Enterprise's proposals for Alport dale will affect the (i) recreational and (ii) conservation potential of the Peak national park. [42037]

Mr. Boswell *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* Harvesting the maturing woodlands at Alport Dale will contribute to the rural economy by generating employment in felling and replanting operations. Forest Enterprise aims to improve the potential of the area by phasing the felling of tress to increase the diversity of the woodlands and replanting in such a way to enhance the landscape.

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what will be the cost of burying the overhead electricity line that supplies Alport hamlet and at present interferes with cable crane extraction from one of the Forest Enterprise's plantations at Alport dale, Derbyshire; and who will bear the cost. [42036]

Mr. Boswell *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* Forest Enterprise has asked Yorkshire Electricity to consider the options for moving the overhead electricity line and for meeting the cost. Putting the line underground is one of the options.

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what provisions have been made by Forest Enterprise against the risk of landslips and erosion during and after the harvesting of its plantations in Alport dale, Derbyshire; what is the expected yield of timber from Forest Enterprise's plantations in Alport dale, Derbyshire; what would be the net return to Forest Enterprise on the entire timber crop in its plantations in Alport dale, Derbyshire, at 1995 prices; and what are the costs of Forest Enterprise of gaining access to all the timber in its plantation in Alport dale, Derbyshire. [42038]

Mr. Boswell *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* To minimise the risk of erosion, Forest Enterprise would use a cable crane to harvest timber from the steep slopes of the Dale. After harvesting, the roots of the trees felled are expect to stabilise the soil until the new trees are well established.

Forest Enterprise estimates that the woodlands will produce about 25,000 cu m of timber and that the net return on harvesting the crop could be £10,000 to £20,000 over the first five years, depending on conditions in the wood market.

Forest Enterprise expects to spend about £10,000 on access improvements.

Dairy Fats and Margarine Industries

Dr. Strang: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will itemise the financial support given to the dairy fats and margarine industries *(a)* from national Government spending and *(b)* from the European Union. [42125]

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I shall write to the hon. Member.

EC Live Transport Directive

Mr. Cann: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what organisations he plans to consult with regard to the draft EC live transport directive. [42089]

Mrs. Browning: The consultation package on the new EU rules, which we issued on 23 October includes a list of the organisations to which it was sent. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

Common Fisheries Policy

Mr. Gill: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if the percentage share-out allocated to each member state of the EU for each of the fish stocks concerned varies when a new member state is fully integrated into the common fisheries policy; [42272]

(2) if the 1983 percentage share out of the total allowable catch is permanent. [42271]

Mr. Baldry: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has received concerning the level of hill livestock compensatory allowances; what action he is taking as a result; and if he will make a statement. [42180]

Mr. Boswell: On 2 November, my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister met representatives from the National Farmers Union for England and Wales, the Scottish National Farmers Union and the Ulster Farmers Union to discuss hill livestock compensatory allowances in the context of the annual review of economic conditions in the hills and uplands. He was accompanied on that occasion by Ministers from both the Scottish Office and the Welsh Office, and by myself.

Sheep Annual Premium Scheme

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received concerning the change in sheep retention periods; and what action he is taking as a result; and if he will make a statement. [42178]

Mr. Boswell: The Department received numerous representations on the move to a single application and retention period for the sheep annual premium scheme, which had been recommended by EU auditors. Most were concerned that this would reduce marketing options, but the National Sheep Association felt that it might help breeders. We investigated the feasibility of tighter controls to enable the continuation of two retention periods but decided these would be too onerous for producers and too costly to administer.

Accordingly, my right hon. Friend announced on 18 October a single application and retention period which will protect the interests of the majority of sheep farmers.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has to increase sheep annual premiums to compensate for any losses resulting from the change in the sheep retention period. [42179]

Mr. Boswell: The sheep annual premium is fixed by the European Commission, taking into account the difference between the basic Community price for sheepmeat and the average price prevailing on the Community market throughout the year. The final rate of premium for the 1995 scheme will not be determined until

February 1996. A first estimate of the rate of premium for 1996 will be made by the Commission in the spring of 1996. It is not open to member states to fix the rate of premium themselves.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Minster of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42309]

Mr. Boswell: I shall write to the hon. Member.

NATIONAL HERITAGE

National Lottery

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will make it her policy to make available figures on *(a)* the sale of national lottery tickets by region and *(b)* the distribution of national lottery proceeds by region. [41238]

Mr. Sproat: My Department produces a monthly report of the distribution of lottery proceeds. Included in this report are details of the awards made each month and the total since the lottery began, for each region of the United Kingdom. Copies of this report are placed in the Libraries of the House. Figures on the sale of lottery tickets by region, are an operational matter for Camelot Group plc. I have therefore asked the Director General of the National Lottery, who is responsible for regulating the operation of the lottery, to write to the hon. Member, placing copies of his response in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will list the total lottery moneys to date collected from each of the English regions, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. [41233]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* This is an operational matter for Camelot Group plc. I have therefore asked the Director General of the National Lottery, who is responsible for regulating the operation of the Lottery, to write to the hon. Member, placing copies of his response in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how much money has been allocated under the national lottery to applicants in the New Forest district council and Test Valley district council areas. [41847]

Mr. Sproat: Figures for national lottery funds broken down by district council areas are not currently available.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what are the emoluments or salaries of members and senior officials of the lottery distributary bodies. [38747]

Mr. Sproat: I have set out as follows, in bands of £5,000, the salaries of all senior officials where these are £40,000 and above and all chairmen and board members.

Body		*£*
National Lottery Charities Board	Chairman and Members	Nil
	Chief Executive	80,000–84,999
	Director of Finance	60,000–64,999
	Director of UK and Corporate Planning	50,000–54,999
	Director of England	50,000–54,999
	Director of Scotland	45,000–49,999
	Director of Personnel and Administration	40,000–44,999
	Director of Communications	40,000–44,999
Millennium Commission	Chairman and Members	[1]Nil
	Director	80,000–84,999
	Director of Projects	65,000–69,999
	Director of Finance	60,000–64,999
	Director of Corporate Affairs	45,000–49,999
National Heritage Memorial Fund	Chairman and Members	Nil
	Director	[2]—
Arts Council of England	Chairman and Members	Nil
	Secretary General	60,000–64,999
	National Lottery Director	45,000–49,999
	Seven other Senior Officials—Total[3]	£305,000
Scottish Arts Council	Chairman and Members	Nil
	Director	40,000–44,999
Arts Council of Wales	Chairman and Members	Nil
	Chief Executive	50,000–54,999
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	Chairman	10,000–14,999
	Vice-Chairman	0–4,999
	Chief Executive	45,000–49,999

Body		£
Sports Council	Chairman and Vice Chairmen[3]	50,000–54,999
	Chief Executive	60,000–64,999
	Acting Director	60,000–64,999
Scottish Sports Council	Chairman	20,000–24,999
	Vice Chairman	0–4,999
	Chief Executive	50,000–54,999
Sports Council for Wales	Chairman	(15,000–19,999)
	Vice Chairman	(5,000–9,999)
	Chief Executive	50,000–54,999
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	Chairman	(10,000–14,999)
	Vice Chairman	(0–4,999)
	Chief Executive	40,000–44,999

Salaries in brackets are *not* met from National Lottery funds.

With the exception of the senior officials and members of the National Lottery Charities Board and the Millennium Commission and the Arts Council of England Lottery Director, the salaries set out above are not fully charged to lottery funds. Salaries are met from grant in aid and lottery funds in proportion with the duties carried out by the officers or members concerned. Charges in respect of these salaries will therefore vary from year to year and specific details will be included in the annual accounts for each body prepared at the end of each financial year.

[1] The Secretary of State for National Heritage (Chairman of the Millennium Commission) and the Deputy Prime Minister (a member of the Millennium Commission) receive salaries in respect of their duties as a Cabinet Ministers.

[2] The new Director of the National Heritage Memorial Fund is due to take up the post in December 1995. The vacancy was advertised with a salary of £70,000.

[3] Only a very small proportion of the salaries of these officials is charged to the Lottery.

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage (1) if, as at 31 August, Camelot plc had reached its 12-month national lottery revenue target as projected in its tender to the Office of the National Lottery; and by how many months it is ahead of its target as at 7 November; [42331]

(2) by what percentage Camelot plc's national lottery revenues had, for the period from commencement of the national lottery to the latest date for which information is available, exceeded those projected in its tender to Oflot. [42332]

Mr. Sproat: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before prorogation. I shall therefore write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

Millennium Commission

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will give the number of projects by each English county which are bidding for support from the Millennium Commission. [41274]

Ms Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many projects from Northern Ireland are currently under consideration by the Millennium Commission. [41909]

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage, further to her letter dated 3 November and placed in the Library, what is the earliest date for commencement of the second round of applications for financial support to the Millennium Commission. [42214]

Dr. John Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage (1) what regional criteria are used for deciding the distribution of Millennium Commission grants; [41227]

(2) what regional criteria will be used to decide on the allocation of Millennium Commission bursaries to individuals. [41225]

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This is a matter for the Millennium Commission. I shall reply to the right hon. and hon. Members in my capacity as chairman of the commission and place copies of my reply in the Libraries of the House.

National Heritage Memorial Fund

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will make a statement on the application of the negative leverage principle with respect to applications for assistance from the national lottery millennium fund. [38760]

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 23 October 1995]:* I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before prorogation. I shall therefore write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage, pursuant to the oral answer of the Attorney-General of 30 October, *Official Report*, column 12, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if she will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of her Department over the past two years; and if she will further indicate the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41209]

Mr. Sproat *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Boothferry (Mr. Davis) on 7 November, *Official Report*, columns *698-702*.

Brynmawr Rubber Factory

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage what action she has taken to date in conjunction with the Welsh Office, to preserve the Brynmawr rubber factory; and if she will make a statement. [40949]

Mr. Sproat: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Under-Secretary of State for Wales, my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, North (Mr. Jones), on 7 November, *Official Report*, column *798*.

English Heritage

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage if she will make a statement on the implementation of English Heritage's policy for the local management of the historic properties she has placed in its care. [42364]

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Since the launch of its forward strategy at the end of 1992, English Heritage has established agreements with partners who can bring local commitment and resources, in conjunction with English Heritage funding, towards improving the presentation and preservation of historic sites. Agreements have now been established in respect of nearly 80 of the 406 properties in English Heritage's care, with partners such as the National Trust, local authorities and local community groups. The agreements include clear safeguards for the care of the property. Given the success of its approach, I have agreed with English Heritage that it may enter into new management agreements, within agreed framework, but without in future seeking my specific approval. My Department will continue to monitor the implementation of this policy and I look forward to its successful extension to further appropriate sites.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by her Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42320]

Mr. Sproat: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before prorogation. I shall therefore write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many persons in his office are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part time or a full time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list the names and how much each is paid.

Mr. Newton: No one in my Department is wholly employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry, and it would not be possible to specify the number involved on an occasional basis. No payments have yet been made for external advice.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by his office relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons.

Mr. Newton: Ministers, officials and other advisers have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above.

Mr. Newton: I shall write to the hon. Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Members (Ethnic Minorities)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Lord President of the Council what percentage of hon. Members are of ethnic minority background.

Mr. Newton: There is no monitoring of the ethnic background of hon. Members.

Written Answers

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Lord President of the Council what is the current disproportionate cost threshold for written parliamentary questions; and if he will publish a table showing the amount of such questions unanswered for that reason expressed as *(a)* a total number and *(b)* a percentage of those submitted to each Government Department or office by right hon. Members during the last and current parliamentary sessions. [39292]

Mr. Newton: The current disproportionate cost threshold for written parliamentary questions is £450.

It would not be possible, except at disproportionate cost, to supply the further information requested.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Prosecution Files

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Attorney-General what is the recommended retention period for prosecution papers by the Crown Prosecution Service. [40788]

The Attorney-General: Area offices of the Crown Prosecution Service retain files relating to cases finalised in the magistrates' courts for a minimum of 12 months after the final court date and those finalised in the Crown court for a minimum of three years. Cases handled in CPS headquarters are retained for a minimum of five years. Where there is a conviction, all case files are retained until the expiry of the sentence if it exceeds the usual retention period. Arrangements also exist to identify those prosecution files worthy of permanent preservation and to transfer them to the Public Record Office.

Advisers and Press Officers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Attornery-General how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by the Law Officers Departments; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42318]

The Attorney-General: No special advisers are employed by the Law Officers Departments. A total of nine press officers are employed, seven by the Crown Prosecution Service and two by the Serious Fraud Office. I shall write to the hon. Member with details of salary costs.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42326]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: At 1 November, the Department employed 19 press officers, at an estimated annual salary bill of £637,000.

It is unclear to whom the hon. Member refers in his reference to "specialist advisers".

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many persons in his Department and in the Export Credits Guarantee Department are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list their names; and how much each is paid. [42053]

Mr. Nelson *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* The number of staff in my Department wholly employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry is five, and their direct annual salary cost is £133,065. It is not possible to identify the number of people involved on a part-time or occasional basis within the Department or as external consultants or advisers. It is not the practice to name staff or external advisers. The amount spent by my Department on external advice, principally on the provision of legal advice to DTI witnesses to the inquiry, is £294,000 since the inquiry began in 1992.

This information does not include the members of Sir Richard Scott's inquiry team.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the ratio of the Department of Trade and Industry's funding of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux to the funding of citizens advice bureau by local authorities over the last five years. [42231]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: In each of the last five years funding by my Department of NACAB has been:

Year	*£ million*
1991–92	11.032
1992–93	11.699
1993–94	12.252
1994–95	12.353
1995–96	[1]11.916

[1] Agreed to date but may change by the end of the financial year.

Individual citizens-advice bureaux are funded by individual local authorities. My Department does not hold information about the level of that funding.

European Framework Programme IV

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will set out how the allocation of the additional costs of the European framework programme IV was divided between Government Departments in 1994–95. [41884]

Mr. Ian Taylor: No allocation of the costs of European framework programme IV were made in the UK financial year 1994–95, since this programme was first implemented in the Community's financial year 1995.

Companies House, Edinburgh

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list the retained functions of Companies house, Edinburgh, after contracting out. [42238]

Mr. Oppenheim: The functions to be retained are:

the granting of extensions of filing dates for annual returns,

the striking off, dissolution and restoration of companies in accordance with the Companies Acts,

processing cases passed by the contractor where there has been an objection to the use of a company name,

processing cases passed by the contractor which may lead to prosecution, pursuing possible breaches of the Companies Acts.

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list the number of staff necessary to carry out the retained functions of Companies house, Edinburgh. [42237]

Mr. Oppenheim : It is envisaged that five staff will be retained to carry out retained functions.

Mr. Griffiths: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list the terms of confidentiality which will apply to contractors seeking to bid for the contract to run Companies house, Edinburgh. [42236]

Mr. Oppenheim: All persons invited to tender are subject to confidentiality obligations as part of the tender documentation. The Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994—under which an order was made to permit statutory functions to be carried out by a contractor—ensures that the same requirements as regards confidentiality will apply to contractor and his staff as apply at present to Companies house. In addition, confidentiality requirements will form part of any contract.

Wincanton Co., Clwyd

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what intervention he will make according to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981, on behalf of the Wincanton Co. milk lorry drivers based at Pentre, Queensferry, Clwyd, who have lost their jobs consequent upon Wincanton failing to keep their contract; and if he will make a statement. [42208]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: Questions concerning the dismissal of employees in connection with the transfer of an undertaking, or part of one, to which the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 apply, are matters for an industrial tribunal to determine.

Pay Increases

Mr. Meacher: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many employees he estimates have had pay increases below the rate of inflation in each of the last 10 years. [41581]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: The information requested is not available.

However, the new earnings survey shows that, since 1985, there have been significant increases in employees' real earnings at all levels of the earnings distribution.

Small Businesses

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list the type and the number of grants made by his Department to small businesses in the Sheffield area for each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [42160]

Mr. Page: Information in respect of DTI grants currently available in the Sheffield travel-to-work area, which covers part of north Derbyshire, is given on the attached table.

If any small firms wish to know whether they are eligible for grants, they should contact Business Link, Sheffield on 0114 281 3813.

	Financial year				
	1990–91	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*
Regional Selective Assistance					
Offers	22	25	15	20	45
Amount offered	£2.5m	£1.7m	£1.8m	£1.2m	£1.8m
Regional Investment Grants					
Offers	144	77	44	47	—
Amount offered	£1.3m	£720k	£428k	£511k	—
Regional Innovation Grants					
Offers	16	14	41	68	85
Amount offered	£328k	£333k	£931k	£1.7m	£2.1m
Spur					
Offers	—	2	2	1	3
Amount offered	—	£179k	£189k	£150k	£348k
Smart					
Offers	1	5	2	2	2
Amount offered	£50k	£220k	£117k	£81k	£97k

1. Regional Investment Grants ceased to be available in Sheffield TTWA on 1 August 1993, but were re-introduced in certain wards in the TTWA, w.e.f 1 April 1995, as part of the coalfield regeneration measures.
2. SPUR was introduced in February 1991.

America (Investment)

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the total number of *(a)* Sheffield and *(b)* United Kingdom firms investing in the United States of America in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [42163]

Mr. Nelson: There is no central register of investments in the USA by Sheffield or other UK companies. To attempt to obtain this information could be done only at disproportionate cost to the Department.

North West Water/Norweb Merger

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) how many hon. Members sought a meeting with him to discuss the merger of North West Water and Norweb; [42181]

(2) when the hon. Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) last met him to discuss the merger with Norweb; [42307]

(3) how many representations he received from *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* others urging him (i) to refer and (ii) not to refer the proposed merger between North West Water and Norweb to the Monopolies and Merger Commission. [42182]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: Around 30 representations were received by this Department concerning the proposed merger between North West Water and Norweb; about a third of these were from hon. Members. Most of the correspondents were opposed to the merger or wished to see it referred to the Monopolies and Merger Commission. The correspondence was copied to the Office of Fair Trading so that the Director General of Fair Trading could take account of it in formulating his advice to my right hon. Friend, the President of the Board of Trade.

My right hon. Friend held no meetings with hon. Members to discuss the merger. He received one request for a meeting, from the all-party parliamentary water group.

Burnley and Pendle Buses

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what guidance the Office of Fair Trading has given to Pendle council concerning the proposed sale of the council's stake in Burnley and Pendle Buses. [42201]

Mr. Jonathan Evans: As a general principle, my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade and the Office of Fair Trading never disclose whether confidential guidance has been sought or the nature of any guidance given.

Business Links

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what has been the cost to public funds of business links in each year since they came into being. [42262]

Mr. Page: Public expenditure on the development of business links is mainly from the DTI's business link pump-priming budget. Expenditure from that budget in 1993–94 and 1994–95 was £1.14 million and £13.1 million respectively. The pump-priming budget for 1995–96 is £38.5 million.

The Department also contributes to the cost of local business support services which are being delivered through business links as they are set up. The budget for these services in 1995–96 is £63.9 million.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list for each business links office *(a)* when it opened, *(b)* how many small businesses with (i) 0 to nine employees, (ii) 10 to 49 employees, (iii) 50 to 99 employees and (iv) 100 to 499 employees it assisted in the last year, *(c)* what its cost was in the last year to the public purse and *(d)* what percentage of businesses which used the service were charged for it. [42261]

Mr. Page: The list of business links and their opening dates is shown. Individual business link information relating to the size banding of company, cost to the public purse and percentage of businesses charged for services is not available. This information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Table of open business links

Business link outlets	*Opening date*
Leicester	September 1993
Birmingham	October 1993
Congleton	December 1993
Macclesfield	January 1994
St. Albans	February 1994
North Tyneside	30 March 1994
South Tyneside	—
Newcastle	—
Gateshead 1	—
Gateshead 2	—
Halton (Widnes)	5 April 1994
Hereford	5 April 1994
Worcester	—
Malvern	—
Leominster	—
Doncaster	18 April 1994
Manchester	3 May 1994
Trafford Park	—
Tameside	—
Barnsley	3 May 1994
Salford	9 May 1994
Dorset (Poole)	19 May 1994
Crewe and Nantwich	23 May 1994
Shropshire (Telford)	31 May 1994
West Cornwall (Redruth)	31 May 1994
Pershore	13 June 1994
Coalville	8 June 1994
Hinckley	14 June 1994
Metropolitan Wigan	14 June 1994
Thames Valley (Reading)	28 June 1994
Ross on Wye	30 June 1994
Lincoln	1 July 1994
Wirral (Birkenhead)	11 July 1994
Southern Derbyshire (Derby)	1 August 1994
Swadlincote	31 August 1994
Derby Inner City	5 September 1994
East Manchester	12 September 1994
Walsall	12 September 1994
Slough	21 September 1994
Aylesbury	30 September 1994
Chester and Ellesmere Port (Chester)	26 September 1994
Dudley	30 September 1994
Gainsborough	30 September 1994
Boston	—
Skegness	—
Grantham	—
Spalding	—
Sleaford	—
Louth	—
Sunderland	31 October 1994
Loughborough	11 November 1994
Gloucester (Cheltenham)	28 November 1994
Chester and Wirral (Hoole Bridge)	28 November 1994
Chester and Wirral (South Wirral)	—
Rutland	28 November 1994
Central Devon (Exeter)	5 December 1994
Merseyside (Liverpool 1)	5 December 1994
Merseyside (Mount Pleasant)	—
Merseyside (Knowsley)	19 December 1994
Merseyside (Bootle)	—
Merseyside (Liverpool 2)	—
North Dorset	19 December 1994
Weymouth	—
Hertfordshire (Letchworth)	19 December 1994
Melton Mowbray	3 January 1995
Market Harborough	—
Isle of Wight (Newport)	3 January 1995
Merseyside (Southport)	3 January 1995
Oswestry	31 January 1995
Brighouse	20 February 1995
Huddersfield	—
Batley	—
Halifax	March 1995
Sandwell	10 April 1995
Middlesbrough	10 April 1995
Derwentside	10 April 1995
Chester le street	—
Teesdale	—
Durham City (1)	—
Durham City (2)	—
East Durham	—
Sedgefield	—
Wearvalley (1)	—
Wearvalley (2)	—
Coventry	10 April 1995
Nuneaton	—
Leamington Spa	10 April 1995
Stratford upon Avon	—
Rotherham	19 April 1995
Hexham	1 May 1995
Berwick	—
Blyth	—
Ashington	—
Alnwick	—
Furness	1 May 1995
Carlisle	—
Workington	—
Whitehaven	—
Kendal	—
Bristol (hub)	9 May 1995
St. Helens	9 May 1995
Welwyn/Hatfield	9 May 1995
East Cornwall	2 June 1995

Table of open business links

Business link outlets	*Opening date*
Bedford	June 1995
Luton	—
Stevenage	June 1995
Bath	3 July 1995
Weston super Mare	—
Wansdyke	—
Cannock	17 July 1995
S. Devon: Newton Abbot	17 July 1995
Solihull	31 July 1995
Wyre Forest	31 July 1995
Craven Arms	1 August 1995
Stafford	17 August 1995
Frome	14 August 1995
Rugby	14 August 1995
Burton on Trent	21 August 1995
Rochdale	29 August 1995
Lichfield	4 September 1995
Redditch/Bromsgrove	4 September 1995
Bridgwater	5 September 1995
Tamworth	11 September 1995
North Devon	11 September 1995
Leek	18 September 1995
Hull	18 September 1995
Sheffield	19 September 1995
SW Herts Centre (Watford)	25 September 1995
Chesterfield	29 September 1995
Ilkeston	29 September 1995
Ripley	2 October 1995
Leeds	2 October 1995
Central Milton Keynes	2 October 1995
Stoke	2 October 1995
West Malling	2 October 1995
Wolverhampton	2 October 1995
Bolsover	2 October 1995
Bakewell	2 October 1995
Minehead	2 October 1995
Wakefield	16 October 1995
Castleford	—
Nottingham City	23 October 1995
Stockton	23 October 1995
Kings Lynn	23 October 1995
Lowestoft	—
Norwich	—
Oldham Inner	26 October 1995
Oldham Outer	—
City	30 October 1995
Hackney	—
Islington	—
Croydon	31 October 1995
Hounslow	31 October 1995

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what advice is given by his Department to *(a)* the business links chief executive and *(b)* local business links offices about fee rates for business links services. [42268]

Mr. Page: Business links are advised, in the business link service guide, to charge for services where it is reasonable to do so. The guide also sets out the requirements of the European Community state aid rules—which set a 50 per cent. limit on public funding of consultancy and training provision for small and medium-sized enterprises—competition policy and value for money. The guide was issued to business link chief executives in October 1995 and is available to business link staff. I have arranged for a copy of the guide to be placed in the Library of the House.

Business Statistics

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will list for each parliamentary constituency *(a)* how many businesses there are employing (i) between 0 to nine people, (ii) between 10 to 49 people, (iii) between 50 to 99 people and (iv) between 100 to 499, *(b)* how many business start-ups there have been in each of the last 16 years and *(c)* how many deregistrations there have been in each of the last 16 years. [42267]

Mr. Page: Figures for parliamentary constituencies are not available.

Numbers of VAT-registered businesses, new registrations and deregistrations by local authority district are published in "VAT County and District Estimates 1980–91" and "VAT County and District estimates 1992–93", copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the total number of business start-ups in each of the last 12 months. [42006]

Mr. Page *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* There are no official figures on the number of business start-ups each month. Estimates from Barclays and NatWest suggest around 400,000 businesses started up in the 12 months ending June 1995.

Small Business Ministers (Meeting)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the outcome of the meeting of small business Ministers on 30 October. [42269]

Mr. Page: The group agreed to meet twice yearly—in January to provide input into the competitiveness White Paper and July to provide input into the Budget. Other meetings will take place on a bilateral basis to discuss issues specific to individual departments.

It was also agreed that each Department would provide a contribution to the annual small firms in Britain report, showing the progress it had made helping small businesses.

Meetings

Dr. Strang: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many times *(a)* he or his predecessor, *(b)* his junior ministerial colleagues in his Department and *(c)* senior civil servants at or above the grade of assistant secretary in his Department, have met food and drink manufacturers, retailers and other food industry trade associations in the last year; and if he will list these meetings and the businesses they represented. [42124]

Mr. Eggar: There is a wide range of DTI Ministers and senior civil servants who may have had such contracts. However, the information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Asthma Research

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how much money the Medical Research Council spent in 1994–95 on *(a)* research into asthma and *(b)* research which may be relevant to the condition. [41160]

Mr. Ian Taylor: In 1994–95, the MRC spent *(a)* £873,400 on research directly relevant to asthma, and *(b)* £718,254 on research related to the condition.

Gas Industry

Mr. Wigley: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will take steps to ensure that measures to increase competition in the gas industry are not at the expense of people living in rural areas a long way from North sea sources of supply; and if he will make a statement. [41769]

Mr. Page: No such measures are necessary. Competitors are already promising to offer domestic customers in the south-west—the first region which is to be opened up to competition in April 1996—lower prices. In fact, one company has already made public its intention to offer prices that are 15 per cent. or more below British Gas's current standard tariffs. This is despite the fact that the region includes large rural areas and is a long way from the North sea.

British Association (Annual Science Meeting)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what considerations made him unable to accept an invitation to visit the British Association's annual science meeting held in Newcastle during September. [39041]

Mr. Lang: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Deregulation

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many occasions in the past 12 months he has agreed to meet individuals and organisations interested in *(a)* deregulation proposals and *(b)* telecommunications policy where the introduction was initially sought by (i) a Minister and (ii) another hon. Member. [42175]

Mr. Lang: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Digital Terrestrial Television

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for National Heritage when she expects the frequency planning work for the introduction of digital terrestrial television to be completed. [41678]

Mr. Ian Taylor: I have been asked to reply.

I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Internet

Mr. French: To ask the President of the Board of Trade (1) what representations he has received about the possible regulation of material available on the Internet; [41815]

(2) what investigations his Department has made in the practicality of the regulation of material available on the Internet. [41816]

Mr. Ian Taylor *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* Over the last few months, I have received a number of representations about the nature of material on the Internet. These have involved indecent, obscene and racially inflammatory material and that which could lead to terrorist activity. In addition, there have also been representations about the possible access of young children to some of this material.

In general, the Internet is already subject to the same laws as apply to other media. However my officials, along with those of other Departments, are considering the practicality of, and the case for, any more specific regulation. We have also been interested in the proposals from the US for specific self-regulation in relation to the Internet, both by providers of Internet services and by schools and parents. On obscenity, my Department is participating in the interdepartmental group on the subject which is chaired by the Home Office.

Increasingly, servers such as BT are offering to filter out material supplied to schools and other similar users. We are co-operating in evaluating such action.

Ultimately, the enormous benefits of Internet and its international character make legal remedies against abuse by a minority difficult.

TRANSPORT

Train Safety (Women)

Ms Jowell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the number of reported assaults on women travelling on trains each year since 1990. [41751]

Mr. Watts: The table shows the number of recorded assaults against women travelling on trains from 1 September 1993 to 30 September 1995. Separate figures by gender for periods before 1 September 1993 are not readily available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Period	*Total*
1 September 1993 to 31 December 1993	113
1 January 1994 to 31 December 1994	494
1 January 1995 to 30 September 1995	395

Ms Jowell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received about women-only train carriages; and if he will make a statement. [41752]

Mr. Watts: None.

Eurostar

Sir Keith Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department has paid in *(a)* grant, *(b)* loan and *(c)* otherwise during the current year to European Passenger Services or British Rail to assist the operation of the Eurostar service. [41641]

Mr. Watts: To date no grant has been paid to European Passenger Services. EPS has an external financing requirement of about £143 million in the current year to date. This is funded by borrowing from the national loans fund. EPS was separated from British Rail on 9 May 1994 and has been funded separately from BR since that date.

Railway Timetable

Mr. Heppell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date he expects the May 1996 railway timetable to be published. [42283]

Mr. Watts: Railtrack informs me that next year's summer timetable will come into effect in June 1996 and will be published at the end of April 1996.

Municipal Bus Companies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list those former municipal bus companies whose sale to the private sector was allowed only under covenants *(a)* preventing asset stripping, *(b)* protecting the work force's employment terms and conditions and *(c)* preserving minimum service levels; [42170]

(2) what factors he considers in deciding whether or not to give consent to the sale of a 50 per cent. stake in a jointly owned municipal bus company where one local authority wants to sell and the other does not; [42168]

(3) what is his policy in respect of sales of a municipal bus company where the sale offer is made to a restricted number of carefully selected potential purchasers; [42172]

(4) to what extent the pension rights of persons formerly employed by municipal bus companies have been affected following the purchase of the company by *(a)* a private operator and *(b)* the management and employees themselves; [42171]

(5) what discussions, meetings or contact he has had with Price Waterhouse Corporate Finance concerning the proposed sale by Pendle council of its stake in Burnley and Pendle Buses. [42173]

Mr. Norris: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Rail Privatisation

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions in the past 12 months he has agreed to meet individuals and organisations interested in rail privatisation where the introduction was initially sought by *(a)* a Minister and *(b)* another hon. Member. [42174]

Sir George Young: The information is not kept in this form and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

M62

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what has been the expenditure to date on the two-year further investigation into the M62 relief road project which was announced in 1983; [42165]

(2) how many houses affected by the M62 relief road proposal have been purchased by his Department to date; [42167]

(3) what has been the expenditure to date on acquiring properties affected by the M62 relief road. [42166]

Mr. Watts: I will write to the hon. Member.

Road and Motorway Maintenance

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many cyclical and routine maintenance contracts let by the Highways Agency for roads and motorways are *(a)* carried out directly or indirectly by local authorities as designated agents and *(b)* supervised by (i) consulting engineers and (ii) others working directly or indirectly for the Highways Agency. [42156]

Mr. Watts: I will write to the hon. Member.

Ferrybridge-Hook Moor Inquiry

Mr. William O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give a breakdown of costs of the public inquiry into the A1 Ferrybridge to Hook Moor proposed development. [42157]

Mr. Watts: The final cost of the inquiry is not yet known but is likely to be of the order of £68,000. Of this amount, some £15,000 relates to accommodation.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the procedure for *(a)* collecting and recording statements, *(b)* answers to questions and *(c)* other matters at the public inquiry held at the Parkside hotel, Pontefract by (i) the Highways Agency and (ii) the independent inspector, (1) in the room where the inquiry was held and (2) in the room occupied by the Highways Agency; [42154]

(2) what procedure in respect of recording of statements, questions and answers was applied during the public inquiry held recently into the A1 Ferrybridge to Hook Moor proposals by the Highways Agency. [42148]

Mr. Watts: The current rules of procedure for inquiries concerned with Highways Act Orders are contained in the Highways (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1994, SI 3263, which came into force on 10 January. All inquiries are subject to the rules of natural justice and are conducted by the appointed inspector on the basis of openness, fairness and impartiality. It is for the inspector to decide the order in which witnesses will be heard, statements recorded and the pattern of examination and cross-examination. Since the purpose of the inquiry is to appraise the inspector of the facts of the matter before him, the most important record is the set of notes the inspector takes himself. These notes provide the inspector with the basis for his report.

All written evidence to the inquiry became inquiry documents which were deposited in the inquiry library.

No record is kept of the proceedings in the private workrooms of the Highways Agency and its advisers.

Motorways Inquiries

Mr. William O' Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many public inquiries dealing with major motorway developments have been initiated by the Highways Agency on behalf of his Department; and if he will list the titles of the public inquiries. [42150]

Mr. Watts: This is an operational matter for the Highways Agency. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Laurie Haynes to Mr. William O' Brien, dated 8 November 1995:

As you know, the Minister for Railways and Roads, Mr John Watts, has asked me to reply to your Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Transport, how many public inquiries dealing with major motorways developments have been initiated by the Highways Agency on behalf of his Department, and if he will list the titles of the public inquiries.

Public inquiries into objections to motorway and trunk road schemes are set up jointly by the Secretaries of State for Transport and for the Environment.

Since our formation on 1 April 1994 Public Inquiries into the following major motorway development have been initiated:-

M1 Junctions 6A–10 Widening
M4 Junctions 3–4b Widening
M11 Junctions 5 North Facing slip roads Improvements
M20 Junctions 3–5 Widening
M23 Junctions 8–9 Widening
M25 Terminal 5 Spur (Heathrow)
M63 Junctions 6–9 Widening
A1(M) Ferrybridge to Hook Moor
A1(M) Leeming to Scotch Corner
A556(M) M6 to M56
Birmingham Northern Relief Road

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice is given to independent inspectors hearing a public inquiry into motorway developments to ensure all witnesses' statements are recorded and available for public inspection. [42151]

Mr. Watts: The planning inspectorate of the Department of the Environment has issued "Notes for the Guidance of Independent Inspectors Holding Inquiries Into Orders and Special Road Schemes Made Under the Highways Act 1980". These notes make it clear that documentary evidence, like oral evidence, can be taken into account only if it is fully disclosed at the inquiry. The notes advise the inspector to list inquiry documents, plans and photographs, giving them unique numbers, in an appendix to the report on the inquiry. A transcript service is normally provided by the Department of Transport, for trunk road inquiries which are expected to last more than 16 sitting days.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what legislation applies to the terms and conditions of a public inquiry into a major motorway development. [42153]

Mr. Watts: The conduct of inquiries for which notice was given on or after 10 January 1995 is governed by the Highways (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1994, SI 1994 No. 3263, and the Compulsory Purchase by Ministers (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1994, SI 1994 No. 3264. Inquiries for which notice was given before 10 January 1994 are governed by the Highways (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1976, SI 1976 No. 721, and the Compulsory Purchase by Ministers (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1967, SI 1967 No. 720.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport at what stage in a public inquiry into a major motorway development the independent inspector appointed by him takes on responsibilities; and if he will make a statement. [42152]

Mr. Watts: The independent inspector for a trunk road motorway inquiry is nominated by the Lord Chancellor and appointed by the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Transport. The inspector is fully responsible for the conduct of the inquiry from its opening and for any pre-inquiry meeting.

Highways Agency

Mr. William O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what responsibilities, other than operational, are allocated by his Department to the Highways Agency. [42149]

Mr. Watts: In addition to being responsible for the day-to-day management and the performance of the Highways Agency, the chief executive advises my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on operational policy affecting the agency's work and has the lead role in making recommendations to him about the future development of the network.

M1–A1 Link Road

Mr. William O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated number of vehicles that will use the Leeds M1 to A1 link road when it is complete. [42158]

Mr. Watts: I will write to the hon. Member.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list all the projects considered for the private finance initiative since it began in his Department, indicating in each case whether or not it has proceeded and the public and private financial input in each case. [41328]

Mr. Watts: All projects for which the Department is responsible are considered for procurement through the private finance initiative. Information on those that have proceeded to date is included in the Department's publication "Building Tomorrow's Transport Network", copies of which are in the Library, and in my answer to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Betts) on 28 June 1995, *Official Report*, column *672–73*. Funding for line 1 of Midland Metro has since been approved: the total value of the project is estimated to be £145 million of which the private sector is contributing £11.5 million. Bids for the WCML modernisation signalling programme are being evaluated by Railtrack and the contract will be let before the end of the financial year.

Road Building Programme

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the spending in constant terms of the road building programme in each year since 1979. [41765]

Mr. Watts: The information requested regarding spending in constant terms in the road building programme since 1979—calculated using 1993–94 as the baseline—is set out in million pounds sterling. The figures apply only to roads in England as the Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales have responsibility for this expenditure in those countries. Expenditure on local roads is not available at constant prices and is therefore excluded.

Year	*£ million*
1979–90	1094.0
1980–81	1083.8
1981–82	1184.2
1982–83	1292.7
1983–84	1190.0
1984–85	1279.1
1985–86	1235.5
1986–87	1270.2
1987–88	1341.5
1988–89	1315.1
1989–90	1656.5
1990–91	2052.4
1991–92	1988.6
1992–93	2018.9
1993–94	2041.9
1994–95	1991.7

Car Windscreen Cleaners

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what plans he has to reduce nuisance to the public by people offering to clean car windows; [42336]

(2) how many people cleaning car windscreens without legal authority or excuse have been prosecuted for wilfully obstructing the free passage along a highway in 1994–95. [42337]

(3) what consultations he has had with the police about the extent of people cleaning car windscreens, with particular reference to the dangers of vulnerable drivers. [42338]

Mr. Norris: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42327]

Mr. Norris: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Trans-European Transport Networks

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the decision by the EU Council of Transport Ministers in respect of the amendments Nos. 12, 162, 163 and 166, concerning environmental standards, from the European Parliament to the European Community proposal on trans-European transport networks. [41763]

Mr. Watts: A common position on the draft guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network was adopted by the Transport Council on 28 September. In reaching this common position, the Council considered amendments Nos. 12, 162, 163 and 166 and agreed to an amendment to article 5 of the draft guidelines. This provides for environmental concerns to be integrated into the design and development of the network. The Council agreed that there was no need to include an article devoted specifically to environmental protection since this was already dealt with adequately in the draft proposals.

Stranraer Rail Services

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are his intentions with regard to the franchising of passenger rail services serving Stranraer. [42377]

Mr. Watts: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Air Pollution

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what support or promotion his Department is giving to installing public displays of traffic pollution levels in streets. [40915]

Mr. Clappison: I have been asked to reply.

My Department makes information available to the public from its automatic air quality monitoring sites, which in city centres are mainly influenced by road traffic emissions. Daily information is provided on air pollution in both urban and rural areas across the United Kingdom via a Freephone helpline, Ceefax, Teletext, the Internet and a variety of other news media. Bulletins include information on levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and ozone together with a forecast for the following day. The information is available to local authorities and it is for them to decide what use should be made of it in their local circumstances.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Micro-credit Programmes

Mr. Keith Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the amount of bilateral British aid in 1994 given to micro-credit programmes making small business loans to poor women. [41587]

Mr. Hanley: British aid, in 1994, funded a number of programmes with micro-credit components including large programmes in Bangladesh, through the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, and in Kenya, through the Kenya rural enterprise programme. Neither the total of these micro-credit programmes nor the proportion made to poor women are readily identifiable, but women are the main beneficiaries in the programmes specified and we believe that total expenditure on micro-credit was approximately £3 million in 1994.

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to contribute funds for the World Bank plan announced last July to assist micro-level credit schemes. [42195]

Mr. Hanley: The consultative group to assist the poorest, launched by the World Bank in June, aims to pool experience on the delivery of financial services to the very poor; to support institutions which provide such services on a financially sustainable basis; to strengthen donor co-ordination and increase awareness of microcredit schemes within the bank. The bank is contributing $30 million towards this pilot programme. Other donors may contribute in cash or in kind, by nominating directly administered projects and programmes for joint review of experience and dissemination of best practice. The UK is participating in the group on the latter basis.

Bilateral Aid

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by how much the Overseas Development Administration budget would need to rise, in percentage and money terms, to maintain the value of the bilateral programme during the period 1996–97 to 1998–99. [41621]

Mr. Hanley: It is not possible to answer this question precisely, since there is scope to modify certain limited categories of multilateral spending such as contributions to new multilateral replenishments, or voluntary contributions to UN or Commonwealth bodies.

The latest relevant forecast, published in the 1995 departmental report, suggests that the increase required to maintain the value, in cash and real terms, of the bilateral programmes at the levels planned for 1995–96 in 1996–97 and 1997–98 is as follows:

	£ millions	*Percentage*
1996–97		
Cash	81.0	3.6
Real	114.0	5.1
1997–98		
Cash	155.0	7.0
Real	216.0	9.7

Departmental Budget

Mr. Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by how much the Overseas Development Administration budget would need to increase, in percentage and money terms, to maintain its value, in cash and real terms, during the period 1996–97 to 1998–99. [41620]

Mr. Hanley: The level of the Overseas Development Administration budget for 1995–96 is planned to be £2,230 million excluding overseas superannuation and global environment assistance. The increase on the planned level for 1995–96, in percentage and money terms, required to maintain its value, in cash and real terms, during the period 1996–97 to 1998–99, is as follows:

	£ millions	*Percentage*
1996–97		
Cash	0.0	0
Real	67.0	3
1997–98		
Cash	0.0	0
Real	124.0	5.6
1998–99		
Cash	0.0	0
Real	177.0	8

Debt Relief

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how much debt service on Overseas Development Administration debt was received in 1993 and 1994; and how much is due in 1995 and 1996; [42343]

(2) to which countries the United Kingdom has provided Overseas Development Administration debt relief in 1995. [42344]

Mr. Hanley: My right hon. and noble Friend the Minister for Overseas Development will write to the hon. Lady.

Nigeria (Oil Industry)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what projects his Department is funding *(a)* alone and *(b)* in partnership, in Nigeria; and if he will list (i) the amount of funding and (ii) the organisations involved; [42374]

(2) if he will provide a full list of all projects and Overseas Development Administration is funding in partnership with Shell and give the amount of funding involved; [42375]

(3) if he will list all projects his Department is funding *(a)* alone and *(b)* in partnership with other organisations linked to the oil industry in Nigeria; and if he will list the amount of funding involved; [42376]

(4) if he will list all projects his Department is funding *(a)* alone and *(b)* in partnership in or to do with Ogoniland, Nigeria; and if he will list the amount of funding involved; [42369]

(5) if he will list all projects that his Department is planning to take part in which includes co-operation with oil industry companies; [42370]

(6) if he will list all the projects his Department his taken part in which have involved Shell in each year for the last 10 years; [42371]

(7) if he will list all projects his Department is planning to take part or fund in Nigeria; [42372]

(8) if he will list all the projects his Department has funded in Nigeria in each year for the last 10 years. [42373]

Mr. Hanley: My right hon. and noble Friend the Minister for Overseas Development will write to the hon. Member.

TREASURY

Income Tax

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide updated figures using the September retail prices index for tables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the tax ready reckoner and tax reliefs giving for each table the effect in 1996–97 and a full year. [40774]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* Revised figures are in the tables.

Table 2
Income tax

	1995–96 £	*1996–97* £
Personal allowance	3,525	3,665
Personal allowance (age 65–74)	4,630	4,810
Personal allowance (age 75 and over)	4,800	4,990
Married couple's allowance[1]	1,720	1,790
Married couple's allowance (age 65–75)[1]	2,995	3,115
Married couple's allowance (age 75 and over)[1]	3,035	3,155
Additional personal[1,2] and widow's bereavement allowance[1]	1,720	1,790
Aged income limit[3]	14,600	15,200
Lower rate band	3,200	3,400
Basic rate limit[4]	24,300	25,300

[1] Allowance available at a flat rate of 15 per cent.

[2] Primarily for single parents.

[3] If the total income, less allowable deductions, of a taxpayer aged 65 or over exceeds this limit, the age-related allowances are reduced by £1 for each £2 of income over the limit until the basic levels of the personal and married couple's allowances are reached.

[4] Higher rate income tax is payable on income (less those allowances and reliefs that are allowed at the higher rate) in excess of the basic rate limit.

Table 5
Cost of indexation for 1996–97

£ million

	1996–97	*1997–98*
Indexation of income tax allowances, lower rate band and basic rate limit[1] of which:	1,190	1,880
increases in allowances	810	1,170
increase in the lower rate band[2]	150	300
increase in the basic rate limit[2]	230	410
Indexation of inheritance tax threshold	25	45
Indexation of capital gains tax annual exempt amount	0	3

[1] Includes the consequential effects on capital gains tax.

[2] Additional cost after previous change has been introduced.

Table 6
Direct effects of illustrative changes in income tax[1]

£ million

Income tax[2]	*Full year cost/yield 1996–97*	*Receipts cost/yield 1996–97*	*1997–98*
Rates			
Change *lower rate by 1p*[3]	*560*	*850*	*720*
Change basic rate by 1p	*1,900*	*1,600*	*2,000*
Change higher rate by 1p	*460*	*240*	*560*
Allowances			
Change personal allowance by £100	590	430	640
Change age-related personal allowance by £100[4]	60	45	60
Change married couple's allowance by £100[5]	150	120	160
Change age-related married couple's allowance by £100[4]	15	11	15
Change aged income limit by £500	13	8	14
Change all personal allowances by 1 per cent.[6]	240	180	260
Change all personal allowance by 10 per cent.[6]	2,530	1,750	2,550
Change married couple's and related allowances by 1 per cent.[6]	30	20	30
Change married couple's and related allowances by 10 per cent.[6]	300	220	330
Lower rate band			
Increase lower rate band by 10 per cent.[6]	320	240	350
Basic rate limit			
Change basic rate limit by 1 per cent.[6]	80	50	95
Change basic rate limit by 10 per cent.[6]			
increase (cost)	750	450	870
decrease (yield)	930	580	1,100
Allowances, lower rate band and basic rate limit			
Change all main allowances, lower rate band and basic rate limit by 1 per cent.[6]	380	280	420
Change all main allowances, lower rate band and basic rate limit by 10 per cent.[6]			
increase (cost)	3,700	2,650	4,100
decrease (yield)	4,050	2,900	4,500

[1] The estimated revenue effects of changes on receipts are rounded. The extent of rounding reflects the desire to avoid undue compounding of its effects when numbers are pro-rated, rather than the accuracy of the estimates.

[2] The figures for income tax changes include consequential effects on the yield of capital gains tax. Changes are assumed to take effect from April 1996.

[3] Including the effects of the change on receipts of advance corporation tax and on consequent liability to mainstream corporation tax.

[4] Allowances for those aged 65–74 and aged 75 and over.

[5] The figures include the revenue effects of changing the additional personal allowance and the widow's bereavement allowance by £100.

[6] Percentage changes are calculated with reference to 1995–96 levels.

Table 7
Direct effects of illustrative changes in other direct taxes and national insurance contributions[1]

£ million

	Full year cost/yield 1996–97	*Receipts cost cost/yield 1996–97*	*1997–98*
Corporation tax[2]			
Change full rate by 1 percentage point	880	630	940
Change small companies' rate by 1 percentage point[3]	130	90	140
Capital gains tax[4]			
Increase annual exempt amount by £500 for individuals and £250 for trustees	6	0	4
Inheritance tax[4]			
Change rate by 1 percentage point	45	20	38
Increase threshold by £5,000	40	19	37

[1] The estimated revenue effects of changes on receipts are rounded. The extent of rounding reflects the desire to avoid undue compounding of its effects when numbers are pro-rated, rather than the accuracy of the estimates.

[2] Assessment to corporation tax normally relates to the preceding year. These estimates are the changes to revenue that would occur if the changed rates were applied to profits from 1 April 1995.

[3] These figures ignore effects arising from the imputation system.

[4] These changes are assumed to take effect from April 1996.

Table 8
Direct effects of revalorising all excise duties by 3.9 per cent.[1]

Typical item	*Current level of duty on typical item*	*Price change*[2]
Pint of beer	24.6p	1.1p
75cl bottle of table wine	105.33p	4.8p
70cl bottle of spirits	£5.77	26.4p
20 king size cigarettes[3]	£1.69	13.8p
Litre of unleaded petrol[4]	31.3p	3.3p
Litre of DERV[4]	31.3p	3.3p
VED[5]	£135	£5.27

[1] These are estimated on the assumption that total consumers' expenditure at factor cost does not change.

[2] The price change is assumed to equal the change in duty plus the consequential VAT except in the case of VED where VAT is not payable. The price change is for the typical item described above and rounded to the nearest one-tenth of a pence.

[3] The duty on cigarettes has ad valorem and specific elements; revalorisation relates to total duty and the illustrative percentage change relates only to the specific element, but the price change includes the consequential increase in ad valorem duty and VAT. The figures are for an increase of 3 per cent. above revalorisation to reflect the commitment to raise tobacco duties by at least 3 per cent. in real terms in future budgets announced in November 1993.

[4] The figures are for an increase of 5 per cent. above revalorisation to reflect the commitment to raise fuel duties by at least 5 per cent. in real terms in future Budgets announced in November 1993.

[5] Cars and light vans.

[1] *£ million cost/yield*

Year	*Revalorisation of all excise duties by 3.9 per cent*
1995–96	415
1996–97	1,750
1997–98	1,875
Impact effect on the RPI	per cent. 0.51

[1] Assuming implementation on 1 January 1996 for alcohol and on Budget day for all other duties.

1. Includes receipts from taxes on items not listed above.

Table 9
Direct effects of illustrative changes in indirect taxes[1]

[1,4] *£ million cost/yield*

	Price change of typical item[2]	*Associated percentage change in duty*	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*
Beer and cider	1p	3.5	15	105	110
Wine	5p	4.0	5	30	35
Spirits	25p	3.7	5	25	25
Tobacco[5]	5p	2.8	40	180	190
Petrol[6]	1p	2.6	75	310	340
Derv	1p	2.7	40	150	170
VED[7]	£5.00	3.7	50	150	150
Air passenger duty[8][9]	50p/£1	10.0	10	35	35
1 percentage point change in VAT standard rate[8]			190	2,480	2,610
1 percentage point change in rate of insurance premium tax[8]			20	270	285

[1] These are estimated on the assumption that total consumers' expenditure at factor cost does not change.:

[2] The price change is assumed to equal the change in duty plus the consequential VAT except in the case of VED where VAT is not payable. The price change is for the typical item described above and rounded to the nearest one-tenth of a pence.

[3] Assuming implementation on 1 January 1996 for alcohol and on Budget day for all other duties.

[4] Revenue effects include effects of changed duty on all items in the same category by the same percentage. Estimates are subject to uncertainty about the extent to which consumers would switch between different categories of expenditure. This is particularly so for switching from one type of alcoholic drink to another.

[5] The duty on cigarettes has ad valorem and specific elements; revalorisation relates to total duty and the illustrative percentage change relates only to the specific element, but the price change includes the consequential increase in ad valorem duty hand VAT. The figures are for an increase of 3 per cent. above revalorisation to reflect the commitment to raise tobacco duties by at least 3 per cent. in real terms in future budgets announced in November 1993.

[6] Revenue effects assume duty on both leaded and unleaded petrol is changed by the same percentage.

[7] All VED, including HGVs as well as cars and light vans.

[8] Assuming implementation from Budget day.

[9] Current duty rates are £5 and £10 depending on destination.

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will estimate the effect on *(a)* tax revenue and *(b)* benefit expenditure of increasing (i) the married couple's allowance, (ii) the additional personal allowance and (iii) the widow's bereavement allowance by *(A)* £100, *(B)* £200 and *(C)* £300; [42287]

(2) what would be the effect on *(a)* tax revenue and *(b)* benefit expenditure of introducing a tax allowance of £300 per child for taxpayers with children (i) under 11 years of age and (ii) under 16 years of age, giving relief at *(A)* the taxpayers' marginal rate, *(B)* the 25 per cent. rate, *(C)* the 20 per cent. rate and *(D)* the 15 per cent. rate. [42285]

Mr. Jack: Estimated full-year tax costs at 1996–97 income levels are given in the table. The benefit offset will depend on take-up and other factors, but it is likely to be small relative to the total cost.

Full year revenue tax costs of increasing allowances at 1996–97 levels

£ million

Increase	*Married couples allowance*	*Additional personal allowance*	*Widow's bereavement allowance*
100	150	10	less than 5 million
200	300	20	
300	450	30	

Full year revenue tax costs at 1996–97 levels

£ million

Introduction of child tax allowance of £300 per child available at:	*Children under 11*	*Children under 16*
marginal rate	460	730
25 per cent.	430	670
20 per cent.	340	540
15 per cent.	260	400

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for all taxpayers the effect on revenue yield in 1995–96 resulting from changes since 1987–88 and 1990–91 in the eligibility, rates or amounts of allowances and reliefs, including MIRAS, available for offset against income tax, after allowing for indexation. [39108]

Mr. Jack: Comparisons at 1995–96 income levels using the higher tax rates from the earlier years and with income tax allowances and rate bands indexed in line with changes in the retail prices index are given in the table. These are based on a projection of the 1993–94 survey of personal incomes. The effect of changes in mortgage interest relief cannot be estimated from this source because most mortgage interest relief is given at source and therefore is not included in individual tax records.

Tax regime applied to 1995–96 incomes	*Total income tax liability before mortgage interest relief £ billion*
1987–88 indexed	84.7
1990–91 indexed	80.2
1995–96 actual	74.7

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will estimate for the latest year available the number of married couples in the United Kingdom, including those couples that are dependent on benefits, who have *(a)* insufficient income and *(b)* sufficient income to use the married couple's allowance in full to offset against tax; [42288]

(2) what is the number of taxpayers who are entitled to *(a)* the married couple's allowance, *(b)* the additional personal allowance *(c)* neither of these allowances because their partner is claiming the allowance, *(d)* neither of these because they are unmarried and do not have dependent children and *(e)* the widow's bereavement allowance. [42286]

Mr. Jack: I cannot answer substantively before Parliament is prorogued. I will, however, write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has of the number and proportion of income taxpayers in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* Mid Glamorgan and *(c)* Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney who pay no higher than the 20 per cent. rate; [41608]

(2) what estimate he has of the number of people in employment in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* Mid Glamorgan and *(c)* Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney who earn enough to pay income tax. [41609]

Mr. Jack: The table provides estimates for those resident in Wales, Mid Glamorgan and Merthyr Tydfil or Rhymney Valley districts. Figures are given for 1993–94, the latest year in which information can be provided below the United Kingdom level.

Numbers: Thousands

	Taxpayers with employment or self-employment income	*Total taxpayers*	*Taxpayers liable only at 20 per cent. rate*	*Percentage liable only 20 per cent. rate*
Wales	970	1,110	290	24
Mid Glamorgan	170	200	50	25
Merthyr Tydfil/Rhymney Valley	50	55	[1]—	[1]—

[1] Estimates cannot be provided due to low number of sample survey cases in the Survey of Personal Incomes sample.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Betts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41745]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* By the end of 1995–96, I expect projects to a value of some £5 billion to have been agreed. Fuller details of the major projects concerned were published in the Treasury press notice 136/94 of 29 November 1994. Within this total, there is a large number and variety of projects, which are being taken forward by a number of public sector bodies, including those outside central Government. Detailed information of the kind requested by the hon. Gentleman is not held centrally.

Financial arrangements for projects under the private finance initiative fall into a number of categories. These include financially free-standing projects where public sector involvement is limited to enabling the project to go ahead; services sold to the public sector where the cost is met wholly or mainly by charges from the private sector supplier to the public sector; and joint ventures, where the cost of the project is met partly from public funds and partly from other sources of income.

Housing Benefit (Taxation)

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the loss to the Exchequer in respect of housing benefit paid to private landlords which is not declared for income tax purposes; [40903]

(2) what amount and proportion of housing benefit paid to private landlords in the last year for which figures are available was paid in income tax. [40902]

Mr. Jack: No specific figures are available. The Inland Revenue places great emphasis on the detection of those who fail to declare taxable income. Payments of housing benefit are monitored as part of the Inland Revenue's normal compliance work.

Capital Gains Tax

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the likely consequences to *(a)* income tax yield and *(b)* capital gains yield in a full year in the medium term and long term of the introduction of a maximum rate of capital gains tax of 25 per cent. due to (i) straightforward revenue loss and (ii) behavioural effects. [42289]

Mr. Jack: For the capital gains tax effects of the specified measure, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) on 27 October, *Official Report*, column *857*. Behavioural effects would also be expected to lead to a small reduction in income tax yield, perhaps of the order of £50 million in a full year in the medium term.

It is not possible to produce reliable estimates for the long term.

Advance Corporation Tax

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the effect on revenue in 1996–97 and a full year of restricting the carry back of ACT to *(a)* three years, *(b)* two years and *(c)* one year. [42284]

Mr. Jack: The Exchequer effect of restricting ACT carry back from 1996–97 would depend on future levels of profits and dividends. On the basis of the economic forecasts in the 1995 summer economic forecast, the yield from restricting carry back to one, two or three years might be between £100 million and £200 million in a full year. The receipts effect in 1996–97 would be negligible. More detailed estimates cannot be made reliably.

Privatisation

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list those companies privatised since 1979 together with the debt write-off agreed by the Government prior to the sale. [42176]

Mr. Jack: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Durham, North–West (Ms Armstrong) on 23 March 1995, *Official Report*, columns *285–88*.

Dr. Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the total expenditure of his Department since 1979 on advertising and promoting share offers in *(a)* gas, *(b)* electricity, *(c)* water and *(d)* telecommunications. [42102]

Mr. Jack: The costs have been as follows:

(a) Nil.

(b) £8 million (Genco2, 1995).

(c) Nil.

(d) £14.7 million on BT2 in 1991
£12.0 million on BT3 in 1993

Betting and Lottery Duty

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how far his most recent projections of combined betting duty and lottery tax revenues for 1994–95 and 1995–96 exceed those projected in November 1994. [42333]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I will write to the hon. Member.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42328]

Mrs. Angela Knight: I will write to the hon. Member.

Development Banks

Miss Lestor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is the total capital, paid and callable, and voting percentage in the African development bank, the Asian development bank, the Inter-American development bank and the European bank for reconstruction and development; [42345]

2) what co-financing of regional development bank projects there has been in 1993–95; for which projects; in which countries; and how much was donated per project. [42346]

Mrs. Angela Knight: My right hon. and noble Friend the Minister for Overseas Development will write to the hon. Lady.

Debt Relief

Miss Lestor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) which countries benefited from debt conversion in 1993, 1994 and 1995; how much was converted and at what rate of face value; of the conversions that took place what proportion were for environmental or social development projects etc; and if non-governmental organisations play a role in designing or implementing the conversions; [42347]

(2) which countries to which the United Kingdom was or is a major creditor benefited from Paris Club debt reduction arrangements in 1993, 1994 and 1995; by how much their debt was reduced; and which option of *(a)* debt reduction, *(b)* debt service reduction, *(c)* capitalisation, *(d)* moratorium interest and *(e)* commercial option was chosen in each case. [42348]

Mrs. Angela Knight: I will write to the hon. Lady.

Bilateral Debt Service

Miss Lestor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much bilateral debt service on Overseas Development Administration and Export Credits Guarantee Department debt was received in 1993 and 1994; and how much is due in 1995 and 1996. [42349]

Mrs. Angela Knight: My right hon. and noble Friend the Minister for Overseas Development will write to the hon. Lady.

Life Assurance (Taxation)

Mr. Matthew Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for the taxation of life assurance policyholders. [42361]

Mr. Jack: The Government have decided to defer the proposals for the reform of policyholder taxation, which were promised for inclusion in this year's Finance Bill, to allow a longer period for consultation with interested parties.

As a result, the system of certification of life insurance policies by the Inland Revenue, which was to be abolished with effect from 6 May 1996, will continue for the time being. It is intended that legislation to give effect to this proposal will be included in this year's Finance Bill.

The Government intend to publish next spring draft clauses and proposed secondary legislation aimed at giving effect to the proposed reform with a view to the inclusion of the clauses in a future Finance Bill. This would enable the Inland Revenue to consult interested parties on the proposed changes and allow those parties more time to assess their impact and prepare for them.

Share Schemes (Taxation)

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost in 1996–97 and a full year of reducing the qualifying period for full relief under profit sharing schemes and savings-related share options schemes from five to three years. [40782]

Mr. Jack *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The cost in 1996–97 of reducing the qualifying period for full tax relief under profit sharing schemes and introducing an optional three-year contract period for savings-related share option schemes is estimated at £15 million. The estimated full-year cost is £25 million.

European Courts

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the reply of the Attorney-General of 30 October, c.12, relating to the decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and if he will further indicate the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41212]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answer the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Boothferry (Mr. Davis), gave him on 7 November 1995.

Savings

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what level of *(a)* gross savings as a percentage of gross domestic product and *(b)* public spending as a percentage of gross domestic product in each year since 1979; and if he will make a statement on the trends indicated. [40908]

Mrs. Angela Knight: I regret that I cannot answer substantively before Parliament is prorogued. I will, however, write to the hon. Member.

Benefits

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list those social security benefits that are not taxable or are in certain instances exempt from taxation and the gross annual amounts that are not subject to tax; and if he will make a statement on the distinction between such differing tax appro[illegible]. [40906]

Mr. Jack: A list of taxable and non-taxable social security benefits appears in the table.

£ million

	Cost 1995–96
Non-taxable benefits	
Pensioners' Christmas bonus	135
Sickness benefit[1]	348
Maternity allowance	35
War pension	1,247
Attendance allowance	2,089
Severe disability allowance	797
Disability living allowance	3,416
Disability working allowance	23
Industrial disablement benefits	659
Child benefit	6,327
One parent benefit	312
Family credit	1,682
Housing benefit[2]	10,996
Council tax benefit[2]	2,039
Social fund payments	226
Independent living fund	103
Other miscellaneous benefits[3]	8
Total	30,442
Taxable benefits (wholly or partly taxable)	
Industrial death benefit	56
Invalid care allowance	609
Invalidity benefit[1]	7,713
Retirement pension	29,833
Widows benefits	1,021
Statutory sick pay	25
Statutory maternity pay	465
Income support	15,964
Unemployment benefit	1,335
Total	57,021

1. Figures given are in £millions and may not sum due to rounding.

[1] All figures given are in respect of 1995–96 planned expenditure (taken from the 1995 Social Security Departmental Report). The Table does not therefore show incapacity benefit which has now replaced Sickness benefit and Invalidity benefit.

[2] Includes additional local authority spending.

[3] Includes Guardians allowance, Child special allowance, miscellaneous industrial injury benefits, vaccine damage payments and payments to charitable organisations.

Annual expenditure on non-taxable benefits is estimated to be £30,446 million in 1995–96. Annual expenditure on taxable benefits, including those taxable in part, is estimated to be £57,021 million in 1995–96. Information is not held on the amount of taxable benefits not subject to tax.

A number of different considerations are taken into account by the Government in deciding on the tax treatment of social security benefits, for example, the purpose of the benefit in question, whether it is short or long-term, whether it is intended as a replacement for income from employment or self-employment, and whether it is subject to a means test.

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many landowners who receive conditional exemption from inheritance tax as a result of access agreements own land covered by these agreements which is *(a)* registered and *(b)* unregistered. [41282]

Mr. Jack: As the inheritance tax conditional exemption provisions make no distinction between registered and unregistered land, the information requested is not available.

Unemployment

Mrs. Bridget Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many unemployed *(A)* 16 to 19, *(B)* 20 to 24, *(C)* 25 to 34, *(D)* 35 to 44, *(E)* 45 to 54 and *(F)* 55 to 65-year-olds in (1) Lewisham, East and (2) each of the London boroughs *(a)* receive job-related training or *(b)* are working either full time or part time while in education; and what is their average income; [41658]

(2) how many unemployed ethnic minority male *(A)* 16 to 19, *(B)* 20 to 24, *(C)* 25 to 34, *(D)* 35 to 44, *(E)* 45 to 54 and *(F)* 55 to 65-year-olds in (1) Lewisham, East and (2) each of the London boroughs *(a)* receive job-related training and *(b)* are working either full time or part time while in education; and what is their average income. [41655]

(3) how many unemployed males in (1) Lewisham, East and (2) each of the London boroughs *(a)* receive job-related training or *(b)* are working either full time or part time while in education; and what is their average income; [41651]

(4) how many unemployed male *(A)* 16 to 19, *(B)* 20 to 24, *(C)* 25 to 34,*(D)* 35 to 44, *(E)* 45 to 54 and *(F)* 55 to 64-year-olds in (1) Lewisham, East and (2) each of the London boroughs *(a)* receive job-related training and *(b)* and working either full time or part time while in eduction; and what is their average income. [41652]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Information about these groups is available from the labour force survey. However, the standard International Labour Organisation definitions used in that survey include all persons in job-related training, full-time and part-time work as in employment. No one in the groups listed is, therefore, classified as unemployed on the ILO definition.

Earnings

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* females and *(b)* males working in (i) Great Britain and (ii) Northern Ireland in April 1995 earned less than £58.00 per week. [41585]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Estimated numbers and proportions of all employees on adult rates, whose pay was not affected by absence, are given in the following tables:

Proportion earning less than £58 per week

Per cent.

	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Total*
Male	0.1	35.7	2.3
Female	0.2	29.7	11.7

Source:

New Earnings Survey 1995.

Estimated number earning less than £58 per week (millions)

	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Total*
Male	—	0.3	0.3
Female	—	1.2	1.2

April 1995 information for Northern Ireland is not yet available.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many and what proportion of *(a)* manual, *(b)* non-manual and *(c)* full-time employees were earning less than (i) £161.60, (ii) £215.47 and (iii) £228.68 per week excluding overtime payments for (1) men, (2) women and (3) both sexes for *(A)* each county in England, *(B)* each county in Wales, *(C)* each London borough and Greater London as a whole and *(D)* each regional authority and borough in Scotland in April; [41583]

(2) how many and what proportion of *(a)* manual, *(b)* non-manual and *(c)* part-time employees were earning less than (i) £4.26 per hour, (ii) £5.69 per hour and (iii) £6.03 per hour excluding overtime payments for (1) men, (2) women and (3) both sexes by standard economic region for *(A)* Great Britain and *(B)* Northern Ireland and for (iv) each county in England, (v) each county in Wales, (vi) each London borough and Greater London as a whole and (vii) each regional authority and borough in Scotland in April; [41582]

(3) how many and what proportion of *(a)* manual, *(b)* non-manual and *(c)* full-time employees were earning less than (i) £161.60, (ii) £215.47 and (iii) £228.68 per week excluding overtime payments for (1) men, (2) women and (3) both sexes by standard economic region for *(A)* each Great Britain and *(B)* Northern Ireland in April. [41584]

Mrs. Angela Knight: I am placing the available information from the new earnings survey in the Members' Library. April 1995 information for Northern Ireland is not yet available.

Mortgage Brokers

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the regulatory bodies which oversee the work of mortgage brokers who give advice on mortgages. [41617]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Firms which sell, or offer advice on, mortgages which include an investment element, such as an endowment policy, have to be authorised by one of the Financial Services Act regulators, normally the Personal Investment Authority.

The banking ombudsman and the building societies ombudsman can also consider complaints about malpractice related to the selling of mortgages.

The mortgage lending industry is currently considering the possibility of producing a code of mortgage lending practice.

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the work of regulatory bodies which pursue cases of malpractice by mortgage brokers giving advice to the public. [41616]

Mrs. Knight: The performance of the Personal Investment Authority and other self-regulatory organisations is a matter for the Securities and Investment Board.

In 1993–94, mortgages accounted for 8.9 per cent. of preliminary complaints to the banking ombudsman, and 10.65 per cent. of the complaints accepted for full investigation. Cases varied from those who claimed that banks had given poor advice, to those who were concerned about mistakes in the calculations of repayments or final redemption figures.

In 1994–95, mortgages constituted 56 per cent. of the preliminary complaints received by the building societies ombudsman, and 62 per cent. of the cases which came to the ombudsman for resolution after exhausting the society's own internal complaints procedure.

WALES

NHS Trusts

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the directly managed units in the national health service in Wales and what progress each has made in moving to trust status. [41786]

Mr. Hague *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* The three remaining directly managed units in Wales are:

Merthyr/Cynon health unit

Rhymney Valley health unit

Hensol health unit

Applications have been received for each unit to acquire trust status from April 1996. Three months public consultation on the applications commenced on 25 September.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 6 November, *Official Report*, columns *642–43* if he will list which trusts provide *(a)* mental health and illness and *(b)* learning disabilities services for each health authority area in Wales classified as in whole or in part. [42303]

Mr. Hague: The answer is as follows:

Health authority	*Trust*
Clwyd	Wrexham Maelor Hospital NHS trust Glan Clwyd District General Hospital NHS trust Clwydian Community Care NHS trust[1]
Dyfed	Derwen NHS trust[1]
Gwent	Gwent Community Health NHS trust[1]
Gwynedd	Gwynedd Community Health NHS trust[1]
Mid Glamorgan	Rhondda Health Care NHS trust Bridgend and District NHS trust Merthyr Cynon Valley health unit (directly managed unit) Hensol hospital (directly managed unit)[1]
Powys	Powys NHS trust[1]
South Glamorgan	Cardiff Community Health Care trust[1] Llandough Hospital and Community NHS trust
West Glamorgan	Glan y Mor trust

[1] Denotes trusts providing learning disabilities services.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to his answer of 6 November, *Official Report*, columns *642–43*, if he will list any representations he has received from *(a)* Welsh Association of Health Authorities and Trusts and *(b)* from other sources in relation to trusts bidding together or separately to take over directly managed units, which themselves wish to be formed into a trust; and if he will make a statement. [42295]

Mr. Hague: Representations received to date on applications from trusts to merge with directly managed units in Wales are as follows:

(a) WAHAT—None;

(b) Others—

Rhodri Morgan Esq. MP

Allan Rogers Esq. MP

South Glamorgan Health Authority

Ceredigion and Mid Wales NHS Trust

Ms M. J. Henderson, Non-Executive Director, Mid Glamorgan Family Health Service Authority (independent comment)

South Glamorgan Homeopathic Group

Standing Conference of Voluntary Organisations for People with a Learning Disability in Wales

Rhondda Borough Council

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 6 November, *Official Report*, columns *642–43*, if he will list the different functions of each of the mixed function trusts and the different geographical areas to which they apply. [42304]

Mr. Hague: The current geographical areas for the different functions of the following NHS trusts are:

Llandough Hospital and Community NHS trust

Acute services mainly for the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan areas with the provision of community services restricted to the Vale of Glamorgan area, excluding Cowbridge and Llantwit Major.

Rhondda Healthcare NHS trust

Acute and community services for the Rhondda and Taff Ely area with drug and alcohol services provided to the whole of Mid Glamorgan.

Bridgend and District NHS trust

Acute, community and mental health services mainly for the Ogwr area and community services in the West Vale of Glamorgan.

Glan-y-Mor NHS trust

Acute services in Neath and Port Talbot areas and community and mental health services for West Glamorgan.

Cardiff Community Healthcare NHS trust

Community, mental health and learning disability services to the Greater Cardiff area and mental health services to the lower Rhymney Valley.

Gwent Community Health NHS trust

Community and mental health services to the county of Gwent and mental health services to the Rhymney Valley.

Welsh Language Board

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many schemes to promote the Welsh language have been submitted by public bodies under the Welsh Language Act 1993 and approved by the Welsh Language Board, and if he will make a statement. [42120]

Mr. Hague: The Welsh Language Board issued statutory notices to public bodies of the need to prepare schemes on 13 October 1995. No schemes have yet been submitted.

Mr. Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the cost of running the Welsh Language Board in 1994–95; and if he will make a statement. [42121]

Mr. Hague: The board's running costs for 1994–95 amounted to £868,792.

Brecon and Radnor Community Health Council

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has had from the Brecon and Radnor community health council in relation to patient deregistration in relation to the incentive payments for meeting immunisation targets, and if he will make a statement. [42213]

Mr. Hague: I have received no such representations.

School Funding

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has had from county councils in Wales concerning funding levels for schools in 1996–97; and if he will make a statement. [42186]

Mr. Hague: I met Welsh local authority representatives at the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government Finance in September to hear their views on local authority expenditure needs, including education, in 1996–97.

Decisions on capital and revenue resources for unitary authorities will be announced in the local authority capital and revenue settlements in December.

Mr. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent representations he has received concerning schools funding in Clwyd. [42188]

Mr. Hague: No representations have been received within the last two months concerning schools funding in Clwyd.

Planning Policy Guidance

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has had concerning draft planning guidance from local authorities in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [42190]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: My right hon. Friend has received representations from the Assembly of Welsh Counties, eight county councils, 28 district councils and seven new county and county borough councils in Wales in response to the public consultation exercise on the draft planning policy guidance in Wales documents. Responses are currently being evaluated to inform the way forward.

Estatecare Division (Sale)

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 6 November, *Official Report*, column *642*, what consultations he has had with the chairman of the Welsh Health Common Services Authority concerning the advertisement for sale of the authority's Estatecare division in the *Official Journal* of the European Communities; and what were the dates of the relevant exchange of correspondence with the *Official Journal* authorities.

Mr. Hague: I have had no discussions on this issue with the chairman. Investigation confirmed that there was no requirement to advertise the sale in the *Official Journal*. The conduct of the privatisation process is a matter for the chief executive of the Welsh Health Common Services Authority, to whom operational questions should be addressed.

OSIRIS

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 6 November, *Official Report*, columns *641–42*, if he will give the estimated number of staff to be provided with personal computers under the OSIRIS contract. [42274]

Mr. Hague: The advertisement inviting proposals for OSIRIS estimated the number of staff to be provided with personal computers as about 1,900.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to his answer of 6 November, *Official Report*, columns *641-42* if he will estimate the annualised sum payable for services under the OSIRIS as a percentage of the initial capital cost. [42296]

Mr. Hague: The information requested is commercially confidential.

Further Education Colleges

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent representations he has received regarding the funding of further education colleges; and if he will make a statement. [42184]

Mr. Hague: None, apart from the annual confidential advice from the Further Education Funding Council for Wales.

Apprenticeships

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many craft apprenticeships were made available in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [42210]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: Information is not collected centrally on the number of apprenticeships made available, nor is any reliable information available on those in employment in craft and related occupations who are undertaking a trade apprenticeship.

The following table shows the information on apprenticeships available from the labour force survey.

Modern apprenticeships were introduced in Wales last year in manufacturing engineering. For 1995–96, training and enterprise councils have been given resources to support 3,400 modern apprenticeships—including up to 1,000 accelerated apprenticeships.

Number of people in employment in Wales who were in the process of completing any recognised trade apprenticeship (at the time of the survey)

Year	*Number*
Spring 1991	19,000
Spring 1992	14,000
Spring 1993	14,000
Spring 1994	10,000
Spring 1995	10,000

Powys Family Health Services Authority

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what consultations he has had with the chairman of the Powys family health services authority concerning the deregistration of children from general practitioner patient lists for reasons arising from incentives paid for achieving immunisation rate targets; [42205]

(2) what consultations he has had with the chairman of the Powys family health services authority concerning the restoration to general practitioners' lists of families provisionally deregistered because of the financial impact on the practice of the immunisation targets set in the standard general practitioner contract. [42270]

Mr. Hague: I have had no such consultations.

European Regional Development Fund

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his oral answer to the hon. Member for Conwy (Sir W. Roberts) of 30 October, *Official Report*, column 7, on which dates his Department received *(a)* a detailed letter and *(b)* reminders from the economic development department of South Glamorgan county council raising concerns about the threat to payments from the European regional development fund arising from the reduced grant in aid from his Department; and if he will make a statement. [42273]

Mr. Hague: South Glamorgan county council raised a number of matters concerning the operation of the structural funds, including WDA participation, in a letter to my Department of 16 November 1994. The council provided further information related to the WDA's corporate plan on 2 February and wrote further on 2 and 17 March and 24 April 1995. There were informal exchanges between officials and the authority on 10 January and 21 February 1995. My predecessor gave an assurance to the House on 20 March 1995 about the propriety of WDA involvement in structural fund programmes, a view which has since been accepted by the European Commission.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will visit *(a)* Queensferry fire service station and *(b)* Buckley fire station in Clwyd; and if he will make a statement. [42191]

Mr. Hague: No; the responsibility for the fire service and its organisation in Wales rests with my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary.

Housing

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has had from district councils in Wales concerning the funding levels for housing in 1996–97; and if he will make a statement. [42187]

Mr. Gwilym Jones: My right hon. Friend and I met Welsh local authority representatives in the forum of the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government Finance in September to hear their views on local authority expenditure needs, including housing, in 1996–97. Subsequently, I met local authority representatives in the Welsh Housing Consultative Committee.

Decisions on capital and revenue resources for unitary authorities will be announced in the local authority capital and revenue settlements in December.

Mr. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many council houses have been sold in *(a)* 1994 and *(b)* so far in 1995, giving the cash units realised according to each housing authority. [42209]

Mr. Jones: The available information for 1994 is given in the following table. I will write to the hon. Member when the corresponding information for the first six months of 1995 has been finalised and will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Council house sales 1994

	Dwellings sold Number	*Receipts £000*
Aberconwy	36	638
Alyn and Deeside	72	1,322
Arfon	52	1,060
Blaenau Gwent	118	1,795
Brecknock	42	682
Cardiff	225	4,224
Carmarthen	59	1,010
Ceredigion	68	1,239
Colwyn	28	480
Cynon Valley	57	549
Delyn	32	492
Dinefwr	41	658
Dwyfor	22	501
Glyndwr	50	846
Islwyn	113	1,882
Llanelli	98	1,488
Lliw Valley	52	802
Meirionnydd	20	304
Merthyr Tydfil	56	754
Monmouth	119	2,264
Montgomeryshire	48	1,016
Neath	52	759
Newport	180	2,961
Ogwr	136	2,046
Port Talbot	105	1,496
Preseli Pembrokeshire	107	1,710
Radnorshire	25	536
Rhondda	30	309
Rhuddlan	25	454
Rhymney Valley	127	1,510
South Pembrokeshire	25	419
Swansea	185	2,418
Taff-Ely	74	1,171
Torfaen	282	3,545
Vale of Glamorgan	89	1,777
Wrexham Maelor	169	2,683
Ynys Mon	44	688

Source:
Local authority returns.

Teachers (Costs)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimate of how many extra *(a)* primary school and *(b)* secondary school teachers could be obtained by additional expenditure of £40 million; and if he will make a statement. [42207]

Mr. Richards: The information requested is not readily available. I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library of the House.

Class Sizes

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many primary school pupils are taught in classes of 32 or more; and if he will make a statement. [42185]

Mr. Hague: Information is not collected centrally in respect of primary school classes of more than 32 pupils. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) on 3 November, *Official Report*, column *493*.

Fire Service Reorganisation

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what further discussions he will have concerning the organisation and structure of the fire brigade in Wales in 1996–97; and if he will make a statement. [42189]

Mr. Hague: I have no plans to have further discussions concerning the organisation and structure of the fire service in Wales for 1996–97. The responsibility for the fire service in Wales rests with my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary.

Immunisation Targets

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will carry out a study of the impact of the immunisation targets in the standard general practitioner contract on the supply of primary health care services in remote rural areas by single-handed practices. [42260]

Mr. Hague: I have no plans to do so.

Patient Lists (Removal)

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he will be taking with respect to the removal of *(a)* children of the Venables family and *(b)* other children whose parents did not wish to have them immunised by Dr. Goodall-Copestake of Presteigne, Powys, from his general practitioner's list; what discussion he has held with Powys family health services authority on this subject; if he will list similar cases where general practitioners have had children removed from their lists; and if he will make a statement. [42280]

Mr. Hague: I understand that Dr. Goodall-Copestake has withdrawn his request that the children be removed from his list. I have held no discussions with Powys FHSA on this issue nor am I aware of any similar case elsewhere.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by this Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42329]

Mr. Hague: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy of my reply in the Library of the House.

Freight Terminal, South Wales

Mr. Sweeney: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his Department's involvement in proposals for a freight terminal in south Wales; and if he will make a statement. [42368]

Mr. Hague: The WDA and Welsh Office have received several applications for contributions towards the capital costs of developing freight terminals. In assessing these applications, the detailed requirements of the various schemes of assistance must be met, together with the overriding one of value for money. It is for the applicants to show that their proposals satisfy all these requirements. The effect on existing rail freight businesses is another important consideration.

The provision of such a facility and its nature are matters for the commercial and technical judgment of investors. There is no need for Welsh Office permission to build a terminal at any location subject to the usual planning considerations, but I have today directed South Glamorgan county council to prepare an environmental statement as part of its planning application for a proposed rail freight terminal at Wentloog, Cardiff.

Applications for ERDF assistance under the objective 2 programme for industrial south Wales have been made by Gwent county council, in respect of a development at Magor, and by South Glamorgan county council, in relation to a project at Wentloog. Both applications were submitted on 30 June 1995 and, inquiries have been completed, these will be considered by the appropriate technical group, a wide-ranging partnership comprising central and local government, the European Commission, agencies and other bodies. Decisions are expected in early 1996.

Applications in respect of the same sites have been submitted for freight facilities grant. This is an environmental grant designed to encourage the transport of freight by rail rather than road.

The Magor application was submitted on 21 June 1995 and, following a meeting with officials on 2 August, further material was received on 10 October. That material is being considered urgently but it is too early to say whether it will be sufficient to enable a decision on grant to be made.

An application for Wentloog was submitted on 20 October 1995 but further essential material is awaited from the applicants.

With regard to the applications made to the Welsh Development Agency, I have asked the agency to consider these proposals on their merits and to offer such support as it may determine is both justified and necessary. The agency will therefore be contacting the relevant bodies concerned to take forward discussion in this regard.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMEMT

Local Education Authorities

Sir David Knox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list local education authorities in rank order by the proportion of the potential schools' budget held back in the most recent year for which figures are available. [37670]

Mr. Robin Squire: The following table provided the information requested, for the financial year 1995–96.

Local education authority	*Percentage age not delegated*
Dudley	4.2
Hertfordshire	5.9
Solihull	6.0
Waltham Forest	6.1
Islington	6.1
Knowsley	6.1
Brent	6.5
Leeds	6.6
Berkshire	6.9
Northamptonshire	7.1
Rochdale	7.1
Staffordshire	7.2
Wigan	7.3
Greenwich	7.4
Liverpool	7.5
Sunderland	7.7
Manchester	8.0
Devon	8.1
Wolverhampton	8.1
Bury	8.2
North Tyneside	8.2
Cumbria	8.2
Havering	8.3
Oxfordshire	8.4
Norfolk	8.6
Coventry	8.7
Bedfordshire	8.8
Bexley	8.8
Gloucestershire	8.9
Somerset	8.9
Cheshire	9.1
Stockport	9.1
Tower Hamlets	9.1
Hereford and Worcester	9.2
Hammersmith and Fulham	9.2
Northumberland	9.2
Salford	9.3
Suffolk	9.4
Oldham	9.4
Redbridge	9.4
Richmond	9.6
Wirral	9.7
Walsall	9.7
Birmingham	9.7
Isle of Wight	9.8
Westminster	9.8
Sutton	9.8
Barnet	9.8
Harrow	9.9
Kensington and Chelsea	10.0
Croydon	10.0
Hillingdon	10.1
Ealing	10.1
North Yorkshire	10.2
Surrey	10.2
Dorset	10.3
Doncaster	10.3
Wiltshire	10.4
St. Helens	10.5
Lincolnshire	10.5
Cleveland	10.6
Enfield	10.6
Rotherham	10.6
Tameside	10.7
Derbyshire	10.7
Cambridgeshire	10.7
Kingston	10.8
Merton	10.8
South Tyneside	10.8
Barnsley	10.9
Calderdale	10.9
Barking and Dagenham	10.9
Essex	11.0
Cornwall	11.0
City	11.1
Bolton	11.1
East Sussex	11.1
West Sussex	11.1
Nottinghamshire	11.2
Hounslow	11.2
Humberside	11.3
Sefton	11.3
Trafford	11.4
Hampshire	11.4
Durham	11.5
Buckinghamshire	11.6
Leicestershire	11.6
Warwickshire	11.6
Newcastle upon Tyne	11.8
Shropshire	11.8
Sandwell	11.9
Avon	11.9
Southwark	12.0
Bradford	12.0
Wakefield	12.1
Sheffield	12.2
Bromley	12.2
Lancashire	12.3
Lewisham	12.4
Kent	12.5
Camden	12.6
Haringey	12.8
Kirklees	12.9
Hackney	13.1
Gateshead	13.4
Newham	13.5
Lambeth	13.6
Wandsworth	14.6
Isles of Scilly	14.9

Education and Employment Departments

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement on the work of *(a)* the Department for Education and *(b)* the Department of Employment since 1990. [38077]

Mr. Robin Squire: The Department for Education has aimed to raise general standards of educational attainment, to enable individuals to realise their full potential, to equip pupils and students for the responsibilities of adult life, to enhance the nation's international competitiveness and to enhance choice and diversity for parents and students.

Standards have been raised in schools. The national curriculum has been developed and revised. Regular assessment for seven and 14-year-olds has been introduced, and in 1994 many 11-year-olds were tested as part of a voluntary national pilot. The parents charter was published in 1991—updated in 1994—setting out the rights and responsibilities of parents in relation to their child's education. The Education (Schools) Act 1992 paved the way for performance tables, which have subsequently been published. A code of practice on the education of children with special educational needs came into effect in 1994. The Office for Standards in Education, Ofsted, was established in 1991 to carry out independent inspections of schools. Where a school is found at inspection to be failing to provide acceptable education, it becomes subject to special measures and is required to submit an action plan to the Secretary of State. In May 1995 the Secretary of State launched the improving schools programme which contains a wide range of measures designed to help raise standards of teaching and learning in all schools.

Choice and diversity have been enhanced. The number of grant-maintained schools have increased from 10 in January 1990 to more than 1,000 in 1995. The number of city technology colleges has increased from three to 15. The technology and colleges and language programme, launched in 1993, builds on CTC experience by helping existing maintained secondary schools to specialise in science, technology and mathematics or in modern foreign languages. We now have 101 technology colleges and six languages approved offering a new choice for parents across much of the country. The assisted places scheme continues to give the parents of academically able children the opportunity to send them to good independent secondary schools. In July 1995, the Secretary of State announced the new nursery voucher scheme for four-year-olds. The parents of every four-year-old will receive a voucher which they can exchange for three terms of good-quality nursery education in the state, private or voluntary sectors.

Participation in full and part-time education at age 16 has increased from 73 per cent. in 1990–91 to 79 per cent. in 1994–95, and at age 17 from 59 per cent. to 68 per cent. The percentage of 15-year-olds obtaining five or more GCSEs at grade C or better has increased from 34.5 per cent. in 1989–90 to 43.3 per cent. in 1993–94, while the percentage of young people obtaining two or more passes at GCE A/AS level has increased from 20.2 per cent. to 27.9 per cent.

In further education, participation of 16-year-olds in full-time education in schools and FE colleges has increased by about 12 per cent. since 1990. The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 released FE institutions from local authority control, giving them greater freedom to conduct their own affairs. Following the 1994 White Paper "Competitiveness: Helping Business to Win", links between FE institutions and local training and enterprise councils have been strengthened.

In higher education, participation rates have greatly increased, and the rates projected in the 1991 White Paper "Higher Education: A New Framework" have already virtually been met. To help maintain standards, the Higher Education Quality Council was established in 1993 and has continued with its programme of audits of HE institutions' quality assurance processes.

The Employment Department has aimed to support economic growth by promoting a competitive, efficient and flexible labour market.

Flexibility in the labour market has facilitated recovery from the recession. Unemployment has fallen by over 700,000 since December 1992 and stands at two percentage points below the average for the European Union. Employment and training measures to help unemployed people have been maintained at high levels despite the fall in unemployment. The effectiveness of measures has been continually monitored and new measures developed on a pilot basis, followed by evaluation and extension where they have proved successful.

The Employment Service was established as an agency in 1990. Over 1,000 jobcentres are clearly focused on their key objectives of getting people into work and paying them benefits accurately and promptly while they look for work. This year, ES has been set its highest ever target of placing 1.9 million unemployed people into jobs.

The Jobseekers Act 1995 provides for the introduction of the jobseeker's allowance. The main aims of the JSA are to improve the operation of the labour market by helping people in their search for work, to secure better value for money for the taxpayer and to improve the service to unemployed people themselves.

During the period since 1990, the Department continued with a step-by-step reform of industrial relations legislation. In 1994–95 the number of strikes was the lowest since records began in 1891.

The Department has continued to promote equality of opportunity in the labour market.

The Department has presented and promoted the United Kingdom's approach to labour market issues within the European Union and helped to increase the emphasis in EU social policy on improving competitiveness, reducing the cost of employment and increasing labour market flexibility.

Both Departments have supported the development of national targets for education and training, and have taken part fully in the Government's competitiveness and deregulation initiatives.

The Employment Department has introduced a series of reforms and measures to boost outputs from the training system. Since 1990, it has established 74 training and enterprise councils in England. The system of national vocational qualifications has been further developed to the point of 86 per cent. coverage of the working population. The Department has promoted and supported the investors in people standard. Nearly 20,000 employers are now committed to investors in people. In 1990, the Department introduced youth training as a replacement for the youth training scheme. It has successfully operated the YT guarantee. In 1991, it introduced youth credits, now available nationally. In 1993, training for work was introduced as a replacement for employment training and employment action. Modern and accelerated modern apprenticeships have been made nationally available. Incentives have been introduced for individuals to improve their skills through a range of measures including career development loans and tax relief for vocational training. The Department has provided help for small businesses to develop the skills of their work force through measures such as small firms training loans, 1994, and skills for small businesses, 1995.

Following the formation of the Department for Education and Employment in July 1995, a draft aim, objectives and values for the new Department have been published and rapid progress has been made towards integrating structures and policies.

Further details of the work of the Department for Education and the Employment Department are available in their annual departmental reports.

Grants

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment for what grant-giving funds her Department is responsible, requiring a private sector contribution, where the use of national lottery funds is not allowed to count towards that private sector portion. [38598]

Mr. Forth: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that my right hon. Friend gave on Tuesday 31 October, *Official Report*, columns *183–84*.

Free School Meals

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is the percentage of children who currently take or are entitled to free school meals in each school in Doncaster education authority; and what was the figure *(a)* 12 months and *(b)* 24 months ago. [39050]

Mrs. Gillan: The following information is derived from returns made by schools in January of each year to the Department.

Percentage of day pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in maintained schools in Doncaster Local Education Authority

	Position in January each year		
	1993	*1994*	*1995*
Abbey CE middle school	41	53	54
Adwick Park junior school	37	31	37
Adwick school	20	23	27
Anchorage school	58	55	61
Arksey first and middle school	14	13	15
Armthorpe CE infant school	39	—	—
Armthorpe comprehensive school	17	19	21
Ash Hill middle school	24	27	24
Askern Spa junior school	39	40	37
Athelstane school	n/a	56	54
Auckley junior and infant school	3	1	2
Balby Carr school	25	24	29
Balby middle school	39	41	41
Balby Street junior and infant school	33	34	32
Barnburgh primary school	6	5	7
Barnby Dun first school	13	8	—
Barnby Dun middle school	11	10	—
Barnby Dun primary school	—	—	5
Bentley RC Junior and Infant School	23	22	23
Bentley New village primary school	45	47	52
Bessacarr first school	2	2	3
Braithwell first and middle school	9	11	—
Brodsworth CE first and middle school	21	12	—
Campsmount school	25	26	29
Carcroft first school	46	40	—
Carcroft middle school	43	47	—
Carcroft primary school	—	—	42
Carr House middle school	37	39	44
Castle Hills first school	21	—	—
Castle Hills primary school	—	23	24
Cedar Special school	55	55	55
Central first school	23	22	24
Chase school	37	35	35
Copley junior school	3	3	2
Crookesbroom primary school	34	41	46
Curlew middle school	41	40	—
Danum school	24	22	22
Denaby main infant school	53	54	50
Denaby main junior school	67	67	73
Don valley high School	27	24	26
Doncaster road infant school	45	38	31
Doncaster road junior school	43	40	30
Dunsville primary school	17	20	20
Eastgate first school	57	57	—
Edenthorpe Hall primary school	10	13	9
Edlington school	17	19	17
Ellers middle school	6	9	9
Estfeld primary school	2	3	2
Fernbank School	40	46	45
Finningley CE junior and infant school	8	6	5
Fishlake Endowed first school	7	11	—
Grange Lane first school	42	46	47
Green Lane middle school	25	32	33
Greentop first school	20	25	23
Hall Cross school	14	9	16
Hatfield high school	19	23	27
Hawthorn first school	34	33	35
Hayfield Lane primary school	7	7	11
Hayfield school	6	6	7
Hexthorpe first school	39	45	43
Hexthorpe middle school	38	41	40
High Street first school	31	—	—
High Street middle school	30	—	—
High Street primary school	—	30	29
Highfields primary school	63	60	61
Highwood junior and infant School	55	60	59
Hill Top infant school	46	42	43
Hill Top junior school	41	44	48
Holmescarr junior school	50	54	57
Holy Family RC junior and infant school	16	16	18
Hooton Pagnell CE primary school	8	18	12
Hungerhill school	8	9	9
Hyde Park first school	24	27	28
Intake first school	43	43	47
Intake middle school	42	44	49
Ivanhoe junior and infant school	31	28	27
King Edward first school	50	47	51
Kingfisher first school	33	35	35
Kirk Sandall infant school	13	11	8
Kirk Sandall junior school	8	11	16
Kirkby Avenue first school	19	22	22
Kirkby Avenue middle school	18	22	21
Kirkton Lane primary school	31	38	38
Little Moor first school	32	37	35
Manor middle school	9	14	17
Marshland middle school	29	36	38
Mayflower junior and infant school	18	13	14
McAuley RC school	13	13	14
Mexborough school	26	29	28
Montagu junior school	30	28	27
Morley place junior school	28	29	32
Moss Road first school	23	26	29
Nightingale first school	36	39	37
Northcliffe school	36	37	40
Northfield middle school	29	34	38
Norton first school	25	26	21
Norton junior school	21	24	24
Orchard infant school	4	5	3
Our Lady of Mount Carmel RC primary school	22	23	18
Our Lady of Sorrows RC primary school	14	16	19
Owston Skellow junior school	28	28	34
Park First school	33	28	30
Park Road infant school	26	25	26
Pheasant Bank junior school	26	31	31
Popham Memorial CE primary school	10	8	6
Richmond Hill infant school	10	11	10
Richmond Hill junior school	14	15	15
Ridgewood school	10	10	11
Rosedale primary school	23	23	17
Rossington Comprehensive school	28	32	34
Rossington Hall school	53	45	55
Rowena infant school	27	27	26
Saltersgate infant school	9	10	7
Saltersgate junior school	6	10	7
Sandall wood school	40	47	46
Sandringham first school	26	30	33
Shaw Wood infant school	27	29	28
Shaw Wood junior school	33	31	34
Sheep Dip Lane primary school	43	45	44
Skellow infant school	28	29	30

Percentage of day pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in maintained schools in Doncaster Local Education Authority

Position in January each year

	1993	*1994*	*1995*
South Cantley first school	20	24	19
South Cantley middle school	11	15	13
South Common first school	36	36	35
Southfield junior and infant school	10	8	11
St. Aidans CE primary	—	—	25
St. Albans RC junior and infant school	32	34	35
St. Francis Xavier RC primary school	26	20	20
St. Georges CE first school	24	23	—
St. Johns CE junior and infant school	12	14	13
St. Josephs RC junior and infant school	16	19	17
St. Marys RC junior and infant school	35	34	36
St. Michaels CE first and middle school	14	14	13
St. Peters CE first school	13	17	—
St. Peters RC primary school	21	21	19
St. Wilfrids CE junior and infant school	7	13	14
Stainforth first school	—	—	54
Stainforth middle school	43	45	53
Station Road junior and infant school	22	24	29
Stirling first school	36	39	48
Sunnyfields first and middle school	17	21	24
Sycamore first school	34	31	36
Thorne grammer school	21	26	27
Thorne Moorends first school	49	45	46
Tickhill CE Aided middle school	6	6	—
Tickhill first school	9	7	—
Tickhill St. Marys CE primary	—	—	6
Toll Bar first and middle school	51	48	46
Tornedale first school	26	26	26
Town Field first school	25	33	35
Tranmoor junior school	20	—	—
Tranmoor Lane infant school	13	—	—
Tranmoor Primary school	—	20	16
Travis CE first school	11	11	12
Victoria first school	34	35	—
Victoria middle school	34	31	—
Victoria primary school	—	—	34
Wadworth primary school	17	12	12
Warmsworth first school	6	7	—
Warmsworth middle school	7	6	—
Warmsworth primary school	—	—	8
Washington infant school	33	29	28
Waverley first school	45	46	44
West Road first school	29	31	29
Westgate first school	49	52	—
Wheatley Hills middle school	20	28	26
Wheatley middle school	34	37	38
Wilby Carr middle school	30	27	33
Willow first school	5	7	8
Windhill junior and infant school	27	31	31
Woodfield first school	37	42	44
Woodfield middle school	32	35	33
Woodhouse primary school	5	7	10
Woodlands East RC junior and infant school	29	34	24
Woodlands infant school	36	36	38
Woodlands junior school	36	37	37
Yorkshire school for the deaf	0	0	—

—not applicable n/a not available

Gateways to Learning Initiative

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what achievements have been made under the gateways to learning initiative programme; what yearly funding it has received to date; if Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council is involved; and when the initiative will end. [39020]

Mr. Paice: The gateways to learning initiative has helped training and enterprise councils in England to promote the development of quality-assured adult careers guidance and information networks. Over 66,000 people have so far been helped to produce personal action plans relating to their education, training and career opportunities. By the time the initiative ends in December 1995 it will have received a total of £8 million in Department funding. The yearly expenditures are shown in the table.

Barnsley and Doncaster TEC joined the initiative in 1994 and its involvement is planned to end in December 1995.

Gateways to learning initiative

	Government expenditure £ million
1992–93	2
1993–94	3
1994–95	2
1995–96[1]	0.4

[1] To end September 1995.

Barnsley and Doncaster Training and Enterprise Council

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement on the results of her Department's last quality assessor's audit of Barnsley and Doncaster TEC; and on what date the next one is planned. [39438]

Mr. Paice: The last quality audit at Barnsley and Doncaster training and enterprise council was a compliance audit undertaken in August 1994 on its youth training provision.

The findings of the audit were that the TEC was in compliance with the Department's quality requirements. A number of areas were identified in which development was desirable to increase the overall effectiveness of the TEC's quality management systems. The TEC has since taken effective action to address each of these development needs.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list by grade the numbers of staff and their cost for *(a)* the financial year 1994–95 and *(b)* the estimated figures for the financial year 1995–96, for each executive agency for which she is responsible. [39524]

Mr. Robin Squire: This Department has two executive agencies, the Teachers Pensions Agency and the Employment Service.

The tables show staff by grade in each agency for 1994–95 and in 1995–96 with their associated costs. The 1994–95 staff figures for ES are at 1 April 1994 while those for TPA reflect the average over the year. The costs shown for 1994–95 are outturn figures.

The staff numbers for 1995–96 for TPA are actuals as at October 1995 and those for the Employment Service are actuals at 1 April 1995. It is expected that the final numbers for the Employment Service will be smaller. Staff costs for the financial year 1995–96 are expected to match the budget allocation as shown.

TPA staff by grade 1994–95 and 1995–96 and total cost

Grade	*1994–95*	*1995–96*
Grade 5 and equivalent	1	1
Grade 7 and equivalent	5	5
SEO and equivalent	9	9
HEO and equivalent	20	25
EO and equivalent	58	56
AO and equivalent	180	178
AA and equivalent	77 (including 12 casuals)	115 (including 23 casuals)
Total staff numbers	350	389
Total staff costs	£5.1 million	£5.5 million

ES staff costs 1994–95 and 1995–96 and total costs

Grade	*1994–95*	*1995–96*
Grade 3 and 4	8.0	7.0
DE 5 and equivalent	18.0	19.0
DE 6 and equivalent	30.5	29.6
DE 7 and equivalent	181.5	180.3
SEO and equivalent	423.5	415.4
HEO and equivalent	2,142.0	1,890.9
EO and equivalent	12,062.5	11,176.7
AO and equivalent	25,611.0	24,066.2
AA and equivalent	1,559.5	1,422.7
SPS/PS	47.5	49.3
Typing staff	106.5	56.4
Support staff	561.0	548.0
Casuals	3,568.0	644.7
Total staff numbers	46,319.5	40,506.2
Total staff costs	£704.3 million	£669.7 million

Vaccines

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will initiate a study as to whether the use of measles, mumps and rubella vaccines is related to learning difficulties in schoolchildren. [40062]

Mr. Forth: This is primarily a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health. I am advised that there are no plans to carry out such a study at present.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what consultation she, Ministers in her Department or departmental officials have had with her or their counterparts in the Department of Health in regard to the effect on school attendance of children vaccinated with measles and rubella inoculations over the past year. [40066]

Mr. Forth: Officials in this Department have been in close contact with colleagues in the Department of Health in preparation for, during and after the measles and rubella immunisation campaign on a variety of issues.

This Department collects and publishes information on pupils' attendance in schools only in terms of authorised and unauthorised absence. Any general health implications for pupils, following the immunisation programme, would be for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health.

Unemployment

Sir Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the annual loss to the Exchequer of unemployed persons in *(a)* October 1992 and *(b)* at present, in current prices. [39907]

Mr. Forth: The total expenditure on unemployment related benefits in the United Kingdom was £9.3 billion in 1992–93 and is estimated to have been £9.5 billion in 1994–95, the latest year for which figures are available.

Sir Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is the basis for the figures supplied to the Employment Committee by the Employment Department on 18 November 1994, showing the overall cost of unemployment to be £13.2 billion in 1992–93 and £14.3 billion in 1993–94; and if she will give a figure for 1994–95 on the same basis. [41376]

Mr. Forth: The figures provided to the Employment Committee were not an estimate of the cost of unemployment, but were simply the total public expenditure on items requested by the Committee. The corresponding figure for 1994–95 is £13.5 billion.

Remploy

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what proposals to sell Remploy are being considered by Ministers. [40390]

Mr. Forth: None. Remploy is already a private company limited by guarantee, although it receives a Government grant to compensate it for the costs of employing severely disabled people.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what has been the cost of ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40742]

Mr. Paice: Ministerial transport is provided to the Department by the government car service and no allowances have been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles. The information requested, in respect of both the former Employment and Education Departments, is contained in the following table:

Year	*Employment department costs £*	*Education department costs £*
1990–91	171,198	134,191
1991–92	195,075	241,215
1992–93	216,352	217,197
1993–94	238,134	288,121
1994–95	236,062	274,377

1. The DFE figure for 1990–91 does not include the cost of using GCS to transport ministerial boxes.

2. During the five-year period, each of the former Departments had four ministerial cars on hire, except for the financial years 1991–92 and the first four months of 1994–95 when the Department for Education had five cars.

School Leavers

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, pursuant to her answer of 24 October, *Official Report*, columns *611–12*, if she will make a statement on the reasons why her Department no longer collects information on school leavers in the maintained and independent sector. [40648]

Mr. Robin Squire: The information on school leavers was derived from the school examinations survey. The survey collected examinations and school leavers data from a sample of pupils in all secondary maintained and independent schools.

The decision to abandon the SES was taken as part of a move towards securing the Department's examination statistics directly from the examination boards and groups. The new source provides more comprehensive and accurate figures, although it cannot identify school leavers.

There were significant cost savings to be realised, in particular in the compliance cost to schools, once the SES had been discontinued. These savings helped offset the added burden on schools arising from checking and providing the data to be published in the school and college performance tables.

Jobfinder's Grant

Mrs. Liddell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many applicants for the jobfinder's grant have been disallowed on the ground that time spent by lone parents on an order book does not count towards the qualifying period for the grant. [40642]

Mr. Forth: I have been asked to reply.

Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from D. J. Lifton to Mrs. Helen Liddell, dated 8 November 1995:

The Secretary of State had asked me, in the absence of the Chief Executive, to reply to your question about the Jobfinder's Grant.

We do not maintain records of lone parents claiming benefits by way of an order book who apply for a Jobfinder's Grant.

The grant is targeted, in the main, at people who have been required to actively seek work for two years or more. It, therefore, precludes payments to lone parents who have received their benefit by means of an order book, since many people receiving benefit in this way will not be looking for work.

I hope this is helpful.

Postgraduate Student Awards

Mr. Bryan Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) how many discretionary awards were made to students on postgraduate courses by each local education authority in the last three years for which figures are available; and what was the total level of spending on discretionary awards to postgraduate students by each local education authority in the last three years for which figures are available in *(a)* cash terms *(b)* current prices; [40756]

(2) what is the total level of discretionary awards made to postgraduate students in the last three years for which figures are available in *(a)* cash terms and *(b)* current prices.

Mr. Forth: The information requested is given in the following table.

Discretionary awards to postgraduate students England and Wales: Academic years 1991–92 to 1993–94

	Number of awards			*Expenditure £000s (Cash terms)*			*Expenditure £000s (Real terms)*[1]		
LEA name	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993-94*	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1991-92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*
Corporation of London	1	—	2	2	—	8	2	—	8
Camden	—	10	—	—	40	—	—	41	—
Greenwich	4	5	3	25	23	16	26	23	16
Hackney	20	2	5	125	12	25	134	12	25
Hammersmith and Fulham	2	9	1	10	29	6	10	30	6
Islington	9	—	—	51	—	—	55	—	—
Kensington and Chelsea	27	27	—	116	113	—	124	117	—
Lambeth	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lewisham	14	8	12	74	29	36	79	30	36
Southwark	15	8	1	64	35	4	68	36	4
Tower Hamlets	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wandsworth[2]	—	11	—	—	30	—	—	31	—
Westminster	38	46	25	124	152	57	133	156	57
Barking and Dagenham	13	5	—	65	22	—	70	23	—
Barnet	—	49	12	—	28	4	—	29	4
Bexley	13	25	—	43	90	—	46	93	—
Brent	—	15	8	—	50	37	—	51	37
Bromley[2]	47	—	1	187	—	3	201	—	3
Croydon	5	31	—	24	25	—	26	26	—
Ealing	31	—	—	90	—	—	96	—	—
Enfield	25	2	—	54	5	—	58	5	—
Haringey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Harrow	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Havering	12	—	—	49	—	—	53	—	—
Hillingdon	33	—	2	133	—	7	143	—	7
Hounslow	5	2	3	11	4	8	12	4	8
Kingston upon Thames	3	—	1	8	—	—	8	—	—

Discretionary awards to postgraduate students England and Wales: Academic years 1991–92 to 1993–94

LEA name	*Number of awards*			*Expenditure £000s (Cash terms)*			*Expenditure £000s (Real terms)*[1]		
	1991–92	*1992–93*	*1993-94*	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1991-92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*
Merton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Newham	26	1	1	61	—	3	65	—	3
Redbridge	68	27	88	271	110	134	291	113	134
Richmond upon Thames	7	—	—	25	—	—	27	—	—
Sutton	2	3	—	2	4	—	2	4	—
Waltham Forest	4	—	—	22	—	—	23	—	—
Birmingham	—	201	27	—	821	192	—	847	192
Coventry	—	5	1	—	11	4	—	12	4
Dudley	12	13	1	11	10	—	12	10	—
Sandwell	1	1	—	5	6	—	6	7	—
Solihull	2	3	3	7	14	14	7	14	14
Walsall	40	34	—	143	116	—	153	120	—
Wolverhampton	6	—	—	29	—	—	31	—	—
Knowsley	10	7	11	28	17	20	30	18	20
Liverpool	68	65	28	192	179	68	206	184	68
St. Helens	11	17	—	33	37	—	36	38	—
Sefton	47	52	51	233	116	137	250	119	137
Wirral	63	58	35	241	263	177	259	271	177
Bolton	57	2	2	13	8	7	14	8	7
Bury	52	—	—	113	—	—	121	—	—
Manchester	7	8	—	28	30	—	30	30	—
Oldham	23	20	—	93	88	—	100	91	—
Rochdale	26	26	8	55	59	12	59	61	12
Salford	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stockport	—	6	8	—	10	16	—	11	16
Tameside	16	—	—	49	—	—	52	—	—
Trafford	61	57	2	141	126	7	152	130	7
Wigan	7	2	—	17	6	—	18	6	—
Barnsley	9	12	—	43	35	—	46	36	—
Doncaster	40	28	36	85	56	60	91	58	60
Rotherham	19	15	18	82	55	45	88	57	45
Sheffield[2]	30	—	—	144	—	—	154	—	—
Bradford	21	21	11	83	99	40	89	102	40
Calderdale	2	—	—	7	—	—	8	—	—
Kirkless	62	57	16	208	148	54	223	153	54
Leeds	23	—	—	20	—	—	22	—	—
Wakefield	7	5	1	25	21	—	26	22	—
Gateshead	16	22	22	61	87	113	66	90	113
Newcastle upon Tyne	3	7	10	7	11	28	8	11	28
North Tyneside	19	10	—	47	21	—	50	22	—
South Tyneside	12	17	9	24	41	20	26	43	20
Sunderland	1	3	20	1	4	24	2	5	24
Isles of Scilly	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
London Residuary Body	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Clwyd	75	2	1	182	6	2	195	6	2
Dyfed	2	—	—	4	—	—	4	—	—
Gwent	88	76	1	317	297	5	340	307	5
Gwynedd	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mid-Glamorgan	82	82	—	330	343	—	354	354	—
Powys	21	5	11	78	23	41	84	24	41
South Glamorgan	4	1	2	11	5	8	12	6	8
West Glamorgan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Avon	24	16	1	56	36	1	60	37	1
Bedfordshire	12	—	—	36	—	—	38	—	—
Berkshire	60	35	10	193	66	20	207	69	20
Buckinghamshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cambridgeshire	63	78	8	286	408	37	307	421	37
Cheshire	186	8	2	589	22	10	632	23	10
Cleveland	101	112	59	441	618	218	473	637	218
Cornwall	77	40	61	187	119	162	200	122	162
Cumbria	70	70	6	172	151	13	184	156	13
Derbyshire	103	21	3	321	45	3	344	47	3
Devon	62	73	3	197	112	6	212	116	6
Dorset	58	128	153	159	231	287	171	238	287
Durham	7	—	—	25	—	—	27	—	—
East Sussex	2	6	2	5	24	11	6	25	11
Essex	181	162	—	810	986	—	869	1,016	—
Gloucestershire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Discretionary awards to postgraduate students England and Wales: Academic years 1991–92 to 1993–94

	Number of awards			*Expenditure £000s (Cash terms)*			*Expenditure £000s (Real terms)*[1]		
LEA name	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993-94*	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1991-92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*
Hampshire	108	3	—	149	1	—	159	1	—
Hereford and Worcester	61	3	2	196	10	9	211	10	9
Hertfordshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Humberside	—	75	—	—	60	—	—	62	—
Isle of Wight	3	1	—	4	3	—	4	3	—
Kent	24	16	7	63	40	17	67	42	17
Lancashire	5	5	166	15	13	483	16	14	483
Leicestershire	22	—	—	30	—	—	32	—	—
Lincolnshire	25	28	41	65	109	120	70	113	120
Norfolk	78	51	2	195	116	2	209	120	2
North Yorkshire	122	145	2	421	112	—	452	115	—
Northamptonshire	50	56	128	159	166	290	171	172	290
Northumberland	43	2	29	148	10	22	158	10	22
Nottinghamshire	43	37	—	142	98	—	152	101	—
Oxfordshire	41	48	44	93	117	122	100	121	122
Shropshire	67	50	56	188	147	150	202	152	150
Somerset	5	8	11	13	10	28	14	10	28
Staffordshire	182	146	5	545	300	12	585	309	12
Suffolk	69	1	—	294	7	—	315	7	—
Surrey	133	147	115	262	316	97	281	326	97
Warwickshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
West Sussex	—	80	91	—	247	175	—	255	175
Wiltshire	30	2	—	154	21	—	165	22	—
England and Wales[3]	3,535	2,920	1,511	11,441	8,869	3,746	12,274	9,149	3,746

Source:
F503G.
— = nil or negligible.

[1] In 1993–94 prices using the March 1995 GDP deflator for fee expenditure and the RPI (excluding mortgage interest payments) in respect of maintenance expenditure.

[2] Wandsworth were unable to provide full details of discretionary awards in 1991–92. Bromley and Sheffield were unable to provide full details in 1992–93.

[3] National totals have been grossed to compensate for either partial or complete non-returners.

Further Education Colleges

Mr. Bryan Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many colleges in the further education sector offered provision in *(a)* sciences, *(b)* construction and *(c)* engineering in the last three years for which figures are available; and if she will list them (i) individually and (ii) by region. [40755]

Mr. Paice: Details of the type of provision available in further education colleges are matters for the Further Education Funding Council. I am therefore asking the council's chief executive to write to the hon. Member.

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans the Government have to allow unincorporated colleges to apply directly to the Further Education Funding Council for their schedule 2 funding. [41236]

Mr. Paice: In accordance with the commitment in the "Competitiveness: Forging Ahead" White Paper, Cm 2867, the Government are considering the removal of the requirement that potential new further education providers must gain the sponsorship of an existing college before being able to receive FEFC funding.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the original estimated cost of implementing the jobseeker's allowance, giving a breakdown of expenditure; and what is the current estimated cost of implementing the jobseeker's allowance, giving a breakdown. [40840]

Mr. Forth: In November 1994 the one-off administrative costs of implementing the jobseeker's allowance were estimated at £270 million. The main cost areas were:

	£ million
Information technology and allied costs	110
Training	70
Premises	45
Project management and Communications	45

Revisions to these estimates are being concerned as part of this year's public expenditure survey.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what will be the final cost of installing the new computer system designed to implement the jobseeker's allowance. [39675]

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* Two new computer systems will support the implementation of the jobseeker's allowance. The labour market system will replace current systems in ES jobcentres used to support vacancy filling and advisory work. The estimated cost of developing and installing this system is around £70 million.

The JSA payments system is being developed to pay JSA, by girocheque or automated credit transfer. The estimated cost of implementing JSAPS is about

£80 million. This figure covers expenditure which has already been incurred and planned expenditure to March 1999.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what will be the cost of delaying the introduction of the jobseeker's allowance by six months; and what will be the interim position of those claiming the allowance. [39671]

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The cost of delaying the introduction of jobseeker's allowance by six months is estimated to be £25 million to £30 million, in terms of overall benefit expenditure.

People who are unemployed between April and October 1996 will continue to receive unemployment benefit or income support. When JSA is introduced in October 1996, existing claimants will be moved to JSA. There will be transitional arrangements to protect such claimants against cash loss. Those for whom benefit was payable immediately before 8 April 1996 will be entitled to a maximum of 12 months' contributory benefit. Those for whom benefit was not payable at that time will be entitled to a maximum of six months' contributory benefit.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what has been the cost of using outside consultant agencies in reviewing the implementation of the jobseeker's allowance. [39672]

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* An external review of the project to implement the jobseeker's allowance was carried out earlier this year. The review cost was £88,000 including VAT.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment when the computer systems designed to implement the jobseeker's allowance will be ready. [39674]

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The computer systems designed to implement jobseeker's allowance will be ready for the introduction of jobseeker's allowance in October 1996.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the original timetable for the implementation of the jobseeker's allowance; what is the current timetable; and if she will make a statement. [39678]

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* It was originally planned that jobseeker's allowance would be introduced in April 1996. It was clear in May 1995 that the implementation as originally planned would entail risks to the smooth delivery of the new service to unemployed people. We therefore decided to introduce it in October 1996 and we are holding to that timetable.

Mr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what considerations led to the decision to reduce unemployment benefit in April 1996 and introduce jobseeker's allowance in October 1996. [39670]

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* Unemployment benefit is not to be reduced in April 1996.

The Government have always been concerned to ensure that implementation of jobseeker's allowance, which is a large and complex undertaking, should not entail risks to the smooth delivery of services to unemployed people. We therefore took the decision to defer implementation of jobseeker's allowance until October 1996 when it became evident that implementation in April 1996 would have involved an unacceptable level of risk.

Youth Training

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many *(a)* fatal, *(b)* major and *(c)* minor accidents took place on youth training schemes in each region in (i) July to September 1993, (ii) January to March 1994, (iii) April to June 1994, (iv) July to September 1994, (v) October to December 1994, (vi) January to March 1995, (vii) April to June 1995 and (viii) July to September 1995; what were the numbers of accidents on training for work for the same periods. [41128]

Mr. Paice: Table A gives the accident figures for youth training. Table B gives the accident figures for training for work in each English region for the periods stated.

Notes:

(a) Department for Education and Employment figures for trainees have been complied on a similar basis to those prepared by the Health and Safety Executive for employed persons. However, the Department's figures include a number of accidents to trainees in educational establishments and road traffic accidents which would not have been reportable to the Health and Safety Executive had the individuals been employed.

(b) Major injuries are classified according to the severity criteria laid down in the Reporting of Injuries Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985.

(c) North-west region and north-west (Greater Manchester) region were restructured in the quarter ending 30 June 1994 and became north-west region and Merseyside region.

(d) The accident figures for the period July to September 1995 are not yet available.

Table A
Youth Training

	Fatal	*Major*	*Minor*
July to September 1993			
South East	0	3	23
London	0	4	8
Eastern	0	5	24
South West	0	4	39
West Midlands	0	6	28
East Midlands	0	3	26
Yorkshire and Humberside	1	12	71
North West	0	10	49
North West (GM)	0	3	21
Northern	0	6	36
January to March 1994			
South East	0	4	29
London	0	1	18
Eastern	0	4	21
South West	0	4	23
West Midlands	0	8	35
East Midlands	0	3	34
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	9	85
North West	0	12	39
North West (GM)	0	6	22
Northern	0	10	49
April to June 1994			
South East	0	1	16
London	0	1	8
Eastern	0	3	28
South West	0	5	20

Table A
Youth Training

	Fatal	Major	Minor
West Midlands	0	3	31
East Midlands	0	4	21
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	5	50
Merseyside	0	1	11
North West	0	12	39
North East	0	8	56
July to September 1994			
South East	0	7	20
London	0	1	19
Eastern	0	0	32
South West	0	5	24
West Midlands	0	5	34
East Midlands	0	9	35
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	11	59
Merseyside	0	0	15
North West	0	13	62
North East	0	5	49
October to December 1994			
South East	0	3	23
London	0	2	19
Eastern	0	4	28
South West	0	12	26
West Midlands	0	7	44
East Midlands	0	4	28
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	8	39
Merseyside	0	2	18
North West	0	9	50
North East	0	9	51
Janaury to March 1995			
South East	0	5	32
London	0	4	17
Eastern	0	5	21
South West	0	7	26
West Midlands	0	2	37
East Midlands	0	6	27
Yorkshire and Humberside	1	13	45
Merseyside	0	1	12
North West	0	11	48
North East	0	8	31
April to June 1995			
South East	0	4	24
London	0	2	15
Eastern	0	1	19
South West	0	1	34
West Midlands	0	10	33
East Midlands	0	5	22
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	6	57
Merseyside	0	1	15
North West	0	8	36
North East	0	6	32

Table B
Training for Work

	Fatal	Major	Minor
July to September 1993			
South East	0	5	2
London	0	0	2
Eastern	0	4	4
South West	0	1	8
West Midlands	0	0	11
East Midlands	0	3	15
Yorkshire and Humberside	1	6	35
North West	0	0	13
North West (GM)	0	0	5
Northern	0	3	15
January to March 1994			
South East	0	3	6
London	0	0	2
Eastern	0	0	9
South West	0	3	10
West Midlands	0	2	4
East Midlands	0	2	10
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	5	20
North West	0	5	12
North West (GM)	0	0	7
Northern	0	2	13
April to June 1994			
South East	0	0	10
London	0	1	3
Eastern	0	4	8
South West	0	0	7
West Midlands	0	5	14
East Midlands	0	1	4
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	3	26
Merseyside	0	0	2
North West	0	4	2
North East	0	3	22
July to September 1994			
South East	0	0	8
London	0	0	1
Eastern	0	4	6
South West	0	0	11
West Midlands	0	0	11
East Midlands	0	1	8
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	3	18
Merseyside	0	0	4
North West	0	3	12
North East	0	0	20
October to December 1994			
South East	0	0	6
London	0	0	3
Eastern	0	1	6
South West	0	2	6
West Midlands	0	1	7
East Midlands	0	0	1
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	4	15
Merseyside	0	0	2
North West	0	3	10
North East	0	1	12
January to March 1995			
South East	0	3	7
London	0	1	3
Eastern	0	2	6
South West	0	0	8
West Midlands	0	1	10
East Midlands	0	0	6
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	6	17
Merseyside	0	0	1
North West	0	1	15
North East	0	0	8
April to June 1995			
South East	0	2	5
London	0	0	3
Eastern	0	0	3
South West	0	2	7
West Midlands	0	1	5
East Midlands	0	1	4
Yorkshire and Humberside	0	0	9
Merseyside	0	0	4
North West	0	1	5
North East	0	0	15

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list for each training and enterprise council the number of youth training places available in 1993–94, 1994–95, the estimated number in 1995–96 and the total budget for youth training in each TEC for the same years. [41476]

Mr. Paice *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* Information on the number of places available on youth training for each training and enterprise council is not available.

The following table shows for each TEC in England:

The number of trainees on youth programmes, excluding prototype modern apprenticeships, at the end of March 1994 and March 1995.

Youth programme budgets, including modern apprenticeships from 1994, for the years 1993–94, 1994–95, and 1995–96.

A comparable figure for the number of trainees on youth programmes for 1995–96 will not be available until early 1996–97.

The responsibility for TECs in Wales lies with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Youth programmes budgets

	1993–94	*1994–95*	*1995–96*	*In training 1993–94*	*In training 1994–95*
		Including MA		*Excluding MA*	
South East					
Hampshire	16,047,985	15,106,666	13,405,079	5,540	5,820
Heart of England	5,242,274	5,694,866	5,513,937	2,010	2,140
Isle of Wight	1,742,460	1,605,572	1,370,053	600	570
Kent	18,062,061	16,400,753	18,527,730	6,420	6,310
Milton Keynes and North Buckinghamshire	5,140,633	5,528,127	6,069,607	1,220	1,230
Surrey	4,405,432	4,823,602	4,186,043	1,670	1,830
Sussex	10,287,749	10,696,850	8,902,406	2,870	4,470
Thames Valley Enterprise	12,602,202	15,440,460	19,247,926	6,830	6,300
London					
AZTEC	3,692,164	3,784,135	3,868,169	1,260	1,370
CENTEC[1]	7,430,302	6,570,634	9,349,726	1,790	2,000
CILNTEC	8,037,943	6,936,267	6,307,241	2,120	1,760
London East	14,169,207	12,854,780	12,541,744	4,260	4,120
North London	3,888,513	4,125,403	4,360,620	1,310	1,600
North West London	2,896,199	2,882,196	2,758,360	1,090	870
SOLOTEC[1]	8,513,285	6,779,580	10,606,280	2,260	2,240
South Thames[2]	11,757,361	10,175,785	10,534,506	2,830	0
West London	7,406,653	7,392,430	7,671,522	2,380	2,410
Eastern					
Bedfordshire	5,604,888	5,937,048	6,222,017	1,930	1,890
CambsTEC	3,196,782	3,114,720	3,494,319	1,290	1,210
Essex	16,534,219	16,577,365	18,086,376	6,170	6,420
Greater Peterborough	4,691,786	5,072,899	5,031,187	1,510	1,630
Hertfordshire	13,125,126	11,447,223	10,183,534	4,620	3,380
Norfolk and Waveney	10,297,504	10,942,005	11,768,955	4,090	4,120
Suffolk	9,450,401	12,447,882	8,278,408	2,710	2,780
South West					
Devon and Cornwall	23,830,082	18,717,697	17,230,580	6,270	6,440
Dorset	6,664,970	6,695,489	6,611,890	2,280	2,430
Gloucestershire	6,411,555	6,619,913	7,848,027	2,900	2,790
Somerset	5,788,739	5,579,887	5,855,758	2,030	2,170
Westec	11,986,489	12,049,031	11,258,709	4,470	4,240
Wiltshire	5,926,164	5,535,863	5,644,332	2,150	1,860
West Midlands					
Birmingham	18,558,199	13,084,266	12,709,982	4,560	3,100
Central England	4,158,285	4,093,850	4,068,131	2,060	1,660
Coventry and Warwickshire	11,845,007	10,722,649	11,300,329	4,240	5,030
Dudley	4,955,104	4,623,153	4,335,351	1,720	1,480
Hawtec	5,568,011	6,482,333	6,530,025	2,090	2,180
Sandwell	5,006,485	5,786,077	5,559,137	2,030	1,930
Shropshire	6,299,786	5,967,341	6,031,148	2,180	2,280
Staffordshire	20,619,930	15,655,714	15,405,069	5,170	6,270
Walsall	3,778,373	3,615,258	3,463,734	1,540	1,220
Wolverhampton	5,059,768	4,246,005	4,133,762	1,610	1,580
East Midlands					
Greater Nottingham	9,261,085	8,873,421	9,010,935	3,620	3,420
Leicester	12,979,065	11,707,244	12,254,713	4,580	4,390
Lincolnshire	10,730,363	10,097,316	10,990,967	3,620	4,160
North Derbyshire	4,962,627	4,780,228	4,992,201	2,000	1,660
North Nottinghamshire	7,423,985	8,049,829	8,172,590	2,710	3,620

Youth programmes budgets

	1993–94	*1994–95*	*1995–96*	*In training 1993–94*	*In training 1994–95*
		Including MA		*Excluding MA*	
Northamptonshire	7,481,478	6,747,909	6,820,843	2,220	2,470
Southern Derbyshire	8,417,026	7,926,205	8,842,730	2,780	3,100
Yorkshire and Humberside					
Barnsley and Doncaster	12,833,878	11,231,677	10,750,819	3,590	3,250
Bradford and District	10,693,263	8,156,103	8,379,978	3,140	2,670
Calderdale and Kirklees	12,535,694	9,137,810	9,344,125	3,010	3,270
Humberside	16,226,497	14,788,882	15,796,139	6,390	5,440
Leeds	7,646,213	6,833,800	7,491,027	2,680	2,880
North Yorkshire	7,258,191	7,008,192	7,046,324	2,760	2,850
Rotherham	5,709,086	4,724,170	4,963,738	1,790	1,500
Sheffield	9,562,261	8,073,007	8,285,362	3,010	2,920
Wakefield	4,891,686	4,309,289	4,284,776	1,410	1,650
North West					
Bolton and Bury	6,863,992	6,596,854	8,050,148	2,850	2,310
Cumbria	9,735,130	9,754,227	10,437,489	3,700	3,630
ELTEC (East Lancashire)	9,616,309	9,411,718	10,631,879	4,250	3,300
LAWTEC (Lancashire West)	13,247,988	12,153,753	14,524,330	5,200	4,990
Manchester	16,208,606	15,688,340	21,028,570	8,310	5,970
METROTEC Ltd. (Wigan)	5,352,625	5,226,318	5,673,611	2,050	1,940
NORMIDTEC	7,719,985	7,025,151	7,934,830	2,830	2,860
Oldham	4,713,622	4,353,242	4,834,414	1,590	1,560
Rochdale	4,038,291	3,821,248	4,405,691	1,620	1,440
South and East Cheshire	7,279,469	6,944,187	8,377,200	3,030	2,600
Stockport/High Peak	5,299,155	5,129,690	6,922,242	1,740	1,790
Merseyside					
CEWTEC	9,249,995	8,497,001	8,111,945	2,910	3,130
Merseyside	27,637,344	20,298,196	20,090,184	8,130	7,820
QUALITEC	5,616,592	4,270,192	3,766,549	1,380	1,370
North East					
County Durham	12,861,366	11,257,776	11,734,070	3,570	3,250
Northumberland	7,519,133	6,151,631	6,883,192	2,620	1,900
Sunderland City	7,782,659	6,487,963	6,437,531	2,020	1,830
Teesside	13,745,206	12,468,630	12,395,338	4,510	4,730
Tyneside	18,334,040	17,516,871	17,536,823	6,430	5,530

1. Budgets (GO latest cash limits) as at 1 October 1995 includes youth training, youth credits, funding pilots and modern apprenticeships.

[1] 1995–96 budgets include successor payments for South Thames TEC.

[2] South Thames TEC—funding relates to receiver payments for 1995–96.

Access to Work Scheme

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what are the estimated annual social security benefit savings from the access to work scheme in helping disabled people to obtain or remain in employment. [39991]

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 8 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about social security benefit savings resulting from the Access to Work programme.

We do not calculate the social security benefit savings accruing from disabled people making use of the Access to Work programme in order to take up work. Access to Work is available to help unemployed, employed and self-employed people to take up or to stay in work. Employed people would continue to receive any in-work benefits they were entitled to as well as Access to Work help. Help is given based on ability to work rather than on entitlement to a benefit so the pattern of benefit savings, if any, will be dependent on the circumstances of the individual case.

I am sorry I cannot be more helpful.

Training and Enterprise Councils

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what was the amount paid in performance-related bonuses for 1994–95 for each training and enterprise council. [40930]

Mr. Paice *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The following table shows the amount of performance-related funding earned by individual TECs in respect of their performance in 1994–95. These amounts are subject to final audit and will be paid to TECs in April 1996.

1994–95 performance-related funding awards

TEC name	*Points*	*Award (£)*
West Midlands		
Birmingham	3	244,185
Central England	7	164,001
Coventry and Warwickshire	7	434,777
Dudley	5	119,290
HAWTEC (Hereford and Worcester)	7	217,958

1994–95 performance-related funding awards

TEC name	*Points*	*Award (£)*
Sandwell	6	181,314
Shropshire	6	180,712
Staffordshire	6	450,121
Walsall	4	77,116
Wolverhampton	7	165,095
South East		
Hampshire	4	272,534
Heart of England	7	205,261
Isle of Wight	7	56,006
Kent	7	663,766
Milton Keynes and North Bucks	7	204,691
Surrey	3	88,330
Sussex	2	105,196
Thames Valley Enterprise	7	624,686
London		
AZTEC	5	202,348
CENTEC (Central London)	5	386,750
CILNTEC (City and Inner London North)	3	207,249
London East	3	369,450
North London	7	425,770
North West London	4	132,815
SOLOTEC (South London)	3	191,677
West London	7	460,040
Eastern		
Bedfordshire	6	175,818
CambsTEC	4	69,883
Essex	7	543,132
Greater Peterborough	7	174,596
Hertfordshire	6	276,416
Norfolk and Waveney	5	283,563
Suffolk	7	246,293
South West		
Devon and Cornwall	7	610,951
Dorset	7	213,570
Gloucestershire	7	221,072
Somerset	7	185,166
Westec (formerly Avon)	5	280,067
Wiltshire	7	170,570
East Midlands		
Greater Nottingham	7	266,588
Leicestershire	7	344,677
Lincolnshire	7	333,345
North Derbyshire	7	154,478
North Nottinghamshire	7	239,139
Northamptonshire	7	191,616
South Derbyshire	6	221,148
Yorkshire and Humberside		
Humberside	7	522,535
North Yorkshire	6	200,476
Wakefield	5	108,550
Sheffield	6	260,878
Rotherham	7	166,782
Barnsley/Doncaster	6	317,336
Leeds	5	200,847
Bradford and District	7	267,886
Calderdale/Kirklees	7	307,020
North West		
Bolton/Bury	7	301,598
Manchester	3	360,861
METROTEC (Wigan) Ltd	6	189,864
Oldham	4	102,826
Rochdale	6	156,700
South and East Cheshire	7	303,552
Stockport/High Peak	7	248,763
Cumbria	5	321,495
ELTEC (East Lancashire)	7	486,075
LAWTEC (Lancashire Area West)	5	496,326
NORMIDTEC (North and Mid Cheshire)	7	359,517
Merseyside		
Merseyside	3	442,205
QUALITEC (St. Helens) Ltd.	3	73,548
North East		
County Durham	6	323,382
Northumberland	7	216,600
Sunderland City	4	131,345
Teeside	7	449,314
Tyneside	7	576,216
Total award for 1994–95 performance		19,925,723

Mr. Robert Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what proportion of the budget for each training and enterprise council in England is spent on administration costs. [41667]

Mr. Paice: The list shows administration costs as a percentage of turnover for each of the training and enterprise councils in England. The information has been extracted from TECs' statutory accounts for 1993–94. I am unable to provide information for 1994–95 as TECs' statutory accounts are not yet in the public domain.

Many TECs do not draw down all their available budgets, so my Department does not calculate administrative costs as a percentage of budget.

TEC administration costs as a percentage of turnover
(Source—1993–94 Statutory Accounts)

	1993–94 Per cent.
Northern	
County Durham	8.24
Northumberland	9.03
Teesside	6.46
Tyneside	6.07
Sunderland (Wearside)	11.75
North West	
Bolton/Bury	10.10
Manchester	12.03
METRO	11.20
Oldham	15.42
Rochdale	8.16
South and East Cheshire	4.41
Stockport and High Peak	7.89
Cumbria	10.71
ELTEC	10.41
LAWTEC[1]	0.00
NORMIDTEC	7.89
Merseyside	
CEWTEC	9.11
Merseyside	10.51
QUALITEC	10.48
Yorks and Humber	
Barnsley/Donacaster	13.57
Bradford	8.67
Calderdale and Kirklees	9.78
Humberside	10.09
Leeds	10.74
North Yorkshire	11.51

TEC administration costs as a percentage of turnover
(Source—1993–94 Statutory Accounts)

	1993–94 Per cent.
Rotherham	10.81
Sheffield	6.62
Wakefield	11.98
Eastern	
Bedfordshire	13.00
Cambridgeshire	11.95
Essex	8.55
Greater Peterborough	10.53
Hertfordshire	8.36
Norfolk and Waverney	12.81
Suffolk	8.87
East Midlands	
Greater Nottingham	5.99
Leicester	10.49
Lincolnshire	5.44
Northamptonshire	9.78
North Derbyshire	10.74
North Nottinghamshire	7.49
South Derbyshire	15.59
West Midlands	
Birmingham	7.40
Central England	8.38
Coventry/Warwick	4.84
Dudley	12.42
HAWTEC	12.60
Sandwell	8.38
Shropshire	9.37
Staffordshire	10.22
Walsall	16.13
Wolverhampton	10.73
South West	
Avon (WESTEC)	9.61
Devon/Cornwall	10.24
Dorset	9.35
Gloucester	12.75
Somerset	12.87
Wiltshire	11.30
London	
AZTEC	12.45
CENTEC	11.83
CILNTEC	10.65
LETEC	11.78
North London	10.85
North West London	11.35
SOLOTEC	11.98
South Thames	0.00
West London	11.88
South East	
Hampshire	7.65
Isle of Wight	12.87
Kent	8.47
Milton Keynes/North Buckinghamshire	13.02
Heart of England	15.60
Surrey	13.70
Sussex	11.76
Thames Valley Ent.	8.56

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[1] The regional average for north-west for 1993–94 does not include LAWTEC as all their expenditure was classed as adminsitration in 1993–94.

Agriculture Training Courses

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what steps she is taking to reduce overlapping of agriculture training courses in the north-west. [41510]

Mr. Paice: Colleges are autonomous institutions and it is for them to decide which courses to offer.

Shaw Trust

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment when she received the letter dated 27 October from the director general of the Shaw Trust about the potential of the trust to employ extra disabled people; what assessment she has made of offsetting flowbacks to the Treasury from the funding of such extra places; and if she will make a statement on what action she proposes to take following the receipt of the letter. [41374]

Mr. Forth: I have received no such letter. However, a letter on the subject to which my right hon. Friend refers was sent to Lord Henley, who received it on 30 October. He is considering it and will reply shortly.

Education Expenditure (Hampshire)

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how much was spent in total on education in Hampshire in each of the past 25 years at constant prices. [41457]

Mr. Robin Squire: The following table shows expenditure by Hampshire local education authority from 1970–71 and 1993–94, the latest year for which figures are available. These figures have not been adjusted for any changes of function.

Hampshire County Council

Years	*Gross expenditure 1993–94 prices £ million*
1970–71	291.17
1971–72	320.57
1972–73	354.06
1973–74	391.12
1974–75	638.49
1975–76	654.89
1976–77	655.17
1977–78	640.25
1978–79	649.81
1979–80	625.49
1980–81	632.01
1981–82	631.23
1982–83	622.71
1983–84	618.71
1984–85	609.70
1985–86	606.02
1986–87	632.15
1987–88	660.28
1988–89	677.83
1989–90	635.94
1990–91	636.49
1991–92	684.46
1992–93	719.20
1993–94	581.48

Teachers

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) what is *(a)* the average, *(b)* the maximum and *(c)* the minimum cost of employing (i) a headmaster and (ii) a deputy headmaster in a special school; [41309]

(2) what is *(a)* the average, *(b)* the maximum and *(c)* the minimum cost of employing a primary school class teacher; and what are the equivalent figures in cash and constant terms for (i) 1975 and (ii) 1985; [41313]

(3) what is *(a)* the average, *(b)* the maximum and *(c)* the minimum cost of employing (i) a secondary school head teacher and (ii) a secondary school deputy head teacher; and what are the equivalent figures in cash and constant terms for (1) 1975 and (2) 1985; [41311]

(4) what is *(a)* the average, *(b)* the maximum and *(c)* the minimum cost of employing a classroom teacher for children with special educational needs; and what are the equivalent figures in cash and constant terms for (i) 1975 and (ii) 1985; [41310]

(5) what is the *(a)* the average, *(b)* the maximum and *(c)* the minimum cost of employing a secondary school class teacher; and what are the equivalent figures in cash and constant terms for (i) 1975 and (ii) 1985; [41314]

(6) what is *(a)* the average, *(b)* the maximum and *(c)* the minimum cost of employing (i) a primary school head teacher and (ii) a primary school deputy head teacher; and what are the equivalent figures in cash and constant terms for (1) 1975 and (2) 1985. [41312]

Mr. Robin Squire: The information requested is set out in the following table.

Estimated cost (£s) of employing teachers in 1975, 1985 and 1994 in cash and real terms

	1975		*1985*		
	Cash	*Real*	*Cash*	*Real*	*1994*
Primary					
Head					
Maximum	9,600	43,400	26,100	40,100	58,600
Average	—	—	14,800	22,700	31,100
Minimum	4,000	17,900	11,300	17,300	26,700
Deputy					
Maximum	7,100	32,100	19,300	29,600	42,600
Average	—	—	12,700	19,500	27,600
Minimum	2,700	12,400	8,000	12,300	25,900
Classroom					
Maximum	5,700	25,800	15,700	24,100	35,200
Average	—	—	10,600	16,300	21,700
Minimum	2,000	9,100	6,400	9,900	13,000
Secondary					
Head					
Maximum	9,600	43,400	26,100	40,100	58,600
Average	—	—	20,600	31,700	42,900
Minimum	4,000	17,900	11,300	17,300	26,700
Deputy					
Maximum	7,100	32,100	19,300	29,600	42,600
Average	—	—	16,700	25,700	34,300
Minimum	2,700	12,400	8,000	12,300	25,900
Classroom					
Maximum	5,700	25,800	15,700	24,100	35,200
Average	—	—	11,400	17,400	24,000
Minimum	2,000	9,100	6,400	9,900	13,000
Special					
Head					
Maximum	7,400	33,600	21,100	32,300	51,600
Average	—	—	17,700	27,200	35,800
Minimum	4,700	21,300	13,300	20,500	28,900
Deputy					
Maximum	6,000	26,900	17,100	26,200	37,300
Average	—	—	15,000	23,000	30,200
Minimum	3,200	14,300	9,300	14,300	26,300
Classroom					
Maximum	5,700	25,800	15,700	24,100	35,200
Average	—	—	11,400	17,500	25,200
Minimum	2,000	9,100	6,400	9,900	13,800

1. Figures relate to full-time teachers in the maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special sectors as at 31 March of each year.
2. Figures include "on costs" in respect of employers' national insurance and superannuation contributions.
3. Average teacher salaries for 1975 were not available in requested format.
4. 1975 figures include "on costs" for men over 18 years old.
5. 1994 data are the latest available.
6. Real term figures are expressed in 1994 prices.
7. Salaries have been rounded to the nearest £100.

Pre-16 Students

Mr. Bryan Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education Employment what representations she has received regarding the education sponsored by Education Otherwise of pre-16 students in colleges of further education; and if she will make a statement. [41804]

Mr. Paice: The Secretary of State is aware that some parents who have exercised their right to educate their children otherwise than at school have sought places for them at further education colleges. It is for the individual FE college to determine whether or not to agree the placement, bearing in mind FEFC advice that pupils of compulsory school age should be admitted only in exceptional circumstances.

Mr. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is her Department's estimate of *(a)* the number of students and *(b)* the number of local authorities involved in the education, sponsored by Education Otherwise, of pre-16 students in colleges of further education. [41805]

Mr. Paice: This information is not collected centrally.

Training for Work

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will list for each training and enterprise council the number of training for work starts for *(a)* 1993–94 *(b)* 1994–95, the estimated number in 1995–96 and the total budget for training for work in each TEC for the same years. [41477]

Mr. Paice *[holding answer 3 November 1995]:* The number of training for work starts for *(a)* 1993–94 and *(b)* 1994–95, the planned number for 1995–96 and the total budget for training for work for the same years for each training and enterprise council in England are listed in the following table. The responsibility for TECs in Wales lies with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Training for work

	1993–94 £	*1994–95* £	*1995–96* £	*Starts 1993–94*	*Starts 1994–95*	*Starts 1995–96*
South East						
Hampshire	11,665,618	10,832,502	7,745,100	5,330	4,170	3,330
Heart of England	3,858,212	3,919,846	3,733,856	1,510	1,520	1,530
Isle of Wight	1,379,369	1,477,441	930,619	480	530	400
Kent	14,232,343	12,451,952	12,486,828	6,650	6,610	5,310
Milton Keynes and N. Bucks	2,829,713	2,824,335	2,785,818	1,110	1,010	1,030
Surrey	5,057,271	5,064,749	4,608,735	2,530	1,770	1,620
Sussex	11,042,127	10,563,542	8,100,887	3,210	4,250	3,190
Thames Valley Enterprise	8,482,205	8,684,611	7,171,892	3,800	3,390	2,850
London						
Aztec	8,825,503	6,496,797	5,529,204	3,220	2,510	2,210
Centec[1]	15,613,383	14,414,841	21,889,220	6,270	6,020	8,711
Cilntec	14,456,709	12,571,342	10,135,739	4,530	4,980	4,040
London East	24,000,588	20,518,363	17,103,731	7,480	6,430	6,820
North London	13,156,694	12,424,582	11,237,109	5,510	3,540	5,020
North West London	7,135,522	6,271,138	5,394,014	3,520	2,200	2,150
Solotec[1]	8,240,523	7,752,474	14,497,827	3,590	3,680	5,779
South Thames[2]	25,166,155	22,628,482	1,005,664	8,440	6,950	769
West London	7,399,737	7,016,948	6,240,073	3,150	3,040	2,490
Eastern						
Bedfordshire	5,285,187	5,506,553	4,130,725	2,240	2,740	1,870
Cambstec	2,302,357	2,601,570	2,260,168	930	960	1,080
Essex	12,688,893	11,294,151	9,292,707	5,810	4,200	3,900
Greater Peterborough	4,588,012	4,774,504	3,989,912	1,340	1,560	1,700
Hertfordshire	7,156,808	7,398,366	6,244,717	3,100	3,020	2,740
Norfolk and Waveney	11,288,618	10,813,090	8,813,196	4,860	3,370	4,260
Suffolk	4,651,158	4,162,161	3,481,084	2,050	2,090	1,800
South West						
Devon and Cornwall	25,533,963	22,286,966	19,831,832	9,810	8,640	8,300
Dorset	6,703,318	5,368,272	4,848,408	3,030	2,240	1,900
Gloucestershire	5,068,345	4,310,120	3,791,687	2,110	1,520	1,350
Somerset	5,255,888	4,867,001	3,918,576	1,830	1,710	1,540
Westec	14,971,534	14,209,852	12,280,754	6,800	4,810	4,980
Wiltshire	5,622,688	4,669,597	3,584,883	1,740	1,900	1,570
Merseyside						
Cewtec	11,025,720	9,214,910	9,181,808	3,800	3,780	4,360
Merseyside	30,041,270	24,171,147	25,194,485	9,230	11,800	11,150
Qualitec	4,719,713	3,456,984	3,208,610	1,740	1,780	1,690
North East						
County Durham	16,791,888	12,962,112	9,613,345	6,020	6,090	3,830
Northumberland	6,670,090	6,084,082	4,948.907	1,910	1,780	1,540
Sunderland City	12,558,651	10,628,801	7,880,288	3,980	3,220	2,880
Teeside	18,308,303	16,590,623	14,239,840	6,160	5,550	5,950
Tyneside	25,145,755	19,530,190	14,526,420	8,290	7,920	6,210
West Midlands						
Birmingham	22,328,234	20,365,575	16,499,337	8,040	6,650	8,820
Central England	5,078,153	4,996,145	3,904,241	2,620	2,340	1,950
Coventry and Warwickshire	13,158,154	11,854,454	9,342,371	5,400	5,920	3,900
Dudley	5,788,085	5,099,161	3,838,838	2,200	1,990	1,470
Hawtec	4,867,681	4,245,428	3,248,105	1,880	1,970	1,590
Sandwell	5,423,583	4,898,597	4,753,041	2,730	2,710	2,110
Shropshire	5,523,999	4,743,849	3,622,462	2,030	2,020	1,530
Staffordshire	11,911,525	10,611,997	7,857,313	5,240	5,580	2,530
Walsall	4,830,477	3,707,430	2,956,441	2,050	1,490	1,480
Wolverhampton	5,442,464	5,165,870	3,964,510	2,670	2,160	1,580
East Midlands						
Greater Nottingham	10,314,638	7,909,295	5,999,848	3,150	3,800	2,970
Leicester	8,877,929	8,000,950	8,277,787	3,200	3,910	2,600
Lincolnshire	11,783,913	11,310,036	8,654,831	3,920	4,400	3,450
North Derbyshire	5,013,978	4,465,685	3,734,693	3,900	2,020	2,200
North Nottinghamshire	7,464,456	6,864,832	5,464,845	2,820	3,750	2,190
Northamptonshire	3,840,188	3,677,035	2,933,257	1,540	1,800	1,300
Southern Derbyshire	7,739,104	6,680,602	5,223,143	2,500	2,880	2,200

Training for work

	1993–94 £	*1994–95* £	*1995–96* £	*Starts 1993–94*	*Starts 1994–95*	*Starts 1995–96*
Yorkshire and Humberside						
Barnsley and Doncaster	13,740,141	13,226,355	10,357,973	10,040	7,370	3,970
Bradford and District	8,345,142	7,348,956	6,099,413	3,690	2,380	2,340
Calderdale and Kirklees	10,800,160	9,920,249	7,128,005	3,700	3,850	3,010
Humberside	17,748,578	15,489,065	11,892,101	6,790	6,070	4,580
Leeds	13,379,984	10,388,387	8,420,482	4,240	4,350	3,230
North Yorkshire	6,763,131	6,480,703	5,362,235	2,960	3,080	2,060
Rotherham	6,106,957	5,202,021	4,088,428	2,680	2,680	1,650
Sheffield	14,268,298	12,028,692	8,852,973	5,190	4,150	3,400
Wakefield	6,879,885	5,622,084	4,272,130	2,670	3,260	1,640
North West						
Bolton and Bury	5,473,743	5,392,104	4,453,173	3,000	2,760	1,990
Cumbria	6,376,747	5,997,170	5,000,621	2,640	2,410	2,080
Eltec (East Lancs)	7,421,013	7,074,335	5,660,454	3,370	2,870	2,830
Lawtec (Lancs West)	12,373,434	11,619,943	9,820,791	5,910	5,230	4,330
Manchester	18,170,265	16,458,591	14,522,504	9,370	9,210	6,070
Metrotec Ltd. (Wigan)	4,722,238	4,699,333	3,877,183	2,340	2,070	1,720
Normidtec	5,512,679	5,504,926	4,546,472	2,290	2,170	2,000
Oldham	3,698,127	3,513,678	2,902,624	1,740	1,560	1,200
Rochdale	4,688,477	4,436,458	3,664,184	2,090	2,060	1,510
South and East Cheshire	4,358,567	4,005,311	3,138,254	1,950	1,610	1,680
Stockport/High Peak	3,812,332	3,779,547	3,114,870	1,540	1,510	1,300

[1] Budgets include successor payments to South Thames TEC.

[2] South Thames TEC—funding relates to receiver payments.

1. Budgets as at 1 October 1995.
2. Includes funding pilots
3. TFW includes allowances and adult guidance and excludes coal.

Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what representations he has received since 1 January 1994 regarding the workings of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969; and if he will make a statement. [42230]

Sir Paul Beresford: I have been asked to reply.

Eighteen representations have been received by myself and colleagues at the former Department of Employment about various aspects of this Act since 1 January 1994. My Department has also received 71 responses to the consultative document issued by the Department of Employment on 27 April 1995 as part of a review of the Act. I am currently considering these responses.

Jobcentres

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many jobcentres have closed since 1990 where the nearest alternative office for signing on is more than five miles away. [41679]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Mr. Gordon Prentice, dated November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about how many Jobcentres have closed since 1990 where the nearest alternative office is more than five miles away.

The number of Jobcentres (taken to include separate Benefit Offices) is 51 of which 20 were only open part time.

I hope this is helpful.

Moorfoot, Sheffield Office

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans she has to recruit and fill posts at Moorfoot, Sheffield , what plans she has for the training division based at Moorfoot, and if he will make a statement. [42026]

Mr. Forth: Posts in the Moorfoot, Sheffield office of the Department for Education and Employment will be filled using normal departmental vacancy filling mechanisms. It is not envisaged that there will be a need for external recruitment at this time.

The training, enterprise and education directorate of the former Employment Department was largely based in Moorfoot, Sheffield. It has been reorganised following the creation of the new Department for Education and Employment. It now forms part of the further and higher education and youth training, employment and lifetime learning, strategy, international and analytical services and operations directorates of the new DFEE.

Schools (Consultation)

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she has drawn up a code of good practice on consultation on lines recommended by the efficiency scrutiny on the administration burden on schools. [42025]

Mr. Robin Squire: My officials are planning to draft a code of practice on lines recommended in the scrutiny report and seek views on the usefulness of such a code.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she has accepted the recommendation of the efficiency scrutiny on the administration burden on schools that periods of consultation should last at least 10 weeks, not including school holidays. [42028]

Mr. Squire: I consider that this is a commendable ideal for the Department, but one that it is not always possible to achieve. Other demands such as the parliamentary and legislative timetable, sometimes necessitate shorter consultation periods if we are to avoid long delays in Government action. The recommendation acknowledged this.

"Just the Job"

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will make a statement on the distribution of the booklet "Just the Job" *(a)* in East Sussex and *(b)* elsewhere in the United Kingdom. [42119]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from D. J. Lifton to Mr. Tim Rathbone, dated 8 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me, in the absence of the Chief Executive, to reply to your question about distribution of the Just the Job booklet.

The Just the Job booklet describes the range of services provided by the Department for Education and Employment to unemployed people through Employment Service Jobcentres (ESJs). It is freely available in ESJs throughout the United Kingdom, including all those in East Sussex.

I hope this is helpful.

European Structural Funds

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, pursuant to her answer of 2 November, *Official Report*, column *459*, how much of the sum applied for has been paid to the Government in *(a)* 1994 and *(b)* 1995; and in respect of the amount applied for in 1994 when was the latest date on which the Commission made a payment to the Government. [42302]

Mr. Forth: The amount paid so far to Government programmes under ESF objective 3 for *(a)* 1994 is £175,040,117; and *(b)* 1995 is £95,643,847.

The 1994 final claim for objective 3 was received from the Commission on 22 September 1995.

SOLOTEC

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what additional financial provision has been made by SOLOTEC for talking on responsibility for the London boroughs of Greenwich and Lewisham. [42258]

Mr. Paice: This is a matter for the board of SOLOTEC. I understand that the board regularly reviews the financial contribution it can make to Greenwich and Lewisham.

"Going GM" Conferences

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what plans her Department has to hold further "Going GM" conferences; and what financial provision has been made for further conferences. [36168]

Mr. Robin Squire: My officials are planning to hold another eight "Going GM" conferences before the end of December, at an estimated total cost to the Department of about £100,000. Plans for conferences after that date have not yet been decided.

Nursery Voucher Scheme

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what sums have been allocated to meet the administration costs incurred by *(a)* the DFEE, *(b)* local authorities *(c)* pre-school provider institutions, *(d)* the contractor appointed to administer the scheme and *(e)* overall, in phase 1 of the pre-school voucher scheme. [42023]

Mr. Robin Squire: The financial details of the Government's contract with Capita Managed Services Ltd. to administer the nursery voucher scheme are commercially confidential.

No detailed estimate of the other administration costs has been made.

GCSE Scores

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will provide the GCSE average point scores per pupil in 1995 for each individual 20th group, and also for the cumulative 20th groups, of all 15-year-old pupils when ranked according to their average point scores, where A* = 7 for *(a)* all such pupils in England, *(b)* all such pupils of the local education authority-maintained sector only, excluding those of grant-maintained schools, *(c)* all such pupils of the grant-maintained sector only, *(d)* all such pupils of the whole maintained sector only, excluding those of independent schools and *(e)* all such pupils of the independent sector only. [42202]

Mr. Robin Squire: The information for 1995 is not yet available. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as this information is available and place a copy in the Library.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will provide for all 15-year-old pupils in *(a)* England, *(b)* the local education authority maintained, *(c)* grant-maintained and *(d)* independent sectors, on the same basis as in the annual school performance tables, and also by gender (i) their GCSE average point score where A* = 7 and where A* = 8 and (ii) the percentage achieving (1) at least five GCSEs at Grades A* = C, (2) at least one GCSE at grade C or higher, (3) at least five GCSEs at grade G or higher and (4) at least one GCSE at grade G or higher. [42204]

Mr. Squire: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy of the answer in the Library.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment if she will provide the average GCSE point scores, where A* = 7 per 15-year-old pupil by local education authority and for 1995, and also by gender in each case for *(a)* the local education authority-maintained sector only, *(b)* the grant-maintained sector only and *(c)* the whole maintained sector; and if he will state the averages in each case for each standard Department for Education region. [42203]

Mr. Squire: The information for 1995 is not yet available. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as this information is available and place a copy in the Library.

Education (School Premises) Regulations 1981

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what were the recommendations of the review of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1981 announced on 2 October 1990, and if she will place a copy of the report of the review in the Library. [42232]

Mrs. Gillan: The Under-Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire), set out the conclusions of the review of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1981 on 14 July, *Official Report,* columns *829-30.* Our detailed proposals for putting those conclusions into effect are set out in the draft regulations and draft circular put out to consultation on 14 August.

Copies of both documents have been placed in the Library.

Labour Statistics

Mrs. Bridget Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) how many *(A)* 16 to 19, *(B)* 20 to 24, *(C)* 25 to 34, *(D)* 35 to 44, *(E)* 45 to 54 and *(F)* 55 to 65-year-olds in (i) Lewisham, East and (ii) each of the London boroughs are *(a)* in full-time employment, *(b)* in part-time employment, *(c)* in full-time education, *(d)* in part-time education, *(e)* on a Government training scheme, *(f)* on another type of training scheme and *(g)* unemployed; [41657]

(2) how many males in (i) Lewisham, East and (ii) each of the London boroughs are *(a)* in full-time employment, *(b)* in part-time employment, *(c)* in full-time education, *(d)* in part-time education, *(e)* on a Government training scheme, *(f)* on another type of training scheme and *(g)* unemployed; [41653]

(3) how many males in *(A)* 16 to 19, *(B)* 20 to 24, *(C)* 25 to 34, *(D)* 35 to 44, *(E)* 45 to 54 and *(F)* 55 to 64-year-olds in (i) Lewisham, East and (ii) each of the London boroughs are *(a)* in full-time employment, *(b)* in part-time employment, *(c)* in full-time education, *(d)* in part-time education, *(e)* on a Government training scheme, *(f)* on any other type of training scheme and *(g)* unemployed; [41656]

(4) how many ethnic minority male *(A)* 16 to 19, *(B)* 20 to 24, *(C)* 25 to 34, *(D)* 35 to 44, *(E)* 45 to 54 and *(F)* 55 to 65-year-olds in (i) Lewisham, East and (ii) each of the London boroughs are *(a)* in full-time employment, *(b)* in part-time employment, *(c)* in full-time education, *(d)* in part-time education, *(e)* on a Government training scheme, *(f)* on another type of training scheme and *(g)* unemployed. [41654]

Mrs. Angela Knight: Information at area level on employment, educational status, training, unemployment and ethnic origin can be obtained from the labour force survey, but not at the full level of detail requested. The available information can be accessed through the NOMIS database by the House of Commons Library.

1-2-1

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment how many unemployed people have been referred to 1-2-1 by Employment Service counsellors since April in each region and in Great Britain as a whole; how many attended and completed 1-2-1; what were the outcomes of the participants; how many had their income support reduced for not attending or failing to complete their attendance on 1-2-1; if she will break down this information by *(a)* ethnicity, *(b)* disability and *(c)* gender; and if she will make a statement. [41915]

Mr. Forth: Responsibility for the subject of the question has been delegated to the Employment Service under its chief executive. I have asked him to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from M. E. G. Fogden to Mr. Terry Rooney, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the 1-2-1 interview programme.

Unfortunately the information is not available in the exact form you require as we do not collect it by ethnic origin, disability or gender. I have set out the remainder of the information you requested in the attached table (Annex 1).

It may be helpful if I explain that 1-2-1 was piloted in 1994/95 and introduced nationally from April 1995. It provides help for 18–24 year olds who have been unemployed for a year. Attendance is mandatory for people who decline other offers of help and it therefore takes the place of Jobplan Workshops for this client group.

1-2-1, which offers 95,000 places in 1995/96, provides a series of caseload interviews with an Employment Service adviser. By using a caseload approach advisers are able to offer clients concentrated help and information. The figures in the table show that 1-2-1 has proved extremely successful in achieving job placings and other positive outcomes.

For those who 1-2-1 is unable to help a linked four week course, Workwise, provides further help with job search and confidence building. Workwise is also made available immediately, in preference to 1-2-1, for those clients to whom it is more appropriate.

I hope this is helpful.

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what has been the total amount paid out in unemployment benefit, by region, since May 1979. [40836]

Mr. Roger Evans: I have been asked to reply.

The table provides estimates for the years 1991–92 to 1994–95. Estimates for earlier years could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

	1991–92	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*
England	1,370	1,531	1,428	1,069
South East	448	540	518	365
East Anglia	55	64	62	45
South West	125	137	126	94
West	174	198	170	122
East	108	125	115	93
Yorkshire and Humberside	159	158	154	123

	1991–92	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*
North West	194	206	178	134
North	107	101	104	93
Wales	82	75	68	55
Scotland	152	154	153	137
Great Britain	1,604	1,760	1,649	1,260

1. Estimates have been calculated using the expenditure data shown in the 1995 social security departmental report and allocated to regions by use of a 5 per cent. sample of unemployed claimants.
2. Figures given are in £ millions.

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what has been the total amount paid out in unemployment benefit, by region, since May 1979, at 1995 prices. [40837]

Mr. Evans: I have been asked to reply.

The table provides estimates for the years 1991–92 to 1994–95. Estimates for earlier years could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

	1991–92	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*
England	1,495	1,604	1,453	1,069
South East	489	566	528	365
East Anglia	60	68	63	45
South West	136	144	128	94
West Midlands	190	207	173	122
East Midlands	117	131	117	93
Yorkshire and Humberside	174	166	156	123
North West	211	216	181	134
North	117	106	106	93
Wales	89	79	69	55
Scotland	165	162	155	137
Great Britain	1,750	1,845	1,678	1,260

Notes:
1. Estimates have been calculated using the expenditure data shown in the 1995 social security departmental report and allocated to regions by use of a 5 per cent. sample of unemployed claimants.
2. Figures given are in real terms 1994–95 prices and are given in £ millions.

Employment-related Benefits

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) what has been the total amount paid out in employment-related benefits, by region, since May 1979; [40838]

(2) what has been the total amount paid out in employment-related benefits by region since May 1979, at 1995 prices. [40839]

Mr. Roger Evans: I have been asked to reply. I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Special Educational Needs Appeals

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) how many special educational needs appeals have been lodged with the Special Educational Needs Tribunal from September 1994 to date; [42263]

(2) how many special education needs appeals have been heard from September 1994 to date; [42264]

(3) how many special educational needs appeals have been withdrawn or settled prior to a hearing taking place; [42265]

(4) how many appellants whose appeals were heard received written confirmation of the outcome of their appeal *(a)* within four months of the date of lodging their appeal, *(b)* within between four and five months of the date of lodging their appeal, *(c)* within between five and six months of the date of lodging their appeal, *(d)* within between six and seven months of the date of lodging their appeal, *(e)* within between seven and eight months of the date of lodging their appeal and *(f)* over eight months of the date of lodging their appeai. [42266]

Mr. Forth: The Department does not maintain detailed records about appeals to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal, which is an independent non-departmental public body. I have therefore asked the president of the tribunal, Mr. Trevor Aldridge QC, to write to the hon. Member.

Information about the numbers of appeals to the tribunal will be available in the president's annual report to the Secretary of State, which will be placed in the Library of the House when it is published.

Nursery Education (Hampshire)

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what is the number and percentage of three and four-year-olds attending nursery and primary schools in Hampshire in each of the last five years. [41846]

Mr. Robin Squire: The information requested is shown in the table.

Pupils under five years of age[1] in maintained nursery and primary schools in Hampshire local education authority area 1991–1995

Position as at January each year

Year	*Pupils*	*Pupils as a percentage of the population[2]*
1991	8,166	20
1992	8,672	20
1993	8,988	21
1994	15,098	36
1995	15,622	37

[1] Excludes pupils who became five years of age by 1 January.
[2] Number of pupils under five years of age expressed as a percentage of the estimated population aged three and four at 31 December in the previous year.

Surplus School Places

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what are the current numbers and percentages of surplus places in each local education authority, in the rank order according to the proportion of surplus places, in *(a)* secondary schools, *(b)* primary schools, *(c)* special schools and *(d)* grant-maintained schools.

Mrs. Gillan: For the latest available figures, I refer the hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend gave the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Kilfoyle) on 20 February 1995, *Official Report*, columns *38–43*.

International Year of Lifelong Learning

Ms Corston: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment what arrangement are in hand for the launch in England of the International Year of Lifelong Learning 1996. [40388]

Mr. Forth: A conference to launch the European Year of Lifelong Learning in the United Kingdom will be held in Scotland during early 1996.

Education Expenditure

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (1) what is the amount budgeted in the current financial year for education in the overall budget for her Department; and if she will break it down into its principal elements; [42103]

(2) if she will estimate the cost of increasing the education element of the budget for her Department by the rate of inflation, indicating the totals for *(a)* education and *(b)* employment spending. [42146]

Mr. Robin Squire: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place copies of my reply in the Library.

HEALTH

Cash Limits

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the original capital cash limits given for each region in each of the last three years. [37925]

Mr. Sackville: The original regional capital cash limits for the financial years 1993–94, 1994–95 and 1995–96 are set out in the tables.

From 1994–95, the number of regional health authorities reduced from 14 to eight as a number of authorities merged.

The amount of NHS capital allocated to RHAs reduced during this period because of the increase in NHS trusts, which receive capital through the external financing limit mechanism. The slight decrease in the overall capital planning totals over this period reflected reduced demand for capital from health authorities and trusts as they reviewed their plans in response to the introduction of capital charging. Receipts from land sales—of the order of £200 million a year—which can be used to fund capital investment are additional to these figures.

Trent and South Thames had negative initial cash limits for 1995–96 because the forecast land sale receipts in each of these regions exceeded the anticipated capital spend. The nil cash limits of South West and North West are a reflection of the original forecasts of receipts on spending being broadly level.

Regional cash limits 1993–94

	Regions	*Trusts*	*£000s* *Total*
Northern	67,046	40,751	107,797
Yorkshire	30,826	94,772	125,598
Trent	50,224	108,112	158,336
East Anglia	21,757	47,412	69,169
North West Thames	64,929	40,958	105,887
North East Thames	47,633	71,408	119,041
South East Thames	43,935	79,691	120,626
South West Thames	44,713	50,232	94,945
Wessex	46,821	54,167	100,988
Oxford	45,975	31,408	77,383
South West	17,189	97,775	114,964
West Midlands	130,802	44,775	175,577
Mersey	18,640	64,030	82,670
North West	85,235	54,731	139,966
Total	715,725	877,222	1,592,947

Regional cash limits
1994–95

£000s

	Regions	*Trusts*	*Total*
Northern and Yorkshire	37,910	187,702	225,612
Trent	10,466	143,074	153,540
Anglia and Oxford	14,428	128,693	143,121
North Thames	63,738	154,420	218,158
South Thames	15,367	194,640	210,007
South and West	23,416	188,038	211,454
West Midlands	28,068	140,940	169,008
North West	27,928	185,941	213,869
Total	211,321	1,323,448	1,544,769

Regional cash limits
1995–96

£000s

	Regions	*Trusts*	*Total*
Northern and Yorkshire	6,773	208,033	214,806
Trent	–785	151,155	150,370
Anglia and Oxford	31	149,100	149,131
North Thames	3,733	227,304	231,037
South Thames	–31,562	237,921	206,359
South and West	0	199,022	199,022
West Midlands	26,853	135,692	162,545
North West	0	215,513	215,513
Total	5,043	1,523,740	1,528,783

NHS Trusts

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will itemise payments made in each NHS trust to *(a)* chairs, *(b)* non-executive directors, *(c)* chief executives and *(d)* board directors for 1993–94 and 1994–95, by region. [37945]

Mr. Malone: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) on 16 February, at column *808* for information regarding chairmen and chief executives of national health service trusts in respect of 1993–94. Information will be placed in the Library on the remuneration of executive and non-executive directors of NHS trusts, as extracted from their annual accounts for 1993–94. The payments listed represent remuneration in respect of the total gross salary, bonus payments, monetary value of benefits in kind, taxable expenses allowances and compensation payments in relation to the offices described—rather than to an individual. Information for 1994–95 is not yet available.

Cash Limits and Running Costs (OPCS)

Mr. Sweeney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the proposed changes to the cash limits and running costs for the OPCS for 1995–96. [42226]

Mr. Sackville: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the cash limit for class XII, vote 4—Office of Population Censuses and Surveys—will be increased by £2,666,000 from £35,775,000 to £38,441,000 and the running costs limit of OPCS will be increased by £1,702,000 from £49,694,000 to £51,396,000. This reflects the take-up of £1,281,000 for running costs and £635,000 for capital under the end-year flexibility arrangements announced by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 13 July 1995, at columns *776-82*. It also reflects an increased running cost provision of £406,000 and increased capital provision of £1,780,000 in the national health service central register area for work on the Department of Health's existing number replacement project. Also included is an increased running cost provision of £15,000 and capital provision of £22,000 for the processing and production of abortion statistics. The increase in capital costs will be met from within the existing resources of the Department of Health, class XII, vote 3. There is also a capital provision of £750,000 for work on a building to house the London staff of the new Office of National Statistics. The increase will be offset by savings and a claim on the reserve and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Health Spending

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list, for each year since 1991, total health spending, expressed as a percentage of gross domestic product, for *(a)* the UK, *(b)* the EU, *(c)* the OECD and *(d)* for each OECD country. [41992]

Mr. Sackville: The table shows total United Kingdom expenditure on the national health service expressed as a percentage of gross domestic product for each year since 1990–91. Information on expenditure on health in other countries is not available on a comparable basis.

United Kingdom NHS expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product

Year	Expenditure (£ million)	Proportion of GDP percentage
1990–91	29,231	5.2
1991–92	33,061	5.7
1992–93	36,209	6.0
1993–94	37,331	5.8
1994–95	39,093	5.8

The national health service share of GDP in 1978–79 was 4.7 per cent.

Primary Health Care Staff

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to assist the recruitment of primary health care staff in deprived areas. [42032]

Mr. Malone: All family health services authorities are able to target their cash limited resources to areas of greatest need. In addition, as part of the Government's London implementation zone initiative, FHSAs are able to provide assistance to general practitioners in the employment of a wider range of health care staff. The number of whole-time equivalent staff employed by general practitioners increased from 37,546 in 1989 to 51,833 last year—a rise of nearly 40 per cent.

Tamoxifen

Mr. Bill Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make the anti-cancer drug Tamoxifen free to all breast cancer sufferers. [41858]

Mr. Malone: No. Extensive exemption and remission arrangements already protect those who might have difficulty paying charges. For those who have to pay charges and who need regular medication, prescription season tickets offer real value for money.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish for each standard region of the United Kingdom and the United Kingdom as a whole for the latest available year the number of woman diagnosed as suffering from breast cancer, indicating the figure as a percentage of the total female population in each case. [41960]

Mr. Sackville: The available information is shown in the table.

Breast Cancer (ICD9[1] 174) 1990
England[2] (RHAs as at 1990)

	Number of cases diagnosed	Percentage of total female population
Northern	1,564	0.10
Yorkshire	1,970	0.11
Trent	2,482	0.10
East Anglia	1,249	0.12
North West Thames	1,997	0.11
North East Thames	2,182	0.11
South East Thames	2,102	0.11
South West Thames	1,773	0.11
Wessex	1,864	0.12
Oxford	1,479	0.12
South Western	1,947	0.12
West Midlands	3,026	0.11
Mersey	1,332	0.11
North Western	2,070	0.10
England	27,037	0.11
Wales[2]	1,775	0.12
England and Wales	28,812	0.11
Scotland (Health Boards)		
Argyll and Clyde	230	0.10
Ayrshire and Arran	214	0.11
Borders	89	0.17
Fife	192	0.11
Dumfries and Galloway	91	0.12
Forth Valley	118	0.08
Grampian	310	0.12
Greater Glasgow	567	0.12
Highland	127	0.12
Lanarkshire	287	0.10
Lothian	488	0.13
Orkney	10	0.10
Shetland	13	0.12

Breast Cancer (ICD9[1]174) 1990
England[2] (RHAs as at 1990)

	Number of cases diagnosed	*Percentage of total female population*
Tayside	222	0.11
Western Isles	21	0.14
Scotland	2,979	0.11
Great Britain	31,791	0.11
Northern Ireland	724	0.09
United Kingdom	32,515	0.11

[1] International Classification of Diseases—9th Revision.

[2] Provisional.

Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 9 June, *Official Report*, column *332*, if he will now provide updated accident and emergency department figures. [42297]

Mr. Sackville: I will write to the hon. Member.

Clinical Negligence Claims

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 18 July, *Official Report*, column *1151*, if he will now provide figures on clinical negligence settlements for 1994–95. [42298]

Mr. Malone: Final figures for the period 1994–95 are not yet available.

Doctors (Recruitment)

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received from royal colleges and other medical bodies about recruitment difficulties in certain specialties. [42233]

Mr. Malone: The Department of Health has received representations through informal discussions with various royal colleges and from the national health service on particular specialties' difficulties in filling vacant posts.

Medical work force advisory groups have been asked to consider suitable action to ameliorate any shortages.

Royal Devon and Exeter Healthcare Trust

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the impact on the delivery of NHS health care by the Royal Devon and Exeter Healthcare trust and the delivery of health care in the region generally of the trust's plans to build a private hospital in the grounds of the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital at Heavitree; [42279]

(2) if he will make a statement regarding the Royal Devon and Exeter Healthcare trust's plans to build a private hospital on the grounds of the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital at Heavitree; what representations he received regarding this project; who was responsible for the final approval of the project in his Department; and if he will place a copy of the contract between the trust and the private contractors involved in the Library. [42278]

Mr. Sackville: There are no plans to build a private hospital on trust property.

Cervical Smear Tests

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received from the medical profession with regard to frequency of smear tests for cervical cancer. [42291]

Mr. Sackville: None of which I am aware.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the cost to the NHS of conducting, analysing and reporting a cervical smear test; and what is the private sector cost of conducting, analysing and reporting a cervical smear test. [42293]

Mr. Sackville: Total estimated costs to the national health service of cervical screening is £100 million each year and £40 for an individual test, including the reporting of it.

Information is not available centrally on these costs in the private sector.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about the cervical cancer screening programme. [42294]

Mr. Sackville: The cervical cancer screening programme has been extremely successful. Some 4 million women are screened each year; this means that 84 per cent. of women in the eligible age group nationally have been screened. Through screening, cervical abnormalities which could lead to cancer are identified so that appropriate treatment can be given. I am confident that our "Health of the Nation" target to cut cervical cancer incidence by 20 per cent. by 2000 will be achieved.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recommendations he has received from the chief medical officer regarding the frequency of smear tests for cervical cancer for women aged between 20 and 60 years. [42290]

Mr. Sackville: Departmental policy agreed with the chief medical officer is set out in HSG(93)41: all women in this age group should be invited for a cervical smear at least every five years.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list for each of the past five years and for each family health service authority area *(a)* the number of women who received a smear test for cervical cancer on the NHS, *(b)* the percentage of women in the at-risk category who have received a smear test, *(c)* the average interval of time between smear test and *(d)* the number of GPs and clinics, also expressed as a proportion of the total number of GPs and clinics at which NHS smear tests were available. [42292]

Mr. Sackville: Information is not available in the form requested. The most recent information held on the cervical cancer screening programme, "Cervical Cancer Screening 1993–1994 Summary information from Form KC53 England", was placed in the Library.

General Practitioners

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement regarding the number of vacant places on the general practitioner vocational training course and the recruitment of doctors who have qualified in other countries to fill some of those vacancies. [42277]

Mr. Malone: This information is not available centrally.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list, for the past five years *(a)* the number of qualified doctors enrolling on the general practitioner vocational training course, *(b)* the overall number of places on the schemes and *(c)* the number of places which are filled by doctors who have qualified in another country, in each case specifying the number per regional training centre. [42275]

Mr. Malone: This information is not available centrally.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he plans to take to encourage qualified doctors to become general practitioners; and if he will make a statement. [42276]

Mr. Malone: At 1 October 1994, there were 25,567 general practitioners in England—a record number. We are ensuring that general practice remains an attractive career, for example, by assisting doctors with their duties out-of- surgery hours and implementing the efficiency scrutiny on unnecessary paperwork.

Contracting Out

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 19 July, *Official Report*, column *1282*, if he will now update the information on regional health authority services. [42299]

Mr. Sackville: The table shows updated information:

Regional health authority	*Organisation or service*	*Current position*
1. South and West	Eastwood Park Training and Conference Centre	Subject to contract, to be sold to Peritas (a subsidiary of ICL) in January 1996
2. South and West	Lyngford House Training and Conference Centre	Options under consideration
3. South and West	Avon and Gloucester College of Health	Contract with the University of Western England due for signing by 30 November to take effect in January 1996. Staff able to transfer on TUPE terms
4. South and West	Tor and South West College of Health	Contract with the University of Plymouth due for signing by early December to take effect in January 1996. Staff able to transfer on TUPE terms
5. South and West	SWIFT (IT services)	Contract awarded to EDS wef 1 September 1995. Staff able to transfer on TUPE terms
6. West Midlands	Midlands Laundry Group	Invitations to tender will go out shortly
7. Northern and Yorkshire	Yorkshire Health Legal Services	Tenders invited, and final bids expected in mid-November. Award likely by the end of the year
8. Northern and Yorkshire	Financial Services	Contract awarded to Hartshead Solway wef 1 August 1995. Staff able to transfer on TUPE terms
9. Northern and Yorkshire	White Hart Training and Conference Centre	Options under consideration for final decision early in 1996
10. North Thames	IT services	Constituent parts have either been transferred to NHS Authorities, or to a management/staff buy-out; or wound up and no longer provided
11. South Thames	HCR and SE Computing (IT services)	Contract awarded to Hoskyns wef July 1995. Staff able to transfer on TUPE terms
12. South Thames	David Salomans Training Centre	Subject to contract, award to be made to Canterbury Christchurch College wef April 1996; staff able to transfer on TUPE terms
13. North West	North West Health Legal Services	Contract awarded to Hempsons wef 1 October 95. Staff able to transfer on TUPE terms
14. Anglia and Oxford	Mandeville Medicines (Pharmaceutical Production)	Options for transfer under consideration for final decision in 1996.
15. Anglia and Oxford	Oxford Consortium (various services)	Contract awarded to CSC wef 1 July 1995. Staff able to transfer on TUPE terms.

NHS Management

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* managerial staff, *(b)* administrative and clerical staff and *(c)* nursing and midwifery staff have been employed and at what cost in (i) trusts and (ii) health authorities in each region in each year since 1989. [42239]

Mr. Malone: I will write to the hon. Member.

Staff Cars

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer to the right hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) of 1 November, *Official Report*, columns *360–1*, if he will provide *(a)* a regional and *(b)* a district breakdown of the figures on staff cars. [42301]

Mr. Malone: This information will be placed in the Library.

Nurse-patient Ratio

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what was the average qualified nurse-patient ratio in each of the last five years by *(a)* region and *(b)* district. [42235]

Mr. Sackville: I will write to the hon. Member.

Private Patient Income

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 1 November, *Official Report*, column *356*, when 1994–95 figures on private patient income will be available. [42300]

Mr. Sackville: Shortly.

NHS Staff

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses and midwives and *(b)* doctors have worked in the (i) acute and (ii) community sectors in each of the last three years in each region. [42240]

Mr. Sackville: I will write to the hon. Member.

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the incidence of foetal alcohol syndrome in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [42340]

Mr. Bowis: I will write to the hon. Member.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42316]

Mr. Sackville: I will write to the hon. Member.

Child Protection

Mrs. Helen Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been allowed for child protection services such as health visitors. [42351]

Mr. Bowis: I will write to the hon. Member.

Health Visitors

Mrs. Helen Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what funding there has been of the health visitor service over the past three years; [42352]

(2) if he will list the number of health visitors by authority over the past three years; [42357]

Mr. Bowis: I will write to the hon. Member.

Dental Implants

Mrs. Helen Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list by authority how many dental implants were performed this year and last year *(a)* on national health patients and *(b)* in the private sector; [42353]

(2) what consultations he has had with representatives of the dental health consultants about the funding of dental implant surgery; [42354]

(3) if he will list by authority those health authorities which have decided not to fund dental implant treatment for NHS patients; [42355]

(4) if he will list those health authorities that perform dental implant treatment for patients on the national health service. [42356]

Mr. Malone: I will write to the hon. Member.

Social Services

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money Buckinghamshire county council has spent on social services under both special transitional grant and social services SSA during the financial year *(a)* 1993–94, *(b)* 1994–95 and *(c)* 1995–96 to date. [42359]

Mr. Bowis: I will write to the hon. Member.

AIDS

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the NHS will continue to meet the full cost of treating patients with HIV and AIDS with combinations of anti-viral drugs. [42366]

Mr. Sackville: I will write to the hon. Member.

Injection Pens

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are his reasons for excluding disposable needles for insulin injection pen systems from the drug tariff. [42367]

Mr. Malone: I will write to the hon. Member.

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the oral answer of the Attorney-General of 30 October, *Official Report*, column 12, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and what was the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41214]

Mr. Malone *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the reply the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the my hon. Friend Member for Boothferry (Mr. Davis), gave him on 7 November, columns *698–702*.

Management Costs

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 27 October, *Official Report*, column *848*, to the hon. Members for York (Mr. Bayley) and for Dulwich (Ms Jowell) what was the level of management and administrative expenditure in each health authority of the last three years for which figures are available. [41432]

Mr. Malone *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

Asbestos-related Diseases

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate his Department has made of the number of deaths wholly or partly attributable to asbestos-related disease that are expected in each year until 2030. [41886]

Sir Paul Beresford: I have been asked to reply.

The estimated number of males dying annually from the asbestos-related cancer mesothelioma in 10 years' time could range from between 1,300 and 2,100; in 20 years' time between 1,300 and 3,000 and in 30 years' time between 1,000 and 3,200. These estimates are based on a paper: "The continuing increase in mesothelioma mortality in Britain" which was published in *The Lancet* on 3 March 1995. This paper discusses the uncertainties attached to the projections, which increase very significantly beyond about 2010. It is therefore inappropriate to forecast a figure for each separate year. Projected figures for females are not available.

Currently, there are estimated to be one or two deaths from asbestos-related lung cancer for each death from mesothelioma. The falling prevalence of smoking is likely to reduce this ratio in the future.

Measles, Mumps and Rubella

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which measles, mumps and rubella vaccines, supplied by which companies, were withdrawn from use in 1992; and for what reasons. [41066]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The two vaccines were manufactured by SmithKline Beecham and Merieux. As to the reasons for the discontinuation of their use, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 6 November, *Official Report*, column *607–11*.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to dispose of measles vaccine surplus to the 1994–95 campaign. [41019]

Mr. Sackville: Surplus measles-rubella vaccines arising from overprovision of diluent has already been returned to manufacturers for which my Department has received reimbursement as credit; a small stock is being held against future requirements.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he possesses as to the reason for MMR vaccines being withdrawn in Japan. [41023]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* Urabe-based MMR vaccines have been withdrawn from use in Japan only recently, for the same reasons that they were replaced in this country three years ago. The reason for replacement was restricted to the rate of adverse reactions in the mumps vaccine component.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information his Department holds as to the shelf life of the vaccines used in the campaign conducted since November 1994 to vaccinate against measles and rubella. [41024]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The shelf lives of the vaccines used in the measles-rubella immunisation campaign were all two years. The expiry dates of the batches were either 30 or 31 July 1996, 30 August 1996 or 30 September 1996.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies have been conducted by his Department into the effects of the modification of natural immunologic response by vaccines in relation to the increase in autoimmune diseases. [41028]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which companies were chosen as suppliers of the measles-rubella vaccine in the recent countrywide campaign; and for what reasons. [41018]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* All possible manufacturers were approached. Only SmithKline Beecham and Merieux were in a position to supply—both were awarded contracts.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the likelihood of the adverse reactions to the administration of both MR and MMR vaccines, in regard to the under-reporting of thrombocytopenic purpura. [41017]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The Public Health Laboratory Service has recently published a review on an advanced technique for surveillance of adverse reactions. New information was established on the association between idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura and MMR immunisation. This related to primary immunisation and was of little relevance to the measles-rubella campaign because there was a far lower probability of susceptibility to rubella in children of the campaign age than in those immunised with MMR at 12 to 15 months.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the problems occurring in the passive surveillance procedures adopted in the United Kingdom to monitor adverse effects of vaccinations. [41031]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* Doctors are aware that suspected adverse reactions to vaccines should be reported through the United Kingdom's adverse drug reactions reporting scheme. It is more likely that acute and serious adverse reactions are reported. The United Kingdom's reporting scheme has successfully detected rare unrecognised hazards with vaccines and other medicines and the scheme receives widespread support from doctors. The limitations of the scheme are well recognised but it is the best scheme currently available for the routine surveillance of adverse reactions to vaccines throughout the UK.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out each consideration which led his Department to initiate a country-wide vaccination campaign against measles and rubella jointly in November 1994. [41061]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The key consideration was to protect children against a predicted epidemic of measles. The background is given in the chief medical officer/chief nursing officer letters issued in July and September 1994, copies of which are available in the Library; other supportive information has been published in:

Babad H.R., Noakes D. J., Gay N. J., Miller E., Morgan-Capner P., Anderson R. M.,

Predicting the impact of measles vaccination in England and Wales; model validation and analysis of policy options.

Epidemiol Infect 1995; 114: 319–344.

Gay N. J. Hesketh L. M., Morgan-Capner P., Miller E.

Interpretation of serological surveillance data for measles using mathematical models: implications for vaccine strategy.

Epidemiol Infect

Ramsay M., Gay N. J., Miller E., Rush M., White J., Morgan-Capner P. et al.

The epidemiology of measles in England and Wales; rationale for the 1994 national vaccination campaign.

CDR Review 1994; 4: R141–146.

Christine P.

Measles in Scotland

Commun Dis Envir Hlth Scot 1994; 28(41): 3–8.

For further relevant scientific papers I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 6 November, *Official Report*, columns *607–11*.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what considerations led to the decision not to include on the consent form given to parents for children being vaccinated against rubella information on the possibility that it might lead to some increase in arthritis. [41033]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* In preparing the leaflet for parents careful evaluation was given to all side effects. The risk of arthritis in the age group covered by the measles-rubella campaign was considered not to warrant inclusion as the risk is in older women.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the claims in a journal which has been sent to him regarding information to parents and professionals in respect of the recent MMR campaign. [40885]

Mr. Sackville: The information for parents was produced after careful consideration of all relevant information and was pre-tested with parents and young people. Extensive information on adverse reactions was provided to all doctors and other health professionals involved in the campaign. The author appears not to have considered all the relevant information in making his claims.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies have been *(a)* conducted and *(b)* sponsored by his Department into the causes and development of measles encephalitis in children. [41021]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* Two studies on the rate of acute encephalitis associated with measles infections have been conducted by the Public Health Laboratory Service, and deaths from measles encephalitis were reviewed by the PHLS in 1985. In addition, detailed information on cases on late-onset encephalitis following measles infection subacute sclerosing panencephalitis is collected by the PHLS, and a comprehensive report from this surveillance scheme was published in 1992.

Miller DL. Frequency of complications of measles, 1963. BMJ 1964; 2: 75–78

Miller CL. Severity of notified measles. BMJ 1978. 1: 1255–54

Miller CL. Deaths from measles in England and Wales, 1970–83. BMJ 1985; 290: 433–34.

Miller C, Farrington CP, Harbert K. The epidemiology of subacute sclerosing panencephalitis in England and Wales, 1970–89. Int J Epidemiol 1992; 21: 988–1006.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of *(a)* mumps and *(b)* rubella occurred in each year since 1985; and what assessment he has made of the reliability of the data. [41026]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* Since 1985, the most reliable source of data on mumps and rubella incidence is reports of confirmed infections to the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre from laboratories in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Cases thus confirmed therefore represent true infections. Laboratory investigation is not performed in all suspected cases, however, and therefore these figures may under-estimate the total number of mumps and rubella infections. Since 1988, statutory notifications of mumps and rubella have been collected at the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. In a Public Health Laboratory Service study of the accuracy of notification, laboratory confirmation of rubella cases was attempted in 18 districts between 1991 and 1993. Only 29 per cent. of rubella were confirmed by laboratory testing. No formal study of mumps notifications has taken place but, as part of the PHLS saliva diagnosis scheme, we have confirmed only 3.3 per cent. of mumps cases notified this year. This data suggest that notifications substantially over-estimate the incidence of these infections.

Reports to Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre of confirmed infection from laboratories in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 1985–1995

Year	*Mumps*	*Rubella*
1985	360	828
1986	547	2,069
1987	688	1,887
1988	428	1,031
1989	265	760
1990	94	705
1991	52	249
1992	49	201
1993	37	1,625
1994	47	310
1995 (to week 42)	44	752

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many yellow card reports covering measles, mumps and rubella have been registered by the Medicines Control Agency identifying cases of possible vaccine damage, in each month since 1992. [41022]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The number of yellow card reports of adverse reactions related to measles, mumps and rubella vaccine for each month since 1992 is shown in the table.

	1992	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*
January	8	8	6	10
February	11	16	3	16
March	15	13	13	15
April	12	10	5	11
May	15	15	14	12
June	17	11	7	15
July	15	8	7	4
August	7	12	13	11
September	44	10	9	4
October	27	9	15	—
November	22	8	19	—
December	9	5	20	—

The report of a suspected adverse reaction does not necessarily mean the vaccine was responsible.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consideration was given to the conclusions in the communicable disease report, volume 4, review number 7 of 24 June 1994, as to the need for a mass campaign against rubella before the decision to institute a measles and rubella campaign in November 1994 was taken. [41032]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The results of the summary of districts in England and Wales were consistent with the decision to include rubella vaccine in the immunisation campaign of November 1994. The article identified current policy at that time but also stated that there are no contradictions to a second vaccination in girls. The article did not address the issue of rubella immunisation in boys.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what considerations he has given to including decisions not to include details of each of the known side effects of immunisation in the booklet "Measles: Why every child in school needs to be protected from measles this autumn"; and if he will make a statement. [41020]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The content of the measles booklet was underpinned by research by the Health Education Authority among parents to establish what information they regarded as most important. This research showed that parents were unaware of the seriousness of measles. The final leaflet reflected parents information priorities about the need for measles and rubella immunisation. Side effects from measles rubella vaccine are rare but the more common ones are covered in the booklet. Doctors and other health care workers were given more detailed information on the full range of possible adverse reactions. Parents were advised to discuss any further concerns with their family doctor.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the policy implications of the scientific article on measles, mumps, rubella and varicella, a copy of which has been sent to him. [40884]

Mr. Sackville: The scientific article in *The Lancet*—volume 345, 4 March 1995— a copy of which is in the Library, has been considered by the Department of Health, and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, and its importance is acknowledged. It describes a valuable technique for investigating more serious adverse reactions—that is, those likely to lead to hospital admission. Wider evaluation of the technique would be appropriate. The policy implication of the article is that active surveillance reveals a higher than previously reported risk of thrombocytopaenia and a fourfold reduction of risk of febrile convulsions after the change in the immunisation schedule that we implemented in 1990. The article has no relevance to varicella, for which there is no UK licensed vaccine.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the incidence of measles in 1994–95 among unimmunised 17-year-olds. [41062]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* During 1994, there were 19 confirmed cases of measles infection in 17-year-old children—all of whom were unimmunised—reported to the Public Health Laboratory Service. So far in 1995, there have been only five confirmed cases and all of these cases occurred in unimmunised people.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations his Department has received from the Association of Parents of Vaccine Damaged Children. [41068]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* A number of letters have been received concerning the measles-rubella campaign and the childhood immunisation programme in general.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanism exists for parents who have lost confidence in their general practitioner to pass on confidential information concerning the suspected deleterious effects of measles immunisation vaccinations on their children. [41006]

Mr. Sackville: Doctors are asked to report adverse reactions when, based on their clinical judgment, there is a likelihood of the reported event being related to the administration of the vaccine. We believe that there was good compliance with standard reporting procedures during the course of the campaign. It is open to parents to make representations on specific issues of concern to them to their local family health services authority through the complaints procedures.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance is issued to doctors, nurses and other medical service professionals in regard to the level of information that they are expected give parents on potentially adverse effects of immunisation against measles. [41069]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* Health service professionals are given extensive information on possible adverse reactions to vaccines. The United Kingdom Health Departments' "memorandum", Immunisation against Infectious Disease, published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, provides information on adverse reactions. In addition, for the measles-rubella immunisation campaign the chief medical officer's letters of July, September and October 1994 covered adverse reactions in some detail and included an information booklet for health care professionals.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what tests are conducted on children before immunisation against measles to establish their existing levels of blood antibodies. [41029]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* None. The European advisory group on immunisation of the World Health Organisation has specifically advised against testing of blood for antibodies because of potential unreliability of information obtained and the impractical scale of the exercise. This practice is not known to be routinely undertaken in any country in the world.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many updates have been prepared and circulated by the chief medical officer, the chief nursing officer and the chief pharmacist on the national measles-rubella immunisation campaign since December 1994; and if he will place copies in the Library. [41025]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* There has been one joint communication from the chief medical officer, the chief nursing officer and the chief pharmacist on the measles-rubella immunisation campaign since December 1994. This was a letter dated 19 December 1994: "Update on National Measles-Rubella Immunisation Campaign". A brief article also appeared in CMO's update 6, dated July 1995: "Success of measles/rubella immunisation campaign". Both letters are available in the Library.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what papers or research reports have been prepared or sponsored by his Department on adverse reactions to immunisation against measles; [41030]

(2) what studies have been *(a)* conducted and *(b)* published by the United Kingdom Public Health Laboratory Service on investigation into the effects of measles-mumps-rubella-immunisation inoculation on convulsions amongst recipient children. [41060]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* Extensive studies of measles vaccine were conducted by the Medical Research Council before the introduction of measles vaccine in 1968. Two reports from these studies summarised the incidence of adverse events. Subsequently, a study of symptoms following measles vaccination was conducted by the Public Health Laboratory Service in a large number of children between 1970 and 1980.

Before the introduction of MMR vaccine in 1988, studies were conducted by the Public Health Laboratory Service to measure the rate of adverse events, including convulsions, associated with the vaccine. The study involved over 10,000 children in three district health authorities in the United Kingdom. In 1993, a pilot study to evaluate new methods for monitoring adverse events following vaccination, including MMR vaccine, was conducted.

This involved linking computerised hospital admissions data to child health vaccination records in five districts of England and Wales.

Measles Vaccine Committee. Vaccination against measles: a clinical trials of measles given alone and live vaccine preceded by killed vaccine. BMJ 1966; 1: 441–6. Measles Vaccine Committee. Vaccination against measles: a study of clinical reactions and serological responses of young children. BMJ 1965; 1: 817–23.

Miller C. Surveillance after measles vaccination in children. Practitioner 1982; 226: 535–7.

Miller C, Miller E, Rowe K, et al. Surveillance of symptoms following MMR vaccine in children. Practitioner 1989; 223: 69–72.

Farrington P, Pugh S, Colvile A et al. A new method for active surveillance from diphtheria/tetanus pertussis and measles/mumps/rubella vaccines. Lancet 1995; 345: 567–9.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the decision was taken, and on what basis, to place a notification for competitive tender in the *Official Journal* of the European Communities for the vaccines to be used in the immunisation campaign initiated in November 1994 against measles and rubella. [41067]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The normal procedures of the European Communities public procurements directives did not allow sufficient time for manufacture of vaccines. Therefore, no notification for competitive tender was placed in the *Official Journal* of the European Communities for the vaccines used in the measles rubella immunisation campaign, but contracts were placed using a negotiated procedure as specified in Statutory Instrument 2679 of 1991.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his predecessor was first involved in internal discussions with his chief medical officer and departmental experts on immunology, on the immunology campaign against measles and rubella launched last year. [41063]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* Ministers were informed in April 1994 of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's recommendation that a measles-rubella campaign should be undertaken. This recommendation was considered by Ministers and an announcement made on 28 July 1994.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what inter-departmental discussions at *(a)* ministerial and *(b)* official level have been held since 1993 on the measles-rubella immunisation campaign. [41065]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* Discussions took place as required.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what procedures have been adopted to monitor suspected adverse reactions to the measles-rubella immunisation campaign since November 1994; and what it has cost to date to conduct the monitoring. [41027]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* Before the start of the campaign with measles rubella vaccine the Medicines Control Agency agreed that all reports of suspected adverse reactions would be handled with the highest priority. Spontaneous reports using the yellow card system were classified and entered on to the MCA database within 24 hours of receipt and evaluated by a doctor within 36 hours. Requests for further information were made for serious adverse reactions if inadequate information had been provided on the yellow card. The cost of monitoring MR vaccine cannot be estimated because surveillance was part of the normal MCA procedures for monitoring all licensed medicines in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when officials in his Department first established internal discussions on the departmental immunisation campaign against measles and rubella. [41064]

Mr. Sackville *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* The situation was evaluated in 1992. Development work on strategies was undertaken in 1993. This work was under the stewardship of the United Kingdom Health Departments' external independent expert committee—the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Immunisation

Dr. Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children were *(a)* harmed and *(b)* died as a result of immunisation in each of the last five years. [41643]

Mr. Sackville: A report of a suspected reaction does not necessarily mean it was caused by the vaccine. Reports to the Medicines Control Agency of suspected adverse reactions to vaccines classified in children, aged 15 years or less, in the United Kingdom are presented in the table:

	Reports of any reactions to a vaccine	*Reports of a fatal reaction to a vaccine*
1 November 1990—31 October 1991	292	6
1 November 1991—31 October 1992	610	7
1 November 1992—31 October 1993	1,843	12
1 November 1993—31 October 1994	830	4
1 November 1994—31 October 1995	1,840	2

These figures include 19 sudden infant deaths but the age at which SIDS most commonly occurs is coincidental with that for the recommended primary vaccination schedule. Numerous studies have failed to identify a causal link with vaccination.

Eleven deaths occurred in children with underlying pathologies that were not linked to vaccination.

Approximately 80 million doses of vaccines used in the childhood programme have been distributed in the UK in the last five years.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the percentage of parents who do not wish to have their children immunised. [42281]

Mr. Sackville: Current United Kingdom immunisation coverage by a child's second birthday is: 95.8 per cent. for diphtheria, tetanus and polio; 93.5 per cent. for pertussis; 94.9 per cent. for Hib; and 92.5 per cent for measles, mumps and rubella. These figures do not identify the reason for children not being immunised, but nationwide research in April 1995, commissioned by the Health Education Authority, into attitudes of mothers of children aged nought to two years, estimated that less than 0.5 per cent. said that they would not allow a future child to have any immunisation at all.

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if general practitioner contract targets for immunisation take into account the fact that some parents do not wish to have their children immunised. [42282]

Mr. Malone: The higher target level of 90 per cent. reflects the fact that not all children will be immunised.

NHS Management

Sir Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the number of *(a)* patients on waiting lists for hospital treatment and waiting times, *(b)* hospital beds available, *(c)* hospital staff employed, *(d)* hospital managers and hospital administrative and clerical staff employed, *(e)* hospital doctors employed, *(f)* hospital nurses and midwives employed, *(g)* medical students qualifying and *(h)* medical school places available in each year since 1989 to the latest date available. [40621]

Mr. Malone *[holding answer 31 October 1995]:* The information available for England is shown in the table. The numbers of managers and administrative and clerical staff and total numbers employed in hospitals, as distinct from the hospital and community health services, are not available separately.

	1989	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*
Numbers of patients on inpatient/day case waiting lists on 31 March	922,676	958,976	948,243	917,717	994,974	1,065,369	1,044,051
Numbers of waiting over 12 months on 31 March	223,311	207,860	169,781	80,585	56,877	64,508	32,194
Average waiting time for inpatient/day case admission as at 31 March (in months)	9.3	8.6	7.6	5.1	4.5	4.6	4.0
Available hospital beds during financial year staring 1 April (1)	270,000	255,000	243,000	232,000	219,000	212,000	n/a
Hospital doctors as at 30 September (2)(3)	38,910	40,250	41,430	42,290	43,800	44,660	n/a
Hospital nurses and midwives as at 30 September (2)(4)	346,710	342,360	339,300	325,370	307,870	296,090	n/a
Medical students qualifying as at 31 July (5)	2,639	2,808	2,730	2,788	2,759	2,866	n/a
Medical school places available as at October	3,051	3,051	3,051	3,051	3,051	3,315	n/a

n/a Data not available yet.

(1) Average daily number of available beds, wards open day and night, all specialties.

(2) Whole time equivalents.

(3) Excludes hospital dentists and medical and dental locums.

(4) Excludes agency staff and Project 2000 students. Project 2000 training was introduced in 1989 and has gradually replaced traditional nurse training. Non-Project 2000 nurses undertaking training are included in work force figures. There were no Project 2000 students in 1989; for subsequent years the figures were 3,000, 10,500, 18,300, 28,000, and 32,000. The figure for 1995 is not yet available.

(5) Medical students with first registerable medical qualification.

ENVIRONMENT

Area Cost Adjustment

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to abolish the area cost adjustment. [40321]

Sir Paul Beresford: I have no plans to abolish the area cost adjustment. There is general acceptance among the local authority associations that there should be some allowance for geographical variations in costs. What is disputed is the proper extent of the adjustment. We have announced that a review of the area cost adjustment is to be carried out.

Mr. Robert Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from local authorities concerning the area cost adjustment. [40333]

Sir Paul Beresford: I have received many representations from local authorities about the area cost adjustment. There have been representations both supportive and critical of the present method of determining the adjustment.

Mr. Bill Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the area cost adjustment element of the standard spending assessments. [40349]

Mr. Hain: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the area cost adjustment element of standard spending assessments. [40360]

Sir Paul Beresford: I refer the hon. Members to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Urban Regeneration to my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) on 17 October, *Official Report*, columns *185–86*.

Mr. Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to reduce the proportion of funding allocations by area cost adjustment within the standard spending assessment. [40352]

Sir Paul Beresford: It is the policy of my right hon. Friend that the amount allocated by the area cost adjustment should be determined on an objective basis.

Local Government Finance

Mr. William O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the additional revenue allocated to local education authorities over the capping levels to provide additional services to meet local demands. [40322]

Sir Paul Beresford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave him on 1 November 1995, *Official Report*, Wednesday 1 November, columns *372–74*.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received with regard to the capping criteria. [40327]

Sir Paul Beresford: My right hon. Friend received a large number of representations about the capping criteria for 1995–96. He will announce his intentions for capping for 1996–97 as part of his proposals for the local government finance settlement shortly after the Chancellor's Budget statement.

Ms Hodge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many authorities, on appeal, he allowed to set budgets in 1995–96 above his Department's initial guidelines. [40330]

Sir Paul Beresford: Three.

Mr. Nigel Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to remove capping from local authorities. [40337]

Mr. Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what changes he intends to make to the capping criteria. [40357]

Sir Paul Beresford: My right hon. Friend will announce his proposals for the local government finance settlement for 1996–97, including his intentions for capping, shortly after the Chancellor's Budget statement.

Sir Irvine Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimated savings in terms of public expenditure as a result of measures taken over the past eight years to restrict spending by local authorities. [41861]

Sir Paul Beresford: Since 1990–91, when capping in its current form was introduced, it has been directly responsible for reducing the budgets of those authorities that challenged their caps by a total that has now reached around a third of a billion pounds a year compared with the budgets originally set. The great majority of authorities did not challenge their caps, but set budgets within the limits implied by the capping criteria; although no direct estimate can be made, it is clear that in these cases too capping has been generally successful in ensuring that many authorities have budgeted at a lower level than would otherwise have been the case.

Mr. David Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many councils have been warned by the district auditor that he is unhappy with their accounts or expenditure. [40356]

Sir Paul Beresford: Appointed auditors may formally warn local authorities about their accounts or expenditure through reports in the public interest, under section 15(30) of the Local Government Finance Act 1982, or by making recommendations under section 5 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. In 1993–94, seven public interest reports were made, and section 5 recommendations were included in the management letters of 10 local authorities.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of local authority capital receipts can be used for new projects rather than debt repayment *(a)* up to 31 March 1996 and *(b)* beyond that date. [42177]

Sir Paul Beresford: At present, local authorities can normally spend on purposes other than debt repayment 25 per cent. of receipts from the sale of housing assets and 50 per cent. of receipts from disposal of other assets. Temporary relaxations introduced this year mean that authorities can now spend on new projects increased proportions of receipts from the sale of certain types of assets. These are:

Airport companies: 75 per cent. (from 1 April 1995 to 31 March 1997)

Bus companies: 75 percent (from 1 April 1995 to 31 March 1996)

Car parks: 90 per cent. (from 1 September 1995 to 31 August 1996)

Shops: 90 per cent. (from 1 September 1995 t 31 August 1996)

Crematoria: 90 per cent. (from 1 January 1996 to 30 June 1997)

In addition, we have announced our intention to make regulations with the effect that for two years from 1 April 1996 authorities should be able to spend 90 per cent. of receipts from the sale of county farms, and 75 per cent. from the sale of education assets.

Yorkshire Water

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to monitor the performance of Yorkshire Water plc. [40323]

Mr. Clappison: The performance of Yorkshire Water Services Ltd., the regulated water and sewerage subsidiary of Yorkshire Water plc, is monitored by the water industry regulators—the Director General of Water Services, the drinking water inspectorate and the National Rivers Authority. During the present water shortages in the area, my right hon. Friend has been taking independent advice to satisfy himself that Yorkshire Water Services is doing all that it can to maintain supplies.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Mr. Khabra: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans the Government have to license houses in multiple occupation; and if he will make a statement. [40324]

Mr. Clappison: The Government have no plans to license houses in multiple occupation. Our proposals are set out in the consultation paper "Improving Standards in Houses in Multiple Occupation" which was published on 13 July. Copies are in the Library. An announcement on how the Government intend to take this matter forward will be made shortly.

Mr. Hawkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further measures he plans to control houses in multiple occupation. [40338]

Mr. Clappison: The Government's proposals are set out in the consultation paper "Improving Standards in Houses in Multiple Occupation" which was published on 13 July. Copies are in the Library. An announcement on how the Government intend to take this matter forward will be made shortly.

Homelessness

Mr. Sutcliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the most recent figures for homelessness; and what was the figure in 1979. [40325]

Mr. Clappison: Local authorities report in their quarterly P1(E) returns the number of households for which they accept responsibility to secure accommodation under the homelessness provisions of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 and the Housing Act 1985.

Local authorities accepted some 119,710 households as homeless in the 12 months ending June 1995, the latest period for which a figure is available. This is some 25,370, 17 per cent., below the peak figure in the year ending March 1992. Total acceptances in 1979 were 55,530.

The figure for 1979 is not strictly comparable with that for the latest 12 months because of changes made to reporting systems in 1980, for non-metropolitan districts, and 1982 for London boroughs and metropolitan districts.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what evaluation he has made of the effect of the proposed White Paper "Our Future Homes", on the levels of homelessness. [40345]

Mr. Clappison: The proposals in the White Paper will help to achieve overall objective of bringing a decent home within reach of every family, and reduce homelessness.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many homeless people there have been in London in each of the last 10 years; [41267]

(2) how many homeless people there have been in Southwark in each of the last 10 years. [41272]

Mr. Clappison: Local authorities in England report in their quarterly P1(E) returns the number of households for which they accept responsibility to secure accommodation under the homelessness provisions of the 1985 Housing Act.

The available information for the years 1985 to 1994 for London and Southwark is in the table:

	Acceptances in	
	Southwark	*London*
1985	[1]1,443	27,070
1986	[1]1,594	29,380
1987	[1]872 (2)	29,220
1988	[1]550 (1)	28,880
1989	n/a	33,020
1990	n/a	36,480
1991	[1]3,012 (3)	37,060
1992	2,885	37,840
1993	1,646	31,890
1994	1,453	28,810

[1] Includes intentionally homeless households (up to quarter 1 1991); some authorities may have further changed the basis of their returns at that time this change was made.

(1), (2), & (3) indicates number of quarters covered where partial returns only.

n/a indicates no figures available.

Mr. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many homeless people there have been in each county in each of the last 10 years. [41268]

Mr. Clappison: The information will be placed in the Library shortly.

North Sea Oil Platforms

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration his Department has given to the environmental implications of North sea oil platform decommissioning; and if he will make a statement. [40326]

Mr. Clappison: My Department's environmental responsibilities are taken into account in the proposals by the Department of Trade and Industry for guidelines on decommissioning issued for comment in May. My Department continues to be involved in evaluating the response to the consultation.

The Government announced on 18 October that an independent group is to be set up to review the scientific aspects of disposal of offshore installations as a bench mark for assessment of future proposals.

Cleveland County Council

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what additional funds will be made available for bereavement counselling for employees affected by the abolition of Cleveland county council. [40329]

Sir Paul Beresford: None.

Household Waste (Recycling)

Mr. Merchant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to encourage further recycling of household waste. [40331]

Mr. Clappison: The Government's overall policy aim for achieving more sustainable waste management is to increase the proportion of waste managed by the options towards the top of the waste hierarchy, including recycling. Specific measures to encourage further recycling of household waste are set out in the draft "Waste Strategy for England and Wales", which was published for consultation earlier this year. A copy has been placed in the Library. In particular, our initiative on producer responsibility for packaging waste will play a key role in developing the local infrastructure, and encouraging higher rates of recycling together with other factors such as the rising cost of waste disposal and the rising value of secondary raw materials.

Single Regeneration Budget

Mr. Jacques Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on progress with the single regeneration budget. [40332]

Sir Paul Beresford: Progress with the single regeneration budget has been excellent. Apart from continuing to meet commitments on the programmes which came into the SRB, there have been two rounds of bidding for support for new schemes through the SRB challenge fund. Under the first round, some 200 regeneration schemes were approved which, over their lifetime of up to seven years from April 1995, stand to receive over £1 billion in challenge fund support. This in turn will attract an estimated £1.8 billion in private investment. It is intended that decisions on the second round, for schemes starting from April 1996, will be made by Christmas.

Ms Eagle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when local authorities will be informed about whether their single regeneration bids have succeeded in getting Government funding. [40355]

Mr. Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when local authorities will be informed about whether their single regeneration bids have succeeded in getting Government funding. [40350]

Sir Paul Beresford: It is intended that local authorities and other bidders for support from the second round of the single regeneration budget challenge fund will be informed whether their bids have succeeded by Christmas.

Construction Industry

Mr. Gunnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to introduce legislation to give effect to the recommendations of the Latham report on the construction industry. [40334]

Mr. Clappison: Any proposal for such legislation in the coming Session will be announced, as is customary, in the Queen's Speech.

Housing Benefit

Mrs. Jane Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of new lettings by housing associations in the last two years have been made to people in receipt of housing benefit. [40336]

Mr. Clappison: The latest available information relates to lettings in England to households who are eligible for either full or partial housing benefit.

The figures for 1993–94 and 1994–95 are set out in the table:

Percentage of housing association new lettings eligible for housing benefit

	Per cent.
1993–94	82
1994–95	82

Source:
CORE new lettings data base.

"Our Future Homes"

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from housing organisations regarding the White Paper, "Our Future Homes". [40339]

Mr. Clappison: I have placed in the House Library lists of organisations with housing concerns who have responded to the White Paper and to five linked explanatory and consultation papers. Responses are still being received.

Rural White Paper

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next expects to meet representatives of parish councils to discuss his rural White Paper. [40340]

Mr. Clappison: We expect to meet a wide range of people to discuss the rural White Paper.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to ensure that housing development in rural communities is appropriate in terms of appearance as well as in quality. [40344]

Mr. Clappison: The White Paper on rural England published last month by my Department and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food endorsed the principle, previously outlined in the quality in town and country initiative, that new development in the countryside should contribute to a sense of local identity and regional diversity.

We have already made it clear that local authorities and planning inspectors can reject obviously poor designs which are out of scale or out of character with their surroundings. In addition we intend to issue good practice guidance on the processes which lead to design; and we are working with the Countryside Commission to promote the preparation of village design statements and countryside design summaries throughout England.

Negative Equity

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the number of households in negative equity. [40341]

Mr. Clappison: Estimates of negative equity are sensitive to the underlying assumptions such as changes in house prices. Using the Department's house price index, adjusted for the mix of different dwelling types, to measure changes in house prices, it is estimated that in the second quarter of 1995 some 850,000 households in England and Wales were living in homes where the market value was less than the outstanding loan debt. This estimate provides only a very broad indication of the numbers in this position. The suitability of the assumptions used in compiling the estimates are currently under review.

Empty Properties

Mr. Jamieson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on progress made in implementing recommendations in his Department's task force report on empty homes owned by Government Departments. [40342]

Mr. Clappison: Implementation of the task force recommendations is a matter for those Departments holding empty properties. The Government are committed to ensuring that their empty homes are brought back into use or disposed of quickly. In the Housing White Paper "Our Future Homes" we announced a strengthened policy that Departments will generally dispose of surplus empty properties within six months of their becoming empty.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many currently empty Government *(a)* residential, *(b)* office and *(c)* other buildings there are in (i) London, (ii) Southwark, (iii) each county and (iv) in England; how many have been empty for more than (1) one year, (2) two years and (3) five years; and what is the amount of floor space in each category. [41269]

Mr. Clappison: Information in the form requested is not held centrally.

It is estimated that at 1 April 1994 there were 15,000 vacant dwellings in England owned by Government Departments. Some data for individual local authorities are included in the 1994 housing investment programme all items print, which is in the House Library; although there are doubts about the quality of some of these data.

The table gives particulars of vacant office and specialised properties on the Government civil estate.

Appendix 1: Vacant and specialist properties

	Vacant at 1 November 1995		*Vacant since 1 November 1994*		*Vacant since 1 November 1993*		*Vacant since 1 November 1990*	
Location	*Number of properties*	*Floor area (m2)*	*Number of properties*	*Floor area (m2)*	*Number of properties*	*Floor area (m2)*	*Number of properties*	*Floor area (m2)*
London	26	149,572	14	63,948	7	30,111	2	1,427
London Borough of Southwark	4	2,483	4	2,483	2	1,317	1	511
England	179	288,117	101	137,564	60	70,356	13	7,311

Green Issues

Mr. Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the work of his Department in relating to promoting a green environment. [40343]

Mr. Clappison: The work of my Department in promoting a green environment, along with that of all other Government Departments, is set out in the White Paper "This Common Inheritance—UK Annual Report 1995" (Cm 2822) which was published in March of this year. Copies have been placed in the Library of the House.

Water Shortages

Mr. Chris Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will place in the Library copies of the contingency plans prepared by water companies to safeguard supplies to their customers next summer in the event of below average winter rainfall; [41377]

(2) what assessment he has made of the contingency plans prepared by water companies to safeguard supplies to their customers next summer in the event of below average winter rainfall. [41378]

Mr. Clappison: It is the general duty of water undertakers to make arrangements to provide water supplies to premises in their area and it is the duty of the National Rivers Authority to take all action that is necessary and expedient for the purpose of conserving, redistributing or otherwise augmenting water resources and to secure their proper use. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has asked the National Rivers Authority to report to him following consultation with the companies on the adequacy of water companies' plans and the measures that they are taking to safeguard supplies for next summer; a copy of that report will be placed in the Library when available.

Pollution Control

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will place in the Library a list of the members of the working parties which advise his Department on guidance for local authorities on pollution control standards; [41444]

(2) if he will make a statement on the membership of the working parties which advise his Department on guidance for local authorities on pollution control standards, stating the total number of members who are representatives of, or hold senior positions within, *(a)* commercial organisations, *(b)* pressure groups concerned with the environment and *(c)* local government. [41443]

Mr. Clappison: The guidance on air pollution control standards issued by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to local authorities is drawn up only after extensive and detailed consultation. The consultation is in two stages. Each proposed guidance note is discussed with an ad hoc working party comprising industry and local authority representatives. The working party meetings are chaired by environmental health officers seconded to my Department to advise on these controls and are used by them as a sounding board. The draft guidance is then sent for comment to a wider range of bodies, including the National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection, the local authority associations, Friends of the Earth, the Trade Union Congress, and the Confederation of British Industry.

I will be placing in the House Library a list of members of the working parties convened for the 82 published guidance notes. Approximately 400 participants represented commercial organisations, including manufacturers of monitoring and abatement equipment, and some 75 were local authority representatives. I am also placing a list of those sent the guidance notes at the second stage of consultation.

Beaufort's Dyke

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will instruct the Health and Safety Executive to examine the video evidence submitted to him concerning explosives at Beaufort's dyke and the British Gas pipeline laying with a view to considering the reimposition of a prohibition notice on the operation until it is fully satisfied that it is not a danger to the workers in the boats involved or a threat to public safety. [41590]

Sir Paul Beresford: I understand that the work concerned was successfully completed on the evening of Thursday 2 November. I have written separately to the hon. Member about matters which he raised in a letter to my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade.

Shop Closures

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies he has commissioned to ascertain the reasons why retailers in small towns cease trading. [41671]

Sir Paul Beresford: None specifically. However, research that we have previously commissioned on the effects of major out-of-town retail development, the impact of the Merry Hill regional out-of-town shopping centre, and on vital and viable town centres, and research we propose on the impact of superstores on market towns and district centres, all seek to address this issue among others.

European Youth Parliament for the Environment

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what steps were taken by his Department to encourage young people from the United Kingdom to take part in the European Youth Parliament for the Environment which met in Strasbourg on 9 and 10 October; [41483]

(2) on what basis representatives from the United Kingdom were selected to take part in the European Youth Parliament for the Environment which met in Strasbourg on 9 and 10 October; and what support was provided by his Department to them. [41484]

Mr. Clappison *[holding answer 6 November 1995]*: The Department of the Environment has no record of an approach for assistance from an organisation or event known as the European Youth Parliament for the Environment. It follows that the Department was neither involved in the selection of participants nor in supporting them in Strasbourg on the 9 and 10 October.

Property Holdings

Mr. Faber: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has for the Security Facilities Executive and the Buying Agency when Property Holdings is wound up next year. [42243]

Mr. Gummer: The Security Facilities Executive is an agency that provides security-related support services to central Government and other public sector and approved customers through four main businesses: the Government car service, the inter-despatch service, the custody service and the special services group. The Buying Agency acts as a purchasing agent for Government Departments and other public bodies using its combined purchasing power to secure discounts from suppliers for the benefit of the taxpayer.

These agencies will transfer to the Office of Public Service and will report to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster from 1 January 1996, joining other agencies such as the Civil Service College, which also provide services to Government. Prior to this, a study will be commissioned to investigate the scope for more private sector involvement in the custody service, which employs around 700 guards to protect over 100 Government buildings in the London area. The study will take account of new factors since this business was last examined, in particular changes in the Government's security requirements. Any proposals will be designed to ensure that Government Departments and other customers in the wider public sector obtain maximum value for money and economy from this service. SAFE's other businesses will not be covered by this study.

I announced to the House on 31 January that Property Advisers to the Civil Estate was to be launched as an executive agency in April 1996 to undertake central co-ordination and advisory functions, following the Government decision, based on an efficiency scrutiny, that Departments should become responsible for owning and managing their own accommodation. It will co-ordinate Departments' activities in the property market; promote interdepartmental rationalisation of Government accommodation; provide Departments with advice and support on property management issues; and help Departments not having in-house property expertise to act as intelligent customers in the procurement of professional property advice. It has now been decided that when PACE is launched next April, it will be an executive agency of the Office of Public Service, reporting to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Packaging Waste

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment on what basis he has rejected the seventh option for shared producer responsibility submitted to him by the industry group, V-WRAG. [40346]

Mr. Clappison: The previous Minister for the Environment and Countryside wrote to the chairman of V-WRAG on 23 June and 5 July explaining that, in their original form, the share producer responsibility proposals fell well short of meeting the criteria for an effective legal obligation to support the recovery and recycling of packaging waste. These criteria were published by the Government on 2 February, *Official Report*, columns

763–64. Copies of the correspondence are in the Library. The principal gap in the SPR proposals in their original form was the lack of any quantified obligation, by which an individual company's recycling and recovery effort could be measured. This is essential if we are to measure progress towards meeting the EC directive targets and to provide enforceable legislation to deter "free riders".

In August the Government produced a supplement to their consultation paper on "Producer Responsibility for Packaging Waste" which made clear that a shared responsibility option could be adopted providing it contained a quantified obligation, and a mechanism for disaggregating this across the different members of the packaging chain. The paper was intended to promote debate on the best means of achieving this and meeting the published criteria. Discussions with industry on this matter have continued to date.

Biological Diversity

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the United Kingdom Government's main objectives at the second meeting of the conference of the parties to the convention of biological diversity. [40347]

Mr. Clappison: The second meeting of the conference of the parties to the convention on biological diversity takes place in Jakarta from 6 to 17 November 1995. The UK's main objective for the meeting is to ensure that sensible decisions are taken to implement the convention, which are based on sound scientific and financial considerations. These considerations will be particularly important with regard to:

- encouraging Parties to take forward action to implement the Convention through national strategies;
- the decision about the need to for a biosafety protocol. The UK believes such an instrument is needed with regard to the transfer of living modified organisms between countries;
- the issue of voting provisions on financial issues, where the UK will emphasise the need for decisions to be taken by consensus; and
- the establishment of a "clearing house mechanism". The UK will be pressing for the mechanism to be cost-effective, decentralised data network providing information exchange services.

Local Government Corruption

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what powers he has to intervene where there is widespread evidence of corruption within a local authority. [40348]

Sir Paul Beresford: Ministers have no powers to intervene. Allegations of corruption involving local authorities are matters for the local authority auditor and, where appropriate, the police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Hampshire

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the latest SERPLAN—south-east regional plan—projections for Hampshire and the draft county structure plan. [40351]

Sir Paul Beresford: The Department of the Environment has published revised household projections up to 2011, but it will be some time yet before the Secretary of State can announce a revised housing provision for the south-east. No projections have been produced by SERPLAN. Therefore, the relevant guidance, including the housing provision, to which the draft county structure plan must have regard, is the regional planning guidance for the south-east (RPG9), published in March 1994.

The draft Hampshire county structure plan, containing policies and proposals for the period 1996–2011, was published by Hampshire county council on 2 October. Representations about the draft plan should be made to the county council and not to the Secretary of State for the Environment.

House Building

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the house building industry. [40353]

Mr. Clappison: The Government remain firmly committed to the continued growth of sustainable home ownership. House prices are now the lowest that they have been in relation to incomes since 1983 and low interest rates mean that the average annual monthly cost of a mortgage has reduced by £140 since October 1990. None the less, I am aware that, despite the current affordability of home ownership, the market for new homes remains depressed. The Government are providing an economic climate in which confidence may return to the housing market by maintaining low inflation and sound public finances and promoting steady economic growth.

Maryport (Derelict Land)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what moneys are available from his Department for the restoration of land which is the subject of industrial dereliction in Maryport. [40354]

Sir Paul Beresford: My Department makes funds available for the restoration of derelict land through English Partnerships and other programmes within the single regeneration budget. To date, English Partnerships and the regimes it subsumed have provided funding of some £7.4 million to assist the regeneration of Maryport. In addition, European funding amounting to some £652,000 has been approved in principle for two projects in Maryport under the west Cumbria and Furness objective 2 programme.

Contaminated Land

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has had regarding the revenue support grant to local authorities with respect to contaminated land, given their new duties under the Environment Act, 1995. [40355]

Mr. Gummer: The local authority associations referred to the new requirements in respect of contaminated land under the Environment Act 1995 in their report "The Spending Needs of Local Services 1996–97 to 1998–99" which was considered by the Consultative Council on Local Government Finance when it met under my chairmanship on 17 July.

Council House Rents

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the average rent of a council dwelling in England in 1979; and what is the most recent figure calculated in real terms. [40358]

Mr. Clappison: The average weekly local authority rent in England in April 1979 was £6.41. The corresponding figure in April 1995 was £38.34 and this equates to £14.90 in 1979–80 prices after adjusting for inflation using the GDP deflator.

Small Businesses

Lady Olga Maitland: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made on the effect of the uniform business rate on small businesses. [40359]

Mr. Curry: In February this year my Department published a report, "The Impact of Rates on Businesses", which analysed the impact of non-domestic rates on different sizes of businesses, including small businesses. A copy of this report is in the Library of the House.

Water Companies

Mrs. Helen Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all changes which have taken place in the arrangements for consultation between water undertakers and planning authorities since 1989. [42200]

Mr. Clappison: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mrs. Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if water undertakers are statutory consultees with regard to local planning applications. [42198]

Mr. Clappison: Water undertakers are not statutory consultees under article 10 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995—consultations before the grant of planning permission.

Mrs. Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if water and sewerage undertakers are required to submit all sewage or drainage plans and relevant information or updates to the local planning authority. [42199]

Mr. Clappison: Under section 199 of the Water Industry Act 1991, sewerage undertakers are required to keep records of the location and other relevant particulars of every sewer or disposal main vested in the company, or in relation to which a declaration of vesting has been made but has not yet taken effect, or agreement to make such a declaration entered into. Section 200 of the 1991 Act places a duty on sewerage companies to provide local authorities with copies of those records and any modifications to them.

DSS Hostels

Mr. Allason: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to introduce a licensing system to regulate DSS hostels. [42234]

Mr. Clappison: The Government have no plans to introduce a licensing system for such hostels in particular or for houses in multiple occupation in general. Our proposals are set out in the consultation paper "Improving Standards in Houses in Multiple Occupation" which was published on 13 July. Copies are in the Library. An announcement on how the Government intend to take this matter forward will be made shortly.

Standard Spending Assessments

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the level of standard spending assessment in 1995–96 and the actual or estimated spending on education by each local education authority in 1995–96. [42257]

Sir Paul Beresford: I have placed the information in the Library of the House.

Beverley (Charter Trustees)

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the charter trustees for Beverley to be established on 1 April 1996. [42212]

Sir Paul Beresford: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 2 November 1995, *Official Report*, column *401*. The names of the eligible councillors will not be known until the charter trustees are appointed.

Housing Corporation

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans the Government have to sell the Housing Corporation's £1.2 billion loan portfolio; and if he will ensure that the proceeds will remain in the housing sector. [42253]

Mr. Curry: The Government are considering the possibility of sale of the Housing Corporation's portfolio of loans to housing associations, but no decision has been taken on the matter. In the event of sale, the proceeds would be applied to redemption of the corresponding borrowing from the national loans fund.

Housing Associations

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has considered the National Federation of Housing Associations' proposal to allow housing associations to buy existing homes, and if he will make a statement. [42254]

Mr. Clappison: Housing associations are already allowed to purchase existing homes with public resources provided through the Housing Corporation's approved development programme, if this is the best and most cost-effective way of meeting the priority housing needs in an area.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will change his policy of increasing the level of housing association rents; and if he will make a statement. [42252]

Mr. Curry: The housing White Paper, "Our Future Homes", noted the benefits of better targeting and higher outputs of social housing that have resulted from our policy of shifting the balance of subsidy away from rents and towards the individual in recent years. But the White Paper also acknowledged that a balance needs to be struck, and that we were reaching the limits of what could be achieved through higher rents.

In line with this policy, I announced on 26 September that the 1996–97 housing association grant rate would be maintained at this year's level of 58 per cent., to give tenants the benefit, in lower rents, of continuing reductions in development costs and greater cost efficiency by housing associations. The Housing Corporation estimates that rents on completed properties funded in 1996–97 will be £6 per week lower than rents being charged on new properties completed in this financial year, after allowing for inflation.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42314]

Sir Paul Beresford: I will write to the hon. Member.

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to the reply of the Attorney-General of 30 October, at column 12, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and if he will further indicate the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41210]

Sir Paul Beresford *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Member for Boothferry (Mr. Davis), yesterday, columns *697*.

SCOTLAND

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which capital projects in the national health service in Scotland were funded outwith the private finance initiative in each of the most recent five years; and what was the cost of each project. [38807]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and arrange for a signed copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list by type of project *(a)* how many schemes have been approved to date under the private finance initiative, *(b)* what is the value of those schemes and *(c)* what public sector contribution will be required both initially and as revenue support during the lifetime of the schemes. [41746]

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* To date, there have been 17 private finance initiative contracts either completed or for which contracts have been let. Sixteen of these are health projects, with an estimated total capital value of £43.4 million; the other is the Skye bridge, the capital value of which is £15.6 million, excluding the cost of approach roads towards which a public sector contribution of £8 million was made.

The revenue cost to the public sector client of a PFI project is dependent on the achievement of contract specifications, which may include the level of usage of the facility concerned. Estimates of the future revenue payments for each health project are not held centrally.

Lafferty Construction Ltd.

Mr. McMaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list each contract awarded by his Department to Lafferty Construction Ltd. and any company known to be linked with it in each of the 10 years prior to its demise; what was the value of each contract; what investigations his Department has carried out to ensure that public funds were not misappropriated, misused or defrauded during such contracts; and if he will make a statement. [39291]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 1 November 1995]:* I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and arrange for a signed copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many circulars his Department has so far issued as a consequence of local government reform in Scotland [39402]

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 26 October 1995]:* A total of 56.

Beta-Interferon

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to restrict the use of beta-interferon to controlled trials; and if he will make a statement. [41509]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Currently there are no marketing authorisations—product licences—for beta-interferon in the United Kingdom but approval has been given for clinical trials to test the efficacy of beta-interferon in the treatment of multiple sclerosis. Details of the clinical trials and the licensing of beta-interferon are restricted by law in accordance with section 118 of the Medicines Act 1968.

In addition to the use of beta-interferon in controlled clinical trials, doctors who identify the need to treat a patient using this unlicensed medicine are able to do so on a "named-patient" basis in accordance with section 9(1) of the Medicines Act 1968 without the patient taking part in a clinical trial and without the doctor notifying the licensing authority. However, a doctor prescribing an unlicensed product does so entirely on his own responsibility. To stop such a use of beta-interferon would be a restriction on clinical freedom and prevent a doctor from offering his patient what in his clinical judgment is the most appropriate treatment for that patient.

Consultants

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many consultants there were in *(a)* urology, *(b)* ear, nose and throat, *(c)* paediatrics, *(d)* ophthalmology and *(e)* anaesthetics for the years (i) 1990 and (ii) 1994–95 in each hospital in Scotland. [41697]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is shown at Scotland level in the table. Data are not collected centrally on consultants' sessional commitments to hospitals; the finest organisational breakdown available centrally being by health board for 1990 and by NHS trust and directly managed units for 1994.

Medical Consultants in Selected Specialities in Scotland

Whole time equivalents as at 30 September

	1990	*1994*
Urology	33.3	35.3
ENT surgery	50.3	52.3
Surgical and medical paediatrics	91.6	88.4
Ophthalmology	65.6	63.0
Anaesthetics	292.0	332.1

The figures include medical school staff who hold honorary NHS appointments.

Manufacturing Exports

Mr. Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his latest estimate for the level of Scottish manufacturing exports; and if he will make a statement. [41665]

Mr. Kynoch: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and arrange for a signed copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

Specialists

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for each health board area in Scotland the number of fully trained specialists in the NHS in *(a)* speech and language therapy, *(b)* physiotherapy and *(c)* chiropody for the years (i) 1990 and (ii) 1994–95. [41698]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Qualified NHS Speech Therapists, Physiotherapists and Chiropodists; by Health Board Area Headcount: at 30 September

	Speech Therapist		*Physiotherapist*		*Chiropodist*	
	1990	*1994*	*1990*	*1994*	*1990*	*1994*
Argyll and Clyde	40	50	105	118	46	52
Ayrshire and Arran	31	35	119	138	64	70
Borders	14	18	35	44	12	14
Dumfries and Galloway	19	24	30	38	18	19
Fife	32	50	94	121	51	55
Forth Valley	24	28	67	84	30	27
Grampian	58	71	145	170	51	56
Greater Glasgow	78	120	359	374	101	105
Highland	21	29	62	69	20	22
Lanarkshire	38	69	135	144	57	67
Lothian	68	99	263	309	83	89
Orkney	2	5	5	8	1	1
Shetland	1	2	6	8	4	4
Tayside	40	55	119	135	42	46
Western Isles	5	6	13	14	4	4

Qualified NHS speech therapists, physiotherapists and chiropodists; by health board area whole-time equivalent: at 30 September

	Speech therapist		*Physiotherapist*		*Chiropodist*	
	1990	*1994*	*1990*	*1994*	*1990*	*1994*
Argyll and Clyde	32.0	39.6	77.6	89.8	41.6	45.1
Ayrshire and Arran	27.2	32.2	93.2	104.3	57.8	60.1
Borders	11.7	13.9	27.4	33.7	11.0	13.6
Dumfries and Galloway	17.1	21.8	23.6	30.7	16.3	17.5
Fife	27.8	44.7	79.0	100.5	45.9	48.2
Forth Valley	18.9	22.6	57.4	69.2	28.0	26.3
Grampian	46.2	59.2	115.7	123.5	41.9	45.5
Greater Glasgow	60.8	99.8	307.5	316.5	87.1	95.7
Highland	18.0	24.7	50.7	58.7	18.0	19.0
Lanarkshire	32.9	58.6	110.4	117.1	52.7	60.2
Lothian	56.3	79.6	216.1	253.1	77.2	80.7
Orkney	2.0	2.7	5.0	5.7	1.0	1.0
Shetland	1.0	2.0	6.0	8.0	4.0	4.0
Tayside	31.3	45.0	91.0	105.8	39.2	43.4
Western Isles	4.1	5.7	10.6	10.6	3.4	4.0

Source:

National Manpower Statistics from Payroll (NAMS) Information and Statistics Division.

Class Sizes

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage and how many *(a)* primary school pupils and *(b)* high school pupils were in classes of over 30 in January in each local education authority and in total; and what was the actual and percentage change in numbers compared with January 1994 in each local education authority in total. [41666]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson: The latest information available is set out in the table. Information from the September 1995 census is currently being processed.

Education authority primary schools
Pupils in classes of over 30 at September 1993[1],[2]

Education authority	*Number*	*Percentage*
Scotland	74,894	17.1
Borders	544	6.3
Central	3,972	17.1
Dumfries and Galloway	2,052	15.9
Fife	5,435	17.5
Grampian	6,556	14.6
Highland	1,996	10.4
Lothian	11,885	20.7
Strathclyde	34,642	17.2
Tayside	7,558	23.1
Orkney	64	3.5
Shetland	—	0.0
Western Isles	190	7.2
Strathclyde divisions:		
Argyll and Bute	287	5.3
Ayr	6,478	19.2
Dunbarton	5,138	17.5
Glasgow	8,068	14.3
Lanark	6,717	14.8
Renfrew	7,954	25.2

[1] All classes running in School Census Week.

[2] Excludes pupils with learning difficulties, who are taught in separate classes.

Education authority secondary schools
Pupils in subject classes of average size over 30 at September 1993[1] [2]

Education authority	*Number*	*Percentage*
Scotland	88,151	2.5
Borders	342	0.5
Central	535	0.3
Dumfries and Galloway	615	0.6
Fife	2,218	0.9
Grampian	4,189	1.2
Highland	3,616	2.0
Lothian	8,996	2.1
Strathclyde	61,517	3.8
Tayside	6,123	2.4
Orkney	—	0.0
Shetland	—	0.0
Western Isles	—	0.0
Strathclyde Divisions:		
Argyll and Bute	155	0.3
Ayr	2,715	1.0
Dunbarton	13,822	5.3
Glasgow	14,918	4.0
Lanark	8,862	2.2
Renfrew	21,045	7.9

[1] All subject classes running in school census week; pupils are counted once for each subject taken.

[2] These figures exclude two schools for which information is not available.

Roads

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* representations which have been made or are about to be made to the European Commission about the future funding of trunk roads in Scotland. [41681]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* My right hon. Friend has made no such representations to date.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those trunk roads and motorway routes in Scotland which have not been submitted by Her Majesty's Government to the EU Commission as priority funding routes during 1995 to 1999. [41682]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* The maps of the proposed trans-European transport networks, which are the routes of strategic importance for traffic moving within and through the European Union states, include several road and rail routes in Scotland. Inclusion of the routes on these maps makes them eligible for support from the EU's TENs funds, at a rate of 10 per cent. of capital costs or 50 per cent. of feasibility studies.

The timing of any applications for funding which may be made in respect of trunk roads or motorways in Scotland would depend on the place of those schemes within the trunk road programme, because the funding of the schemes would continue to come predominantly from that programme. While the European Council has agreed on the total funds to be available for TENs between 1995 and 1999, the allocation between years and individual schemes will be determined annually. There are no schemes in Scotland with planned start dates which would have made it appropriate to submit an application up until now. We will keep this matter under review.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if the EC Commission has announced that the A1 route from Edinburgh to Newcastle was omitted from a list of routes awaiting Euro-funds between 1995 and 1999; and if he will make a statement. [41683]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* My right hon. Friend is not aware of any such announcement.

Regional Selective Assistance

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his latest forecast outturn for regional selective assistance offers and expenditure in Scotland in 1995–96 and its relationship to planned expenditure. [41782]

Mr. Kynoch *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* The latest estimate of total value of regional selective assistance offers accepted by businesses in Scotland during the first seven months of 1995–96 is £36.3 million. The original voted expenditure for the year was £82.450 million including estimated receipts of £2 million—but—subject to parliamentary approval of a supplementary estimate, a further £3.425 million will be made available to meet anticipated additional demand in-year. Grant is paid in instalments against progress on projects, typically over a period of three to five years, so much of the grant offered in 1995–96 will not fall to be paid until later years.

Special Protection Areas

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for each designated *(a)* special area of conservation, *(b)* special protection area in Scotland the (i) name of the site, (ii) local authority, (iii) size and (iv) species in question. [41852]

Mr. Kynoch: No special areas of conservation under the EC habitats directive have yet been designated. The information requested for special protection areas designated under the EC birds directive is shown in the table:

Name	*Region*	*District*	*Area (ha)*	*Qualifying species*
Abernethy Forest	Highland	Badenoch and Strathspey	5,796	Scottish crossbill Capercaillie
Ailsa Craig	Strathclyde	Kyle and Carrick	105	Gannet
Bridgend Flats, Islay	Strathclyde	Argyll and Bute	331	Greenland barnacle goose
Cameron Reservoir	Fife	North East Fife	64	Pink-footed goose
Coll	Strathclyde	Argyll and Bute	2,177	Greenland barnacle goose Greenland white-fronted goose
Copinsay	Orkney		152	Great black-backed gull Kittiwake Guillemot
Eilean na Muice Duibhe, Islay	Strathclyde	Argyll and Bute	574	Greenland white-fronted goose
Fair Isle	Shetland		592	Fair Isle Wren Arctic Tern Fulmar Shag Arctic skua Great skua Kittiwake Guillemot Razorbill Puffin
Fala Flow	Lothian	Midlothian	323	Pink-footed goose
Fetlar	Shetland		2,639	Red-necked phalarope Arctic tern Fulmar Whimbrel Arctic Skua Great Skua Black guillemot
Feur Lochain	Strathclyde	Argyll and Bute	384	Greenland white-fronted goose
Flannan Isles	Western Isles		81	Leach's petrel Guillemot Razorbill Puffin
Forth Islands	Lothian/Fife	East Lothian City of Edinburgh North East Fife	92	Sandwich tern Roseate tern Common tern Gannet Cormorant Shag Lesser Black-backed gull Kittiwake Guillemot Razorbill Puffin
Fowlsheug	Grampian	Kincardine and Deeside	8	Kittiwake Guillemot Razorbill
Glac na Criche	Strathclyde	Argyll and Bute	265	Greenland white-fronted goose
Gladhouse Reservoir	Lothian	Midlothian	187	Pink-footed goose
Glen Tanar	Grampian	Kincardine and Deeside	4,185	Scottish crossbill Hen harrier Osprey Capercallie
Gruinart Flats	Strathclyde	Argyll and Bute	3,170	Greenland barnacle goose Greenland white-fronted goose Whooper swan Light-bellied brent goose Ringed plover
Handa	Highland	Sutherland	363	Arctic Skua Great Skua Kittiwake Guillemot Razorbill
Hemaness and Saxa Vord	Shetland		1,039	Fulmar Gannet

Name	Region	District	Area (ha)	Qualifying species
				Great skua
				Guillemot
				Puffin
Hoselaw Loch	Borders	Roxburgh	46	Pink-footed goose
				Icelandic greylag goose
Laggan Peninsula and Bay	Strathclyde	Argyll and Bute	1,270	Greenland barnacle goose
				Greenland white-fronted goose
Lochs Druidibeg, a'Machair and Stilligarry	Western Isles		1,677	North Scottish greylag goose
Loch Eye	Highland	Ross and Cromarty	195	Icelandic greylag goose
				Whooper swan
Loch Ken-River Dee Marshes	Drumfries and Galloway	Stewartry	773	Greenland white-fronted goose
				Icelandic greylag goose
Loch Maree	Highland	Ross and Cromarty	3,100	Black-throated diver
Loch of Kinnordy	Tayside	Angus	86	Icelandic greylag goose
				Pink-footed goose
Loch of Lintrathen	Tayside	Angus	189	Icelandic greylag goose
Loch of Skene	Grampian	Gordon	125	Icelandic greylag goose
Loch Spynie	Grampian	Moray	93	Icelandic greylag goose
Loch Vaa	Highland	Badenoch and Strathspey	45	Slavonian grebe
				Goldeneye
Marwick Head	Orkney		9	Kittiwake
				Guillemot
Mingulay and Berneray	Western Isles		819	Fulmar
				Shag
				Kittiwake
				Guillemot
				Razorbill
Monach Isles	Western Isles		577	Greenland barnacle goose
				Common tern
				Little tern
				Black guillemot
Montrose Basin	Tayside	Angus	987	>20,000 waterfowl
				Pink-footed goose
				Icelandic greylag goose
				Redshank
Priest Island	Highland	Ross and Cromarty	138	Storm petrel
Rum	Highland	Lochaber	10,684	Manx shearwater
St. Kilda	Western Isles		853	Leach's petrel
				Storm petrel
				Fulmar
				Manx shearwater
				Gannet
				Kittiwake
				Guillemot
				Razorbill
				Puffin
Shiant Isles	Western Isles		202	Greenland barnacle goose
				Fulmar
				Shag
				Guillemot
				Razorbill
				Puffin
South Tayside Goose Roosts	Tayside	Perth and Kinross	409	Icelandic greylag goose
				Pink-footed goose
Sule Stack and Sule Skerry	Orkney		19	Storm petrel
				Leach's petrel
				Gannet
				Shag
				Puffin
Treshnish Isles	Strathclyde	Argyll and Bute	208	Storm petrel
				Greenland barnacle goose
Upper Solway Flats and Marshes	Dumfries and Galloway	Annandale and Eskdale	29,950	Whooper swan
		Nithsdale		Svalbard barnacle goose
		Stewartry		Golden Plover
				Pink-footed goose
				Pintail
				Scaup
				Oystercatcher
				Knot
				Bar-tailed godwit
				Curlew
				Redshank

GP Fundholders

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of general practitioners in *(a)* Inverclyde, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland as a whole are currently fundholders; and if he will make a statement. [41977]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* The information is provided on the basis of health board areas as set out in the table.

	Argyll and Clyde	*Health Boards in Strathclyde*[1]	*Scotland*
Percentage of GPs who are currently fundholders	13.5	16.9	20.4

[1] Ayrshire and Arran, Argyll and Clyde, Greater Glasgow, Lanarkshire.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many persons in his Department are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list their names; and how much each is paid; [42046]

(2) how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by his Department relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42047]

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and arrange for a signed copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

NHS Trusts

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of the annual budget was spent by NHS trusts in *(a)* Strathclyde and *(b)* Scotland as a whole on management, administrative and clerical staff in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [42000]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* The accounts of NHS trusts for 1994–95 provide information on the cost of management and administration staff and board members. Based on the information contained in these accounts, the proportion of total annual income spent on management and administrative staff and board members by NHS trusts in *(a)* Strathclyde was 7.23 per cent. and *(b)* NHS trusts in Scotland as a whole was 7.12 per cent.

Hospices

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his policy concerning the funding of hospices; and if he will make a statement. [41975]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* The voluntary adult hospices in Scotland obtain public funding through contracts with health boards, designed to ensure that provision is sufficient to meet the needs of the population in each board's area. The arrangements are being kept under review.

Training

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what are the results of the youth training skillseekers leavers survey for the period April 1994 to December 1994, for each local enterprise company area and for Scotland as a whole, broken down to show the number and proportion of leavers who were *(a)* in full-time work with the same employer, *(b)* in full-time work with a different employer, *(c)* in part-time work, *(d)* on a full-time course at a college or training centre, *(e)* on another YT scheme, *(f)* doing something else, *(g)* who were unemployed and *(h)* who had obtained a vocational qualification; and what was (i) the number of questionnaires issued, (ii) the usable percentage response rate and (iii) the percentage of respondents who were early leavers and the reasons stated for leaving training early; and if he will make a statement; [41995]

(2) if he will set out, according to the results from the youth training/skillseekers leavers survey, the number and level of Scottish vocational qualifications or credits towards SVQs or other qualifications gained by people leaving training in the period April 1994 to December 1994, for Scotland as a whole, for all leavers and by ethnic group, disability and gender showing male, female and all; and if he will make a statement; [41921]

(3) if he will set out according to the results from the training for work leavers survey, the number and level of SVQs or credits towards SVQs or other qualifications gained by people leaving training for work in the period April 1994 to December 1994, for Scotland as a whole for all leavers and by ethnic group, disability and gender showing male, female and all; and if he will make a statement. [41923]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* In Scotland, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise are responsible for training for work and youth training leavers follow-up surveys within their respective areas. I have asked the chairmen of the bodies to write to the hon. Member with the figures for each local enterprise company where requested and totals for their networks.

Guided Learning Hours

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 22 March, *Official Report*, column 269, what definition he intends to introduce to mirror the concept of guided learning hours appropriate to England and Wales. [41948]

Mr. Raymond S. Robertson *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* It is proposed to define a full-time further education student in Scotland as a person undertaking a course of study which is funded in whole or in part by the Secretary of State at a college of further education if it involves:

i. more than 16 hours per week of classroom or workshop-based programmed learning under the direct guidance of teaching staff; or

> ii. 16 hours or less per week of classroom or workshop-based programmed learning under the direct guidance of teaching staff together with additional hours using structured learning packages supported by the teaching staff so that the combined total of hours exceeds 21 per week.

Students who do not satisfy this criteria will be regarded as part-time.

Nurses (Regrading)

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the regrading procedure in the nursing profession. [41974]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* I understand that on 31 October 1995 the central adjudicating panel had 71 nurse clinical grading appeals still outstanding.

Bus Fleets

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate he has made of the average age of bus fleets operated by private bus companies in *(a)* Inverclyde, *(b)* Strathclyde regional area and *(c)* Scotland as a whole. [41976]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* The average age of public transport vehicles in Scotland is given in the Scottish Office publication "Scottish Transport Statistics" (1992–93) as 8.4 years (1992 figure). Information on a local/regional basis is not readily available.

NHS Budget

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of the NHS budget was spent on management, administrative and clerical staff in *(a)* 1989 and *(b)* the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [41999]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* Information on management, administrative and clerical staff expenditure is contained in the NHS accounts for 1989–90 and 1994–95, the latest year for which figures are available. These costs, expressed as a proportion of the total for the NHS, for *(a)* 1989–90 were 5.34 per cent. and for *(b)* 1994–95 were 6.86 per cent.

Health Board Budgets

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those health boards which have been required to provide additional funds to trusts in their areas due to financial difficulties in those trusts for the year 1994–95 and for the current year. [42137]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and arrange for a signed copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the underspend for each health board *(a)* in absolute terms and *(b)* as a percentage of their total budget for each of the past three years. [42145]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The underspend for each health board *(a)* in absolute terms and *(b)* as a percentage of their total allocated budget for each of the past three financial years, is shown in the table. The figures are based on health board accounts and those for 1994–95 are provisional.

Health board	*Under/over spend £000*	*Percentage of total budget*
1994–95		
Argyll and Clyde	85	0.03
Ayr and Arran	828	0.42
Borders	816	1.18
Dumfries and Galloway	1,453	1.59
Fife	1,197	0.64
Forth Valley	1,313	0.89
Grampian	1,373	0.48
Greater Glasgow	9,880	1.65
Highland	971	0.78
Lanarkshire	1,272	0.47
Lothian	3,057	0.70
Orkney	(2)	(0.01)
Shetland	106	0.64
Tayside	845	0.34
Western Isles	201	0.71
Scotland total	23,395	0.79
1993–94		
Argyll and Clyde	525	0.22
Ayr and Arran	632	0.34
Borders	595	0.97
Dumfries and Galloway	874	1.01
Fife	959	0.53
Forth Valley	247	0.17
Grampian	(4)	(0.00)
Greater Glasgow	3,082	0.50
Highland	848	0.73
Lanarkshire	31	0.01
Lothian	72	0.02
Orkney	58	0.44
Shetland	(11)	(0.07)
Tayside	323	0.13
Western Isles	(26)	(0.10)
Scotland total	8,205	0.28
1992–93		
Argyll and Clyde	(28)	(0.01)
Ayr and Arran	751	0.42
Borders	289	0.50
Dumfries and Galloway	724	0.88
Fife	1,663	0.99
Forth Valley	68	0.05
Grampian	39	0.01
Greater Glasgow	3,292	0.54
Highland	790	0.66
Lanarkshire	810	0.32
Lothian	833	0.20
Orkney	232	1.83
Shetland	152	8.01
Tayside	91	0.04
Western Isles	385	1.63
Scotland total	10,091	0.39

Miscarriages of Justice

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 15 June, *Official Report*, columns *669–70*, if he will list the names and convictions of each of the eight defendants whose cases were referred back to the Court of Appeal by the Secretary of State. [42206]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is as follows:

Name	*Year of referral*	*Conviction*
Alan James Pocock	1986	Possession of a Class A controlled drug with intent to supply Possession of a Class B controlled drug Attempt to defeat the ends of justice Bail offence
Ernest Barrie	1988	Theft, assault and armed robbery
Graham Archer Marland	1989	Incest
William Kilpatrick/Christopher McEwen	1991	Mobbing and rioting
Stewart William Murray Dickson	1992	Murder
George Beattie	1993	Murder
Francis Joseph Dougan	1993	Assault

Health Boards (Audited Accounts)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *197*, when he expects to announce a final decision on the reallocation of health overspend; and if he will inform the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden at that time. [42155]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The answer of 31 October dealt with health board underspends in 1994–95. The amount of such underspends to be reallocated to health boards is dependent upon parliamentary approval, which is normally given in late December. A final decision on the reallocation of health board underspend will be made then. I will inform the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden at that time.

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the incidence of foetal alcohol syndrome in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [42341]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and arrange for a signed copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

Severe Disability Allowance

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many claims there were for severe disability allowance on the grounds that the applicant suffered from persistent virus disease in each of the past three years; and how many of these claims were upheld. [42342]

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have asked the Secretary of State for Social Security to write to the hon. Member and arrange for a signed copy of the letter to be placed in the House Library.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42324]

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member and arrange for a signed copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

Companies (Innovation)

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to improve delivery of support available to companies in Scotland to assist innovation. [42358]

Mr. Kynoch: Innovation is crucial to competitiveness. Support to companies for innovation should be delivered, wherever possible, at the local level both to ease access and to allow integration with support available in other aspects of business strategy. In Scotland, the regional enterprise grant for innovation, which is administered by the Scottish Office, will therefore close to applications on 31 December 1995. Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise will then assume responsibility for providing similar support to small companies and will do so throughout Scotland through their local enterprise companies.

In addition to the advantages of local delivery, more extensive support will be available. Whereas the regional enterprise grant for innovation has been available only in assisted areas and certain urban areas, support from the enterprise networks will be available across Scotland.

The Scottish Office will continue to administer the small firms merit award for research and technology and support for products under research schemes in Scotland.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Child Benefit

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Social security what estimates his Department has made of the cost of extending to families of students in local further full-time education at the age of 19 the right to child benefit. [37380]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: None.

Medical Examinations

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people were in receipt of *(a)* invalidity benefit and *(b)* disability premium at the beginning of each of the last four financial years; how many people (i) in receipt of invalidity benefit and (ii) in receipt of disability premium were referred to a regional medical officer for a medical examination in each of the last four financial years; and how many were found to be (1) incapable of work, (2) fit for work within limits and (3) fit for work, for each Benefits Agency district office covering the postal districts of Doncaster and Mexborough. [39000]

Mr. Burt: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the cost of each medical examination carried out by his Department's medical officers on customers claiming sickness benefit for the first time, and the cost of each subsequent medical examination of customers in receipt of sickness benefit in his Benefits Agency's boundaries covering Doncaster and Mexborough for the year ended 31 March; how many *(a)* first-time and *(b)* other claimants' claims for sickness benefits were rejected on the basis of the examination medical officer's report; and if he will list the equivalent figures for the year ended 31 March 1994. [39473]

Mr. Burt: The information requested on the cost of each medical examination in Doncaster and Mexborough is not available. Information regarding the number of first time and other claimants' claims for sickness benefit in Doncaster and Mexborough which were rejected on the basis of the medical officer's report could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Family Credit

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will consider holding centrally records of the number of applications for family credit, by benefit agency district area; and if he will make a statement. [39025]

Mr. Roger Evans: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Social Security Spending

Mr. Hain: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was social security spending as a percentage of gross domestic product in 1994; what was the figure in other European Union and OECD countries; and what was the EU and OECD average. [38826]

Mr. Burt: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Housing Market

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what discussions he has had with and what representations he has received from the Council of Mortgage Lenders as to how the proposed social security restrictions could affect the housing market. [38817]

Mr. Roger Evans: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many times in each month of the current year he has met personally the heads of the agencies which report to him to discuss the work of those agencies. [39862]

Mr. Burt: My right hon. Friend has a regular monthly meeting with the chief executive of the Benefits Agency, who also attends a limited number of meetings to discuss particular concerns. He meets chief executives of other agencies within the Department as necessary when particular issues arise. The chief executive of the Child Support Agency has regular meetings with my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell), as does the chief executive of the Contributions Agency with my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, North (Mr. Heald). Other chief executives meet Ministers relatively infrequently. Much of the contact between Ministers and chief executives is in writing.

Ministerial Transport

Dr. Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what has been the cost of the ministerial transport in each of the past five years; what allowance has been paid to Ministers who use their own vehicles; and what has been the cost in each of the past five years. [40739]

Mr. Burt: The information in relation to use of official vehicles is in the table.

Year	*Expenditure £*
1990–91	[1]226,118
1991–92	[1]286,391
1992–93	[1]274,758
1993–94	[1]290,241
1994–95	325,815

During the period 1990–91 to 1994–95 no allowances were paid to Ministers in respect of use of their own vehicles.

[1] Includes expenditure incurred by officials acting in direct support of Ministers.

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Ian McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the total amount paid out in unemployment benefit, by region in May 1979 and in the most recent month for which figures are available, at 1995 prices. [40835]

Mr. Roger Evans: I have been asked to reply.

The table provides estimates for the most recent month for which figures are available. The information for May 1979 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

	Number of recipients (000s)	*Average amount of UB (£)*	*Amount of UB paid (£Millions)*
England	458.7	48.63	22.3
South East	158.9	47.99	7.6
East Anglia	19.3	49.15	0.9
South West	40.7	48.43	2.0
West Midlands	51.9	48.88	2.5
East Midlands	39.2	49.32	1.9
Yorkshire and Humberside	51.6	49.68	2.6
North West	58.0	48.09	2.8
North	39.1	49.60	1.9
Wales	23.3	48.89	1.1
Scotland	58.9	48.45	2.9
Great Britain	540.8	48.62	26.3

Source:

5 per cent. sample of unemployed claimants taken on the second Thursday of May 1994.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when procedures will be agreed between his Department's finance division and Her Majesty's Treasury to enable the special payments section of the Child Support Agency to pay compensation to Wendy

Hardaker and Janet Daniel, on whose behalf applications for compensation were made in July 1994 and November 1994. [41144]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *830*, to the hon. Member for Broxbourne (Mrs. Roe).

The chief executive of the Child Support Agency, Miss Ann Chant, will write to the hon. Member regarding the cases of Wendy Hardaker and Janet Daniel.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Secuirty what is his Department's definition of "absent parents not paying maintenance" as referred to in paragraph nine of the annexe of the memorandum CS7 submitted by the Child Support Agency to the Social Security Select Committee prior to the Committee hearing of 18 October. [41803]

Mr. Mitchell: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Ann Chant. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Miss Ann Chant to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 7 November 1995:

I am replying to your question about the definition of "absent parents not paying maintenance".

This part of the Memorandum relates to an estimate of the proportion of cases taken on by the Agency since April 1994, in which the absent parent was not making regular payments of maintenance to the parent with care.

Ms Lynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 25 October, *Official Report*, column *711*, relating to benefit savings, if he will define which actions will start the four-week period or the eight-week period in cases where the parent with care ceases to claim income support. [41344]

Mr. Mitchell: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Ann Chant. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Miss Ann Chant to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 7 November 1995:

I am replying to your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Social Security about Child Support Agency benefit savings.

The action is defined as the issue of a form requiring completion, to either the parent with care or absent parent, or direct contact with either party by telephone or interview.

I hope this is helpful.

Ms Lynne: to ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many parents with care are regularly receiving maintenance through the Child Support Agency maintenance collection service. [41801]

Mr. Mitchell: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Ann Chant. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Miss Ann Chant to Ms Liz Lynne, dated 7 November 1995:

I am replying to your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Social Security about Child Support Agency assessments.

As at 15 September 1995, there are 135,974 parents with care who have received at least one maintenance payment in the last 13 weeks via the Agency collection service.

Income Support

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many people were in receipt of *(a)* income support or its predecessor benefit and *(b)* housing benefit for each year since 1979 by (i) regions and (ii) parliamentary constituency using the current boundaries; [41252]

(2) what amounts, at current prices, have been paid in *(a)* income support or its predecessor benefit and *(b)* housing benefit in each year since 1979 by (i) region and (ii) constituency. [41503]

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many appeals against the disallowance of income support under the habitual residence test were heard by the Sutton social security appeal tribunal in the most recent period of a month or more for which information can be obtained; how many succeeded; how many failed; and how many were adjourned or were withdrawn. [42362]

Mr. Roger Evans: I will write to the hon. Members shortly.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many income support claimants are currently receiving disability premium, with a breakdown of their means of qualification for each of his Department's benefits offices covering the Doncaster and Mexborough area in respect of *(a)* receipt of invalidity benefit, *(b)* submission of medical certificates only, *(c)* receipt of severe disablement allowance or *(d)* receipt of disability living allowance; and what were the figures for 12 months ago. [39484]

Mr. Evans: This is a matter for Mr. Peter Mathieson, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will reply to hon. Member with such information as is available.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. Martin Redmond, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Social Security has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about how many income support claimants are currently receiving disability premium, with a breakdown of their means of qualification for each of his Department's benefit offices covering the Doncaster and Mexborough area in respect of (a) receipt of invalidity benefit, (b) submission of medical certificates only, (c) receipt of severe disablement allowance or (d) receipt of disability living allowance; and what were the comparable figures for 12 months ago.

The full range of information requested is not available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Statistics are maintained for each Benefit Agency District on the number of income Support customers in receipt of a disability premium. The figure for the Doncaster district at the end of August 1994 was 3,204 and the end of August 1995 was 3,423. This district comprises of Doncaster West and Doncaster East offices. The figure for the Rother and Dearne district at the end of August 1994 was 4,704 and the end of August 1995 was 5,109. This district comprises of Rotherham South, Goldthorpe, Mexborough, Rotherham North and Wath-on-Dearne offices.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

Fraud

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many cases there have been by region of *(a)* fraud and *(b)* overpayment of benefit for each benefit since 1979; and what have been the total amounts involved in each. [41254]

Mr. Heald: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

State Pensions

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what the current level of the state pension would be today if the break with earnings had not been made. [41677]

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will recalculate tables E1 and E3 of the latest national insurance fund long-term financial estimates on the basis that *(a)* the number of future entrants to the state earnings-related pension scheme are (i) half the assumed level, (ii) a quarter the assumed level, and (iii) there are no new entrants, *(b)* the number of people assumed to be contracted into the state earnings-related pension scheme next year is at half its assumed level and that future entrants to the scheme are (1) half the assumed level, (2) a quarter the assumed level, and (3) there are no new entrants and *(c)* the number of people assumed to be contracted into the state earnings-related pension scheme next year is at a quarter of its assumed level and that future entrants to the scheme are *(x)* half of the assumed level, *(y)* a quarter of the assumed level and *(z)* there are no new entrants; [42211]

(2) if he will list the assumptions used in tables E1, E2 and E4 of the latest national insurance fund long-term financial estimates for *(a)* the number of people assumed to be contracted-in to the state earnings-related pension scheme; *(b)* the number of people assumed to be contracted-out of the state earnings-related pension scheme into personal pension plans and *(c)* the number of people assumed to be contracted-out of the state earnings-related pension scheme who are in occupational schemes. [42194]

Mr. Heald: I will write to the hon. Members shortly.

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make it his policy that the system of age-related rebates for the state earnings-related pension scheme will be actuarily neutral. [42197]

Mr. Heald: As required under the Pensions Schemes Act 1993, as amended by the Pensions Act 1995, I shall lay before Parliament in due course a report by the Government Actuary on the age-related rebates for people contracted out of the state earnings-related pension scheme through contracted-out money purchase schemes and appropriate personal pension schemes. The report will show the rebate levels which, in the Government Actuary's opinion, are required to reflect the cost of providing benefits of an actuarial value equivalent to that of the SERPS benefits forgone. This will be accompanied by a report of my own as to what I consider the rebates should be, and draft orders implementing those rebates. In order to come into effect in April 1997, the orders must be laid and made by the end of March 1996. In accordance with past practice, the Government Actuary issued on 16 August 1995 a consultative memorandum setting out the considerations on which his report to Parliament will be based.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what the value of the retirement pension would be if it had been uprated in line with earnings or prices, whichever was higher, since 1980. [42306]

Mr. Heald: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. McMaster) on 6 November 1995, *Official Report*, columns *648–49*.

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list at current prices the annual sums paid to providers of personal pension plans under the Social Security Act 1986 in respect of *(a)* incentives, *(b)* rebates and *(c)* other payments for contracting out of the state earnings-related pension scheme, in each of the financial years since the Act has been in force. [42196]

Mr. Heald: The information is in the table.

Paid in year	*Contracted-out rebate*	*2 per cent. incentive*	*1 per cent. addition*	*Total £ millions*
1988–89	410	—	—	410
1989–90	2,280	924	—	3,204
1990–91	1,819	637	—	2,456
1991–92	1,951	671	—	2,622
1992–93	2,045	694	—	2,739
1993–94	2,134	718	—	2,852
1994–95	1,757	17	225	1,999

Note:
This table shows the expenditure, at 1995–96 prices, on contracted-out rebates and incentive and additional payments for appropriate personal pensions in each of the years for which published figures are available. Figures for 1994–95 are estimates.
Source:
Government Actuary's Department (costs adjusted to 1995–96 prices).
Figures relate to Great Britain.

Christmas Bonus

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make it his policy to increase the Christmas bonus to pensioners. [41676]

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to increase the Christmas bonus to pensioners. [42227]

Mr. Heald: The Christmas bonus has remained at £10 since it was introduced in 1972. We have no plans to increase it.

War Pensions

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make it his policy to exclude war pensions when assessing either council tax allowance or rent allowances. [41607]

Mr. Heald: We have no plans to change the present arrangements.

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many claims lodged with the War Pensions Agency have lapsed in each of the past five years on the ground that the applicant has died while awaiting a decision; [41579]

(2) if he will state the average time lapse between claims being lodged with the War Pensions Agency and the decisions being issued. [41578]

Mr. Heald: These are matters for Mr. John Sheppard, the acting chief executive of the War Pensions Agency. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from John Sheppard to Mr. Brian Wilson, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Social Security has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about claims to War Disablement Pension.

Information on the number of claims lapsed due to the applicant dying whilst awaiting a decision is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. However, I should point out that wherever possible, we continue with a claim after a person has died and try to make a decision on the available evidence. Any payments which become due are made to the next of kin.

The average times taken to deal with claims are shown in the attached appendix, along with details of the Secretary of State's targets and our achievement against these.

These standards have been achieved despite the phasing in, since April, of a new computer system and major restructuring of the organisation. This month sees the final stages of the introduction of these changes and the average time for clearance of claims should then see a gradual improvement during the remaining part of the year.

I hope you find this information useful.

Average time taken to deal with War Pension claims (April to September 1995)

	Working days
First claims to War Pension	151.70
Second and subsequent claims	126.27
Claims to War Widows Pension	37.72

Secretary of State's Targets

Achievement (April–September 1995)	*Per cent.*
First claims to War Pension	
60 per cent. in 150 working days	61.45
95 per cent. in 310 working days	94.60
Second and subsequent claims	
60 per cent. in 135 working days	66.19
95 per cent. in 195 working days	91.00
Claims to War Widows Pension	
80 per cent. in 70 working days	90.66
95 per cent. in 145 working days	98.68

Visually Impaired People

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what estimate he has made of the number of visually impaired people who were refused attendance allowances in 1993, 1994 and 1995 to the latest available date; [42090]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of visually impaired people who were refused the middle rate care component of the disability living allowance in 1993, 1994 and 1995 to the latest available date. [42091]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: The information requested is not available. A claim for disability living allowance or attendance allowance is a claim for the benefit and not for a particular component or rate. Statistics about the disabling condition of claimants refused benefit are not routinely collected.

Adjudication Officer Guidance

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to publish the guidance issued to adjudication officers following the House of Lords ruling in favour of an appeal by Mr. Eric Mallinson in April 1994. [42104]

Mr. Roger Evans: The provision of guidance to adjudication officers and the publication of such guidance are matters for the chief adjudication officer. His office, Central Adjudication Services, issued letter HEO(AO)5/94 on 12 May 1994 giving guidance to adjudication officers on the effect of the House of Lords judgment in Mallinson. Letter HEO(AO)13/94 issued on 27 October 1994 gave some clarification of the earlier letter. I have made arrangements for copies of these letters to be provided to the hon. Member.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if sponsorship declarations are legally enforceable in respect of proposals to curb benefit entitlements to asylum seekers and sponsored immigrants; and if he will make a statement. [42140]

Mr. Roger Evans: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects the Social Security Advisory Committee to report on the proposed regulations referred to the committee on 11 October concerning the benefit entitlements to asylum seekers and other persons from abroad; if he will place a copy of the report in the Library; and if he will make a statement. [42147]

Mr. Evans: We expect to receive the Committee's report and recommendations during December. The report and our response to it will be incorporated in a Command Paper which will be published when the regulations are laid.

War Veterans

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence regarding paying British war veterans who fought in the Pacific during the second world war, along the lines of the burnt-out pension paid to Australians; and when he plans to make such payments. [42225]

Mr. Heald: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Social Fund

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what in 1985 prices was the value of *(a)* the single payment budget and *(b)* the community care grants budget in 1995–96. [42250]

Mr. Roger Evans: The value of single payments in 1985 was £308 million, while planned expenditure on community care grants in 1995–96, which in cash terms will be £97 million, expressed in 1985 prices represents £62 million.

The social fund offers much better value for money for the taxpayer than the old single payments scheme. Its discretionary nature ensures that payments are targeted on those most in need, while the recycling of loan repayments has enabled the fund to grow with each successive year; over £1.5 billion worth of loans have been made since the start of the fund for a net outlay of only £329 million.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Allason: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what increase in housing benefit has occurred in Torbay since 1990; and what were the figures for *(a)* Exeter, *(b)* Plymouth and *(c)* Honiton. [42221]

Mr. Roger Evans: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Benefit Tapers

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many families face a marginal deductions rate of 70 per cent. or higher on each £1 earned as a result of benefit tapers. [42183]

Mr. Roger Evans: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many claims there were for *(a)* the mobility component and *(b)* the care component of disability living allowance on the grounds that the applicant suffered from persistent virus disease—myalgic encephalopathy—in each of the past three years; and how many of these claims were upheld. [42339]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many blind or partially sighted people have won appeals on the basis of the Halliday/Fairey decision since 14 October 1994; and what is his estimate of the cost of paying the middle rate care component to those blind and partially sighted claimants who have won the entitlement on the basis of the Halliday/Fairey decision since 14 October 1994. [40893]

Mr. Andrew: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for Peter Mathison, chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member with such information as is available.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. David Clelland, dated 7 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Social Security has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the number of blind/partially sighted people who have won appeals based on the Halliday/Fairey decision and the estimated cost of paying middle rate care component to those blind/partially sighted customers who have won entitlement on this basis since 14 October 1994.

To date there have been nine blind/partially sighted Disability Living Allowance customers who have been successful on appeal where the terms of this judgement have contributed to the award of benefit. These are subject to an appeal by the Secretary of State to the Social Security Commissioner.

Information as to the estimated additional cost of paying Disability Living Allowance middle rate (MR) care component for blind/partially sighted customers is not available.

I can however give some information which may be helpful. Detailed records have been kept from March 1995 to date on the number of cases in which the Halliday/Fairey decision has influenced the award of the MR care component. From March 27 October 1995, the Halliday/Fairey decision has influenced 364 awards. Of these, 269 have been awarded the MR care component as a result of the effects of the Halliday/Fairey decision. These cases have entitlement to the lower rate care component without the effect of the Halliday/Fairey decision and are, therefore, currently receiving this rate. This is because any entitlement due to the Halliday/Fairey decision is subject to suspension by the Secretary of State pending the outcome of the appeal to the House of Lords. The remaining 95 customers have been awarded the MR care component and, as this is entirely due to the Halliday/Fairey decision, they are not currently receiving payment pending the outcome of the appeal.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42325]

Mr. Burt: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Homelessness

Ms Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to instruct his Department branch office to produce leaflets advising the homeless and those not eligible for income support and crisis loans of where to find soup kitchens and which provide the names of local charities where they may get assistance. [37259]

Mr. Roger Evans: The provision of leaflets on benefit related matters is a matter for Mr. Peter Mathison, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member with such information as is available.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Ms Joan Ruddock, dated 8 November 1995:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about what plans there are to instruct branch offices to produce leaflets advising the homeless and those not eligible for income support and crisis loans of where to find soup kitchens and which provide the names of local charities where they may get assistance.

The Benefits Agency has recently conducted a review of its service to homeless customers. A recommendation in the subsequent report was that 'a leaflet be produced for Advice Centres and Homeless customers clearly setting out the benefits available and the customer's responsibilities'.

We are currently co-ordinating action on the recommendations in the report. A leaflet is being developed for production by Benefits Agency Districts. This will include details of local services for homeless customers, including that of the type to which you refer.

We have set up three national conferences for Benefits Agency staff on Service Delivery to Homeless Customers, which will take place between November 20 and November 28 1995 and at which there will be input from the voluntary sector. The conferences will stress the importance of the leaflet initiative, amongst others, in providing a better service to homeless customers. As a follow up to the conferences, we plan to prepare 'a Good Practice Guide' which will be issued to all Districts.

I hope that you find this reply helpful.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Heppell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what extra administrative work is and has been necessary to deal with the change from invalidity benefit and sickness benefit to incapacity benefit; and what is the total cost of this extra administrative work. [41961]

Mr. Burt: The administration of Social Security benefits is a matter for Mr. Peter Mathison, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency. He will write to the hon. Member with such information as is available.

Letter from Peter Mathison to Mr. John Heppell, dated 8 November 1995:

The Secretary of State for Social Security has asked me to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about what extra administrative work is and has been necessary to deal with the change from invalidity benefit and sickness benefit to incapacity benefit and what is the total cost of this extra administrative work.

The additional administrative work in the period April—March 1994/95 included:

1. Recruitment—of 700 Doctors and Medical Advisers for the Independent Tribunal Service;
2. Training—of 40,000 District Office (DO) staff, 1,400 Doctors and 600 Benefits Agency Medical Services (BAMS) administrative staff;
3. Enhancements to DO computer systems and procedures;
4. Development and implementation of a new computer system for BAMS;
5. Development of procedures, forms and information leaflets related to the introduction of the new medical test;
6. Development of procedures and enhancement of computer systems for the deduction of income tax from IB.

The cost of this work amounted to £42 million.

The additional administrative work in the period April–March 1995/96 includes:

1. The application of the new medical test;
2. The issue of the new Medical Questionnaire by DO staff;
3. Dealing with direct taxation of benefit. This is completely new to the BA and involves notifying the Inland Revenue of taxable benefit paid, tax deducted and providing the appropriate forms as necessary.

The cost of this additional work is expected to be £53 million for the financial year.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prosecution Court Files

Mr. Dafis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the recommended retention period for prosecution papers by the police. [40789]

Mr. Maclean: No advice has been issued centrally to police forces on the retention period for prosecution papers.

Parole

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of prisoners in England and Wales sentenced to terms of imprisonment of five or more years who in each year since 1989 were released with *(a)* under 50 per cent., *(b)* 50 per cent., *(c)* 50 per cent. to 60 per cent., *(d)* 60 per cent. to 69 per cent., *(e)* 70 per cent. to 79 per cent., *(f)* 80 per cent. to 89 per cent., *(g)* 90 per cent. to 99 per cent., *(h)* 100 per cent. of their term served and the percentages of the group serving five or more years who were released in each of those years within those per cent. stepped categories. [42141]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Brian Landers to Mr. Robert McCartney, dated 8 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me, in the absence of the Director General from the office, to reply to your recent Question asking if he will list the number of prisoners in England and Wales sentenced to terms of imprisonment of five or more years who in each year since 1989 were released with (a) under 50 per cent, (b) 50 per cent, (c) 50 per cent to 60 per cent, (d) 60 per cent to 69 per cent, (e) 70 per cent to 79 per cent, (f) 80 per cent to 89 per cent, (g) 90 per cent to 99 per cent, (h) 100 per cent of their term served and the percentages of the group serving five or more years who were released in each of those years within those per cent stepped categories.

The information could only be provided at disproportionate cost. The available information relates to time served between the date of sentence and the release date and excludes time served on remand. It is published in "Prison statistics, England and Wales" (tables 3.14, 4.13 and 5.12 of the 1993 edition, Cm 2893) a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Prisoners sentenced to five or more years since October 1992 are released under Part II of the Criminal Justice Act 1991. Release occurs after serving two thirds of sentence (or earlier if granted discretionary conditional release) subject to a minimum of half the sentence. For prisoners sentenced before October 1992, eligibility for consideration for early release occurred after serving one third of sentence, subject to a minimum of six months served following the date of sentence.

Firearms

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of firearm certificates at present issued in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and for what number of weapons, enumerating the type of category of weapon licensed. [42142]

Mr. Maclean: There were 140,200 firearm certificates in force on 31 December 1994 in England and Wales, covering an estimated 396,800 firearms. There were also 670,000 shotgun certificates in force on the same date, covering an estimated 1.33 million shotguns.

Figures for Scotland are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and figures for Northern Ireland are a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Prisoners (Transfers)

Mr. Robert McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners in British prisons were sentenced in other countries and later transferred to the United Kingdom; from what countries; and if he will indicate whether they are subject to differing releases rules or prison regimes. [42143]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from David Scott to Mr. Robert McCartney, dated 8 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me, in the absence of the Director General from the office, to reply to your recent Question about the number of British prisoners sentenced in other countries and returned to prisons in the United Kingdom.

Details of such transfers are given in the attached table.

Prisoners transferred to the United Kingdom are subject to the same statutory and other provisions relating to release and prison regimes as prisoners sentenced within the receiving jurisdictions.

Prisoners transferred into the United Kingdom

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994[1]
Belgium	—	1	—	—	—
Cyprus	—	—	—	1	1
Czech Rep	—	—	—	—	1
Denmark	—	—	1	1	2
Finland	—	1	—	1	1
France	—	1	2	—	—
Germany	—	—	—	—	1
Holland	—	2	—	1	—
Spain	—	1	3	—	—
Sweden	—	—	1	—	4
Thailand	—	—	—	2	—
United States	—	—	2	5	6
Total	0	6	9	11	16

[1] Figures for 1994 exclude transfers to prisons in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many foreign prisoners have been handed over to the prison authorities of other countries for continuation of their sentence; and if he will indicate to which countries and by what authority in each of the last five years. [42144]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letters from David Scott to Mr. Robert McCartney, dated 8 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me, in the absence of the Director General from the office, to reply to your recent Question about the number of foreign national prisoners transferred to other countries to continue their prison sentences, over the last five years.

Details of such transfers are given in the attached table.

These transfers have taken place under the provisions of the Repatriation of Prisoners Act 1984.

Outward transfers between the years 1990–94

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994[1]
Belgium	—	1	5	5	—
Canada	—	—	2	—	—
Cyprus	—	—	—	—	1
Gibraltar	—	—	—	2	—
Greece	1	—	—	—	—
Holland	2	4	8	1	4
Italy	—	—	3	1	—
Luxembourg	—	1	—	—	—
Spain	—	1	—	—	—
Sweden	1	—	—	—	—
United States	9	10	—	—	—
Total	13	17	18	9	5

[1] Figures for 1994 exclude transfers from prisons in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Animal Rights

Mr. Allason: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints have been received by the Charity Commissioners concerning the RSPCA's role in respect of advocacy of animal rights. [42222]

Mr. Kirkhope: The Charity Commissioners received 14 complaints between February and September 1995 regarding advertising conducted by the RSPCA. One of these complaints was subsequently withdrawn.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by what means he is informed of upheavals in any country of such significance as to require him to notify the Secretary of State for Social Security in order to enable nationals of that country seeking asylum in the United Kingdom to apply for benefit entitlement; what criteria he applies to determine such a significant upheaval; and if he will make a statement. [42224]

Mr. Kirkhope: Countries which generate asylum claims are monitored by the asylum division on the basis of reports from a variety of sources, including diplomatic posts, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and non-governmental organisations. The basis for making a declaration will be that a country has undergone such a fundamental change of circumstances that its nationals are not normally being required to return to it for the time being.

Leeds Prison

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for additional funding for Leeds prison to redress the serious financial difficulties facing the prison in 1997–98. [42251]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from David Scott to Mr. John Battle, dated 8 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me, in the absence of the Director General from the office, to reply to your recent Question about Leeds prison.

Financial provision for the public sector will be announced in the Autumn Statement due at the end of this month, and budgets for individual prisons will be finalised during the early part of 1996 taking into account their strategic plans.

The Prison Service is committed to improved efficiency and unit cost reductions. A target of 8.6% was set out in the corporate plan published earlier this year and all prisons are expected to contribute to this.

European Court Decisions

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the oral answer of the Attorney-General of 30 October, *Official Report*, column 12, relating to decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, if he will list those European Court decisions relating to responsibilities of his Department over the past two years; and if he will further indicate the estimated annual cost to public funds of each decision. [41208]

Mr. Kirkhope *[holding answer 2 November 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Boothferry (Mr. Davis) on 7 November, *Official Report*, columns 697–702.

Deregulation

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the rules and regulations he proposes to repeal or amend by means of a reference to the Deregulation Committee before the end of 1995; and if he will make a statement. [41544]

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 6 November, *Official Report*, column 576.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what regulations his Department proposes to repeal by the end of 1995; if he proposes to conduct a compliance cost assessment on each regulation repealed; and what is the estimated cost of undertaking a compliance cost assessment to assess the advantages or disadvantages of such a repeal. [41561]

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 6 November 1995]:* I hope on present plans that by the end of 1995 the Betting Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963 will be amended to relax the rules on greyhound racing. The cost savings likely to accrue to the greyhound industry have been estimated at £260,000 per annum. It is not possible to estimate the cost of making this assessment.

Scott Inquiry

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons have been authorised to have access to documents held by his Department relating to the Scott inquiry; and if he will list such persons. [42066]

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* Ministers, former Ministers and officials have access to material relating to the inquiry as necessary in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons in his Department are on the public payroll or employed as consultants or advisers and work on a part-time or a full-time basis in relation to the Scott inquiry; if he will list their names; and how much each is paid. [42065]

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* No staff in my Department are wholly employed on matters relating to the Scott inquiry. Four officials have been involved on an occasional basis within the Department. It is not the practice to name staff.

Employers (Illegal Immigrants)

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to produce his consultation paper on proposals to fine employers who give jobs to illegal immigrants; what scale of fines he envisages; and if small and medium-sized enterprises will be exempt from his proposals. [42009]

Mr. Kirkhope *[holding answer 7 November 1995]:* We expect to issue a consultation paper outlining our proposals shortly.

Murders

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been prosecuted in each of the past 10 years for murder; and how many people have been prosecuted for murder since the IRA ceasefire of 31 August 1994. [42138]

Mr. Maclean: The information is given in the table.

Number of persons prosecuted for murder 1984–1994 England and Wales

	Prosecutions
1984	434
1985	483
1986	515
1987	496
1988	550
1989	506
1990	484
1991	584
1992	609
1993	598
1994	
January–August	344
September–December	182
Total	526

Passports

Mr. Allason: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if British passports are required for United Kingdom citizens to travel to Germany. [42223]

Mr. Kirkhope: Passports are required by British citizens to travel to Germany.

Specialist Advisers

Mr. Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* specialist advisers and *(b)* press or public relations officers are employed by his Department; and what is the total annual salary bill for *(a)* and *(b)* above. [42317]

Mr. Howard: I will write to the hon. Member.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has yet responded to the recommendations in the report of the Animal Procedures Committee on regulatory toxicity. [42365]

Mr. Kirkhope: My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary has now responded to the recommendations made by the Animal Procedures Committee and has received the committee's reply. Copies of the exchanges have been placed in the Library.

Suspects' Rights

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the total expenditure of his Department on promoting the rights of suspects under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 for each year since that Act came into force. [42099]

Mr. Maclean: The approximate expenditure incurred in distributing to police forces new and revised versions of the codes of practice required under sections 60 and 66 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and notices to detained persons required under paragraph 3.2 of code C was as follows:

1985: £33,700
1986: £2,000
1988: £14,600
1991: £138,300
1995: £109,000

Electoral Register

Dr. Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further consideration he has given to bringing forward proposals for a rolling electoral register since his working group produced its report on the matter; and if he will make a statement. [42101]

Mr. Kirkhope: The working group concluded that more work was needed before a decision could be taken on a rolling register; we have no plans to bring forward proposals.

Prisons (Drugs)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the number of drug finds in each of the prisons in England and Wales in each of the last 12 months. [41865]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 8 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the number of drug finds in each of the prisons in England and Wales in each of the last 12 months.

Information is readily available centrally for the period from January 1995 and is provided in the attached table, a copy of which will be placed in the Library of the House.

Prison	*1995*								
	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*August*	*September*
Acklington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Albany	1	2	4	5	5	6	4	3	3
Aldington	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ashwell	1	0	32	15	16	10	6	9	10
Askham Grange	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Aylesbury	0	1	5	2	8	0	1	1	1
Bedford	6	14	6	11	12	18	8	11	14
Belmarsh	10	11	16	4	6	10	5	4	3
Birmingham	9	12	8	17	10	7	9	16	13
Blakenhurst	6	15	13	27	14	12	19	41	14
Blantyre House	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blundeston	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Brinsford	9	5	23	14	15	21	14	17	9
Bristol	9	4	6	9	8	5	2	6	12
Brixton	14	13	8	1	8	0	8	8	4
Brockhill	1	4	1	2	2	2	0	2	2
Buckley Hall	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0
Bullingdon/Oxford	4	9	5	2	9	8	6	8	2
Bullwood Hall	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Camp Hill	8	7	8	10	10	4	10	7	5
Canterbury	9	12	17	4	4	4	4	7	1
Cardiff	21	21	13	24	30	15	23	30	17
Castington	0	2	3	5	4	5	2	4	6
Channings Wood	0	1	0	1	4	6	5	1	5
Chelmsford	3	10	8	4	0	14	9	7	7
Coldingley	0	0	2	0	4	1	2	1	1
Cookham Wood	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Dartmoor	11	15	23	13	19	5	9	7	4

Prison	*1995*								
	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*August*	*September*
Deerbolt	7	5	4	5	15	5	9	10	4
Doncaster	6	8	41	33	18	14	18	24	23
Dorchester	8	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	1
Dover	7	8	1	2	3	5	2	2	2
Downview	3	1	3	2	5	5	1	1	0
Drake Hall	0	0	0	1	0	2	7	3	1
Durham	8	15	12	8	8	5	10	16	9
East Sutton Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Elmley	8	8	13	6	18	13	7	11	8
Erlestoke	4	3	8	5	5	4	3	14	17
Everthorpe	0	0	5	2	2	1	2	0	5
Exeter	4	14	8	6	15	3	7	7	4
Featherstone	5	2	4	4	2	2	3	1	5
Feltham	54	45	34	28	44	33	54	36	39
Ford	1	4	12	1	4	0	1	3	2
Frankland	8	6	0	4	1	5	2	2	6
Full Sutton	1	5	1	5	3	1	3	2	6
Garth	7	4	11	3	7	2	7	5	4
Gartree	7	4	10	10	4	0	3	1	3
Glen Parva	23	21	30	20	16	26	12	6	21
Gloucester	3	8	8	0	6	0	1	7	2
Grendon/Spring Hill	5	2	3	0	4	5	1	1	2
Guys Marsh	10	14	9	11	20	10	18	13	10
Haslar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hatfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Haverigg	29	28	30	32	33	23	26	20	26
Hewell Grange	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Highdown	3	8	1	7	10	9	19	5	6
Highpoint	2	1	5	1	0	4	7	4	7
Hindley	8	12	10	7	3	8	7	11	8
Hollesley Bay	7	5	7	4	0	5	4	7	5
Holloway	1	8	5	5	5	10	4	1	3
Holme House	10	5	14	11	13	3	11	7	5
Hull	13	11	12	5	9	14	3	11	9
Huntercombe	0	5	0	2	4	1	0	1	2
Kingston	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Kirkham	9	5	14	8	4	2	6	3	7
Kirklevington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lancaster	1	1	2	0	2	0	5	7	2
Lancaster Farms	13	17	12	0	20	4	7	4	7
Latchmore House	2	1	0	14	1	8	0	0	0
Leeds	0	0	0	15	36	16	17	16	26
Leicester	23	19	15	21	8	18	14	14	13
Lewes	7	8	12	7	10	12	10	16	15
Leyhill	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Lincoln	10	9	14	7	8	11	5	8	4
Lindholme	5	8	10	6	13	11	9	17	10
Littlehey	4	2	7	6	1	2	3	1	2
Liverpool	20	17	27	28	30	16	21	23	26
Long Lartin	2	5	2	2	6	0	2	1	3
Low Newton	3	4	0	2	2	2	3	2	4
Maidstone	1	1	0	1	7	4	3	0	0
Manchester	2	5	5	4	6	7	19	15	7
Moorland	0	6	15	12	19	8	9	17	7
Morton Hall	0	0	3	0	2	0	2	1	0
The Mount	3	2	2	0	8	5	6	3	2
New Hall	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
North Sea Camp	0	0	3	4	0	0	2	0	0
Northallerton	7	10	8	8	15	6	14	0	14
Norwich	1	7	6	7	0	3	5	9	10
Nottingham	0	1	5	1	4	4	0	1	1
Onley	5	2	4	4	11	8	5	9	8
Parkhurst	0	1	2	0	4	2	0	4	18
Pentonville	9	10	5	3	12	8	4	4	8
Portland	7	8	9	9	9	2	6	8	12
Preston	8	4	10	8	11	7	17	8	17
Pucklechurch	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ranby	3	0	3	0	6	6	2	2	2
Reading	0	0	0	5	3	2	2	3	5
Risley	8	16	12	8	15	6	4	12	13
Rochester	7	6	2	2	6	6	4	9	6
Send	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Shepton Mallett	0	2	2	2	2	1	5	1	1

Prison	*1995*								
	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*August*	*September*
Shrewsbury	1	4	1	4	5	6	3	6	2
Stafford	20	11	10	15	9	10	10	15	15
Standford Hill	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	3
Stocken	3	11	4	2	13	0	6	0	0
Stoke Heath	5	0	0	10	15	15	11	13	20
Styal	2	3	1	1	5	2	5	4	3
Sudbury/Foston Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swaleside	4	12	4	2	7	8	7	3	6
Swansea	5	2	1	2	2	0	0	0	0
Swinfen Hall	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	2
Thorn Cross	10	8	10	13	16	16	8	4	3
Usk	0	2	1	1	0	6	4	1	3
The Verne	6	3	3	4	9	6	9	9	5
Wakefield	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wandsworth	25	21	15	24	32	19	24	20	17
Wayland	3	3	7	0	0	0	5	2	6
Wealstun	2	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	3
Wellingborough	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
Werrington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetherby	0	1	3	0	1	2	4	0	3
Whatton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Whitemoor	3	7	5	3	4	2	1	0	1
Winchester	1	0	6	1	1	5	4	2	3
Wolds	4	10	9	7	5	11	11	11	13
Woodhill	9	14	9	11	18	14	16	14	6
Wormwood Scrubs	20	14	21	23	17	14	17	23	4
Wymott	1	0	2	6	4	0	0	0	0

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the number of prison inmates in each prison in England and Wales who have been put on report for being in possession of illegal drugs, in each month during the last 12 months. [41857]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from Richard Tilt to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 8 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me to reply to your recent Question about the number of prison inmates in each prison in England and Wales who have been put on report for being in possession of illegal drugs.

The readily available information was published in 'Statistics of offences against prison discipline and punishments, England and Wales, 1994 (Cm 2934)', a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

National Lottery

Mr. Hanson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of the national lottery on the betting industry. [41244]

Mr. Kirkhope: We are monitoring off-course betting turnover in order to assess the impact of the national lottery on the horserace betting levy, and plan to report our findings to Parliament in the spring of 1996.

Parliamentary Constituencies

Mr. Thomason: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when residents in Frankley will be notified as to the parliamentary constituency in which they are to be included; and what is his timetable for laying the necessary order before the House. [40175]

Mr. Kirkhope: I will write to the hon. Member.

Parkhurst Gaol

Ms Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions the previous governor of Parkhurst gaol, John Marriott, requested the installation of electronic perimeter fences, high-intensity lighting, extra cameras and guard dogs; and what was the Prison Service's response on each occasion. [39605]

Miss Widdecombe: Responsibility for this matter has been delegated to the temporary Director General of the Prison Service, who has been asked to arrange for a reply to be given.

Letter from A. J. Butler to Ms Janet Anderson, dated 8 November 1995:

The Home Secretary has asked me, in the absence of the Director General from the office, to reply to your recent Question about the number of occasions Mr. John Marriott, former Governor of Parkhurst Prison, has requested the installation of electronic perimeter fences, high intensity lighting, extra cameras and guard dogs; and the Prison Service's response on each occasion.

Mr. Marriott made a number of requests for these security measures to be installed.

Geophones

Appendix F of the Learmont Inquiry report sets out a schedule which includes Mr. Marriott's documented requests for geophones to be installed at Parkhurst prison and the response to these.

High Intensity Lighting and Cameras

Perimeter CCTV and lighting was installed at Parkhurst in 1991 as the first phase of work to upgrade the perimeter security at Parkhurst. The Governor and Area Manager subsequently put forward bids to upgrade the CCTV and lighting as part of the annual process of compiling a capital building programme. These bids were considered in 1993/94 and 1994/95 but not included in the programme because there were other security schemes in other areas of the Prison Service already programmed which were considered to be of a higher priority. Following a special review of perimeter security at Parkhurst in April 1994 the Governor, in conjunction with the Area Manager, took forward the planning for the now funded improvements to perimeter security identified in that review, including geophones. Following the escape in January 1995 adjustments and additions were made to the perimeter security cameras and lighting and this was followed by the replacement of the camera system which was completed by the end of June 1995.

Dogs and Dog Handlers

The Governor made a bid in 1990 for additional dogs.

The Governor, through the Area Manager, made a bid in April 1992 and in September, identified the need for two dogs and handlers to work at Parkhurst until 31 March 1993. In October 1992, the Governor asked that these be retained after this date.

The Governor and Area Manager made a bid in 1993/94 for additional dogs and dog handlers, but there was insufficient funding for this increase. They renewed the bid for 1994/95.

No money was directly allocated as the result of the above bids. It was acknowledged that any increase in the number of dogs and handlers would have to be made from within the existing budget. The governor sought six additional dog handlers and dogs in November 1994. He offered to fund two himself by diverting funds from elsewhere and bid for additional funding for the remaining four. It was agreed to take this forward as a prioritised bid for that year.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme

Mr. David Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether structured settlements will be offered under the current criminal injuries compensation scheme. [42220]

Mr. Maclean: Structured settlements can be a highly advantageous way of paying compensation to victims in higher value cases. It affords them the option of receiving their award, not as a lump sum, but in the form of a stream of periodic payments under an annuity. These payments will be tax free and can be index linked, thereby providing guaranteed payments for life or other specified period.

Under provisions in the Criminal Injuries Compensation Bill, this facility will be available to claimants under the new, enhanced tariff scheme to be established under the Bill's powers. The Bill also provides for the facility to be extended to claimants under the present—1990—scheme although, as previously announced on 10 July 1995, *Official Report*, column *389*, and on 17 October 1995, *Official Report*, *House of Lords*, column *723*, that will first require a complementary amendment to the 1990 scheme to allow payment of compensation by the purchase of annuities.

Once the Criminal Injuries Compensation Bill receives Royal Assent, I will accordingly amend the 1990 scheme by making some small alterations to paragraph 12, and by the insertion of new paragraphs 12A and 29(g). The revised paragraph 12 and the new paragraph will read as follows:

> "12. Subject to the other provisions of this Scheme, compensation will be assessed on the basis of common law damages and will normally take the form of a lump sum payment, although the Board may make alternative arrangements in accordance with paragraph 9 above or with paragraph 12A below. More than one payment may be made where an applicant's eligibility for compensation has been established but a final award cannot be calculated in the first instance—for example where only a provisional medical assessment can be given. In a case in which an interim award has been made, the Board may decide to make a reduced award, increase any reduction already made or refuse to make any further payment at any stage before receiving notification of acceptance of a final award. Once an award has been paid to an applicant paragraph 12A does not apply".
>
> "12A. Where prior agreement is reached between the Board and the applicant, an award may consist in whole or in part of an annuity or annuities, purchased for the benefit of the applicant or to be held on trust for his benefit. Once that agreement is reached, the Board will take the instructions of the applicant as to which annuity or annuities should be purchased. Any expenses incurred will be met from the award".
>
> "29(g). Paragraph 12A of this Scheme will apply additionally to applications otherwise falling to be considered under the 1969 or 1979 Schemes".

These changes will be made when the Criminal Injuries Compensation Bill receive Royal Assent.

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES SESSION 1994–95 **VOLUME 265**

30th October—8th November 1995

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc., between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes and cannot therefore, be used in connection with the daily part or weekly Hansard. For these versions use the Fortnightly Index.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instruments etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Speaker and deputies are brought together under the heading 'Speaker's rulings and statements'.

Other contributions by Speaker and deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

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Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates, etc.* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions.*

Abbreviations

Bills 1R = first reading, 2R = second reading, Money res = money resolution, Comm = Committee stage, Rep = Report stage, 3R = third reading, amendt/amendts = amendment/amendments, * = matter taken formally, without debate.

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